

II. EXCAVATING THE DAWSON FAMILY SITE

A. BACK TO WORK

We returned to the Dawson Family Site on November 12, 1997, to begin the final excavations. There was some concern about the coming cold weather and the possibility of rain, as we had to use heavy equipment to remove the plowzone from the site (Plate 7). We had worked on sites where the mud had made this nearly impossible, and had visions of our dump truck spinning its wheels as it dug ruts deeper and deeper in the site. We needn't have worried. It turned out to be one of the mildest late falls in memory. The days were mostly dry and balmy through the middle of December, and there were no particularly heavy rains. Cold winter set in around Christmas, but by then the site was already stripped and mapped, and we were working for the most part within shelters. On these cold days we could warm up by having lunch at the diner across the street.

We worked on the site through December and finished on January 21. During excavations, we dug a sample of the plowzone across the site, used a backhoe to strip off the remainder of the plowzone from the site, and excavated all of the cultural features we uncovered.

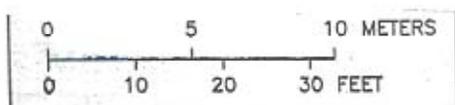
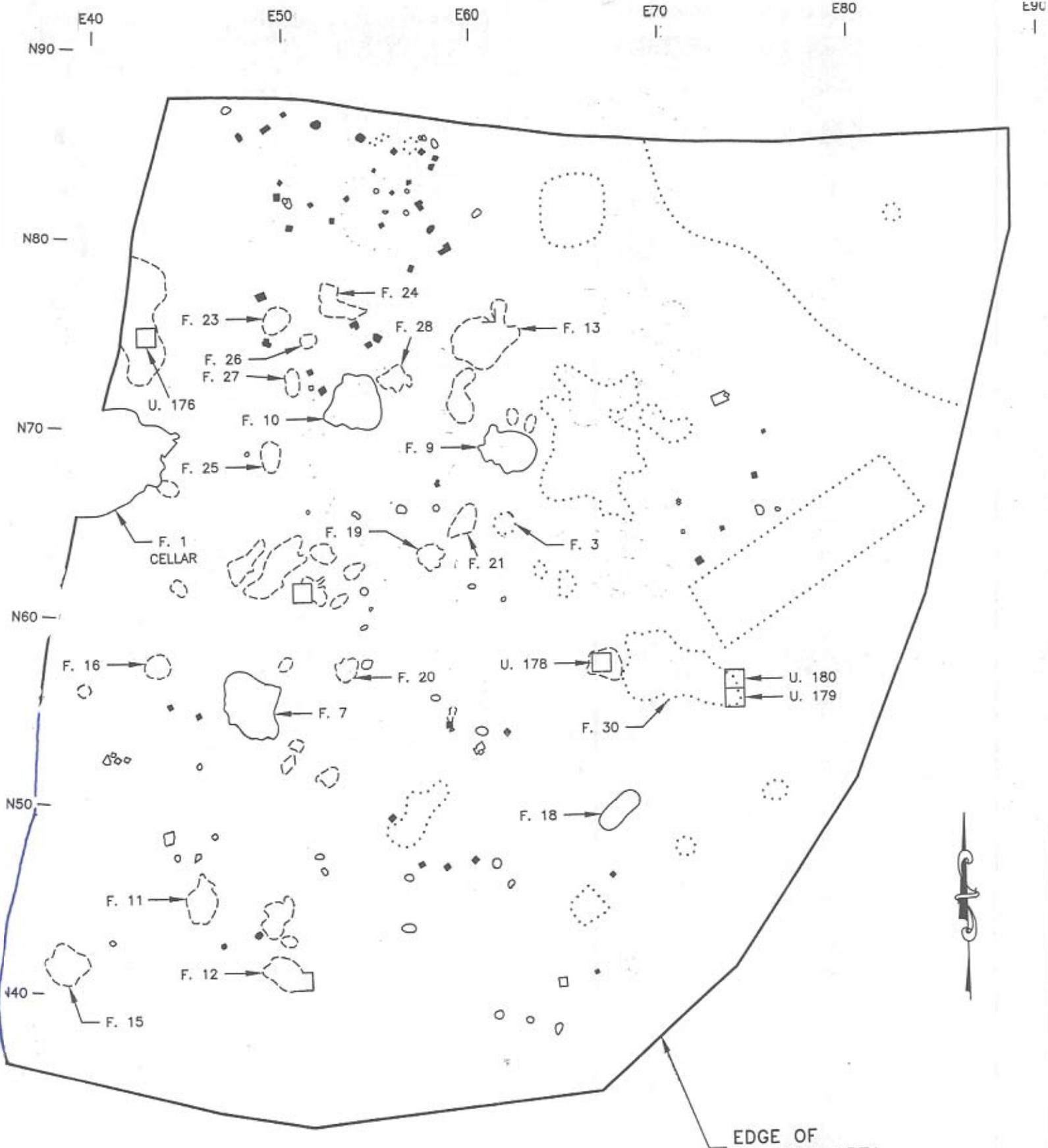
B. SAMPLING THE PLOWZONE

Our previous excavations at the Dawson Site had shown that the plowzone contained substantial numbers of eighteenth-century artifacts and that the distribution of artifact types varied across the site. We therefore thought that information about how the residents had used the space on the farm might have been preserved in the distribution of the plowzone artifacts. In particular, we believed it might be possible to identify a separate industrial area in

the northeastern portion of the site, where we also hoped to find the malthouse, and to define a working yard for domestic activities in the southern portion. With these objectives in mind, we excavated a 5 percent sample of the plowzone across the site. To accomplish this, 64 1x1-meter test units were excavated in addition to the 91 that had already been dug (see Figure 5). The numerous pieces of modern junk found during the excavations were discarded, but any items that might have been from colonial times were saved. Because of the high level of modern activity that had occurred on the site, including construction of the twentieth-century Rudnick house and the barns associated with the horse racing track, we did not attempt soil chemical analysis.



PLATE 7: Stripping the Plowzone



Plan of the Dawson Family Site

LEGEND

- FEATURE
- - - SHALLOW PIT
- MODERN DISTURBANCE
- POST HOLE
- TEST UNIT

EDGE OF STRIPPED AREA

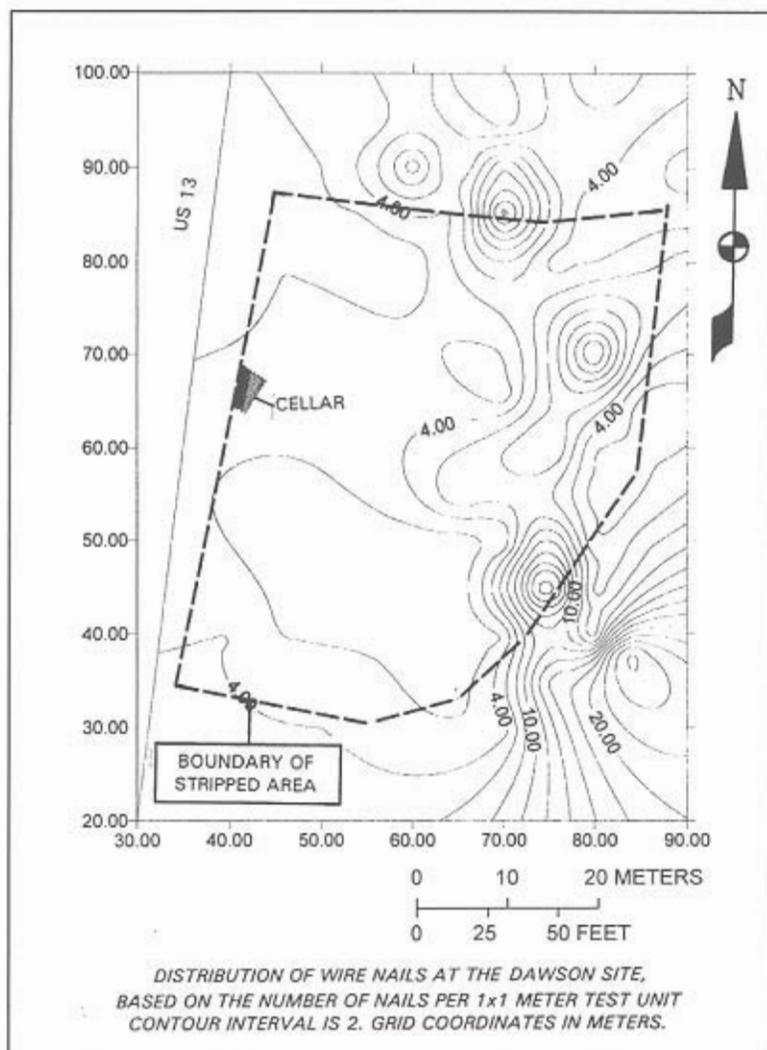


FIGURE 8: Distribution of Wire Nails in the Plowzone, an Indication of the Degree of Modern Disturbance Across the Site

The plowzone excavations did not change the basic picture of the site developed during the Phase II testing. The most important discovery was that the degree of modern disturbance on the site was even greater than had been expected. Disturbance was especially severe in the northern portion of the site, around the Rudnick house, and in the southeast corner, where the plowzone was almost completely missing. Most units in the southeast corner of the site encountered modern fill deposits, consisting of redeposited clay soil mixed with building rubble, directly beneath the sod. The sod contained some eighteenth-century artifacts. We dug shovel tests through the modern

fill in several units, but no intact plowzone was found beneath it. Some of the fill appeared to be associated with horse barns. We also noted disturbance, consisting of modern pits and rubble piles, in the center of the site, close to the eighteenth-century features. In some units in this area the plowzone had been truncated by grading and was only two or three inches deep. In other units quite close by, a full plowzone was present, so damage to the site by grading was not consistent. An indication of the degree of modern disturbance across the site is provided by the distribution of wire nails, as shown in Figure 8. Wire nails were invented around 1850 but they did not come into common use until the 1890s, so the presence of these artifacts is a good indication of twentieth-century activity.

C. STRIPPING THE PLOWZONE

In order to understand the layout of a farm site and locate the buildings and artifact deposits, it is important to expose the entire site, or at least a large portion of it. To expose the intact subplowzone features on the Dawson Site, the plowzone was removed from the entire site using a backhoe with a smooth bucket. A dump truck was used to transport the soil off the site. From

experience on other sites we knew that heavy rains could quickly bring such work to a standstill, but our luck held and we finished the stripping by December 11.

The stripping further documented the extent of disturbance on the site. Numerous piles of modern building debris were encountered, and large areas of shallow clay fill containing concrete, modern bottles, and other debris were exposed in the eastern half of the site. In much of the northern third of the site the plowzone proved to be very shallow, really no more than sod, and the grass roots penetrated into the subsoil and the features.

A building with concrete footers and a clay floor, measuring 12 by 40 feet, was exposed along the east side of the site. A plastic drainpipe protruding from one amorphous patch of shallow fill suggested that part of the site may have been a drain field. Because of the degree of modern disturbance evident, stripping was not extended as far as had been planned to the north and the southeast, although it was extended slightly farther to the south. Even within the area that was stripped, about a quarter had been significantly disturbed.

During a later stage of the excavations, David Leppo, Sr., a resident of the neighborhood and a regular volunteer on the site, brought us photographs he had taken during the demolition of the Rudnick house in the 1980s. It was from those photographs that we learned why the plowzone was missing from much of the site (Plate 8). Mr. Leppo's pictures showed the northern part of the site as bare earth, with pans and bulldozers moving back and forth across it. Considering the

horse farm, the Rudnick house, the construction of U.S. 13, and the demolition documented in Leppo's photographs, we were really very lucky to find that anything at all survived on the Dawson Site.

After the plowzone had been removed, a grid of points at 5-meter intervals was laid out across the site using a surveyor's transit. These points were used to prepare a detailed map of all the features (Figures 9, 10, and pocket map).

Seeing the fully stripped site was somewhat discouraging. We had particularly hoped to find evidence of the malthouse that we believed had been on the site at one time, but there was no sign of it. Other than the cellar hole, which we had already located, the exposed features were mostly shapeless pits. Some of the pits were very dark and looked as though they might be deep, but a few minutes with a soil probe showed that they were not. Except for the cellar, not one of the features on the site was more than a foot or two



PLATE 8: Demolition of the Rudnick House in the 1980s; Northern Part of the Dawson Site Is in the Foreground

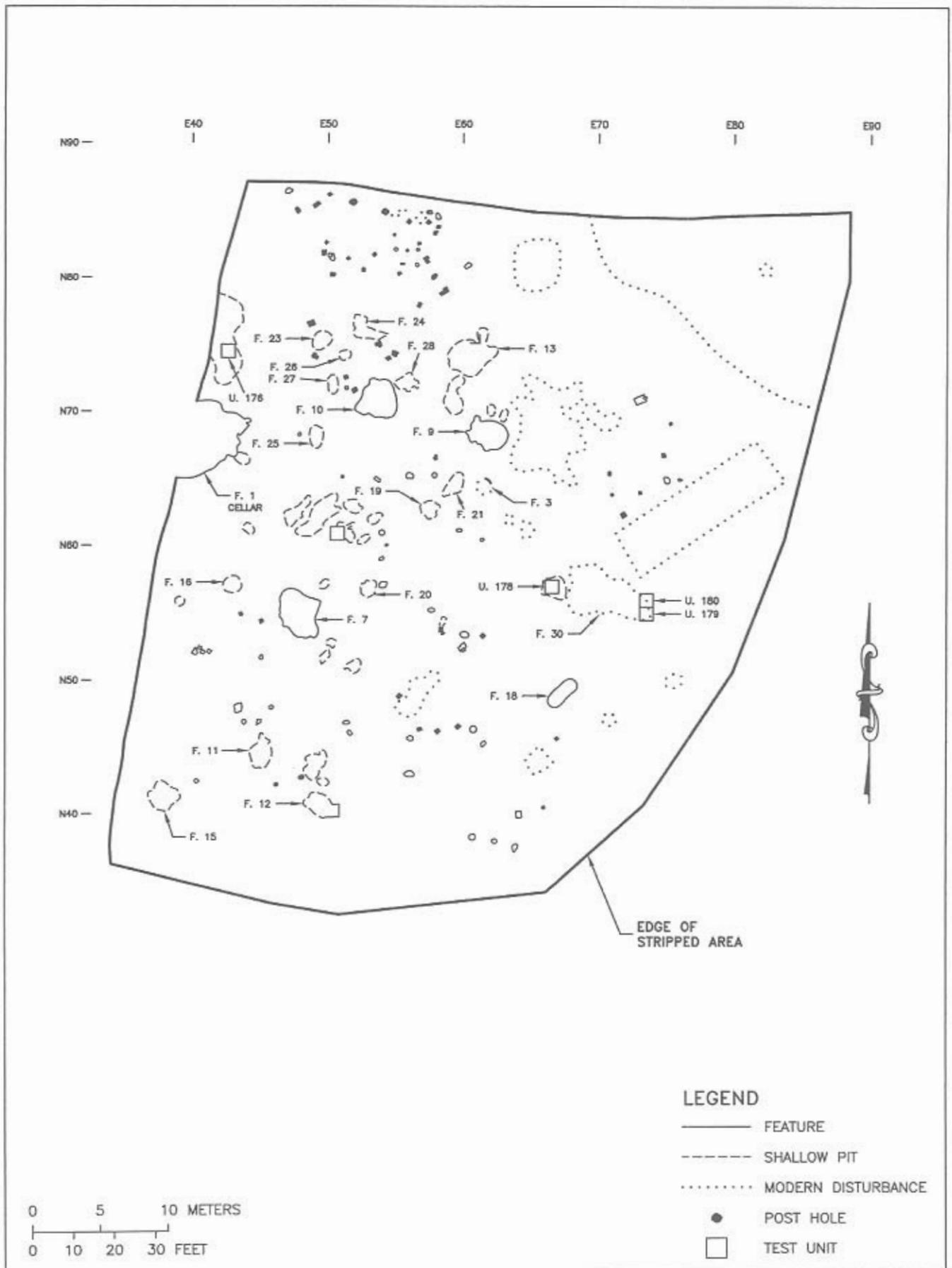


FIGURE 9: Site Plan

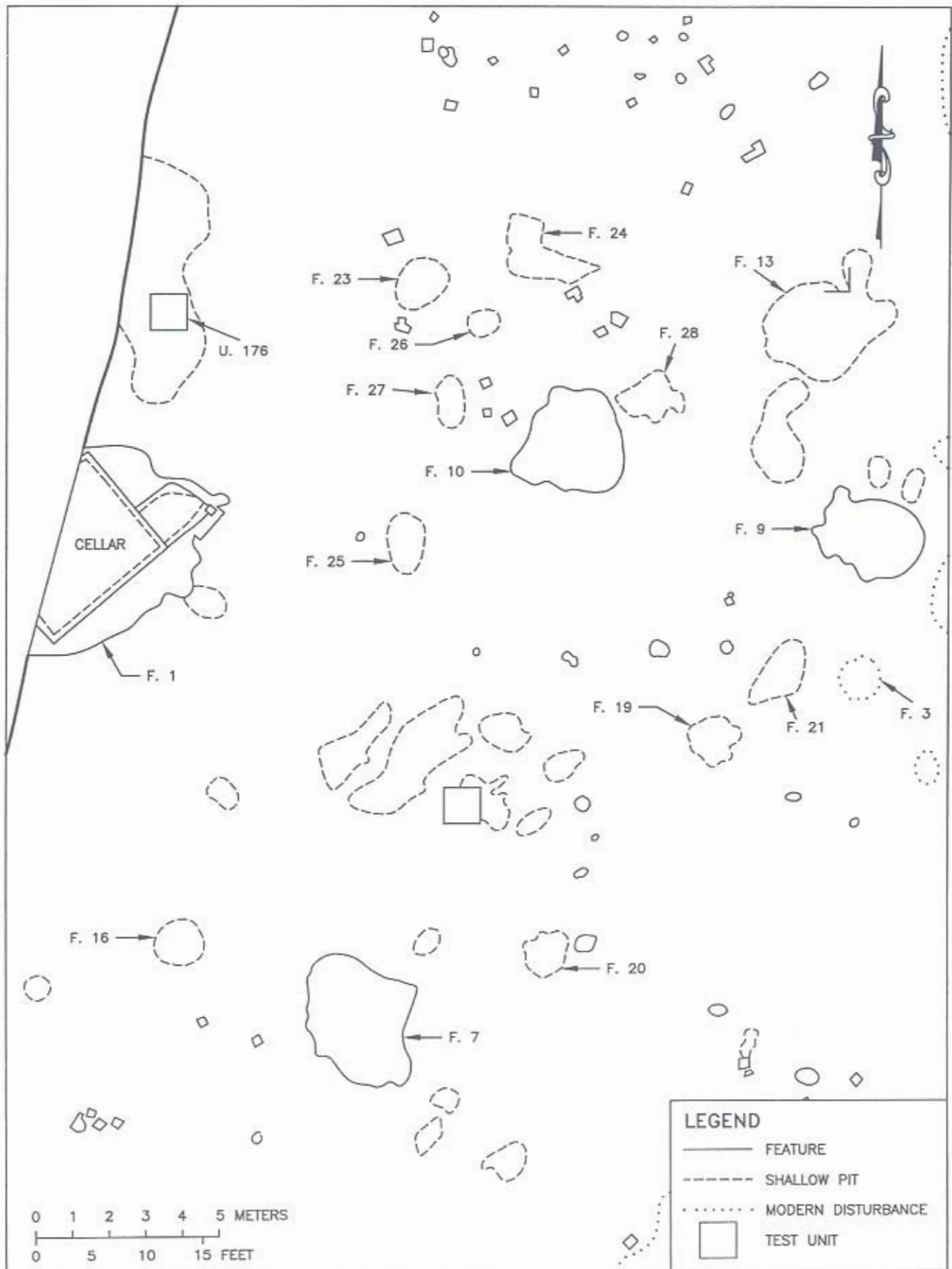


FIGURE 10: Enlarged Plan of the Central Part of the Site

deep. If the Dawsons had a well, it must now be somewhere under U.S. 13. Since we had already dug one unit inside the cellar, without great results, we began to think that we would not find very much at the Dawsons' farm. Once again, we turned out to be wrong.

D. EXCAVATING THE PITS

The majority of the features dating from the colonial period on the site were pits of various sizes. Some were more than 10 feet across, but most were much smaller, and most of them were less than a foot deep. None of the pits appeared to have been created intentionally. Many activities can be the cause of such pits, from falling trees to wallowing pigs, and archaeologists find such pits on most farm sites. All of the pits uncovered at the Dawson Site were excavated completely, which proved to be very rewarding.

We found about 2,800 artifacts and 2,500 pieces of animal bone in the 21 excavated pits.

1. *Feature 7, Tree Hole*

Feature 7 was the largest of the miscellaneous pits on the site. It was located about 35 feet southeast of the cellar (see Figure 10) and measured about 13 by 6.5 feet. We had dug one 1x1-meter unit in this feature during the extended Phase II testing and had found that the feature was about 8 inches deep. The fill contained artifacts and bones, including small fish bones, and even fish scales. The feature was completely excavated during the Phase III work (Figure 11; Plate 9). We discovered that our Phase II test had been excavated in the shallowest part of the feature, and that the northern half was up to two feet deep. The feature contained two layers of soil, an upper layer that was dark and organically rich, and a lower fill layer that resembled mixed subsoil and topsoil.

The shape of the pit was irregular, and the feature appeared to be a tree hole. A large tree may have blown down in the Dawsons' yard, leaving a hole

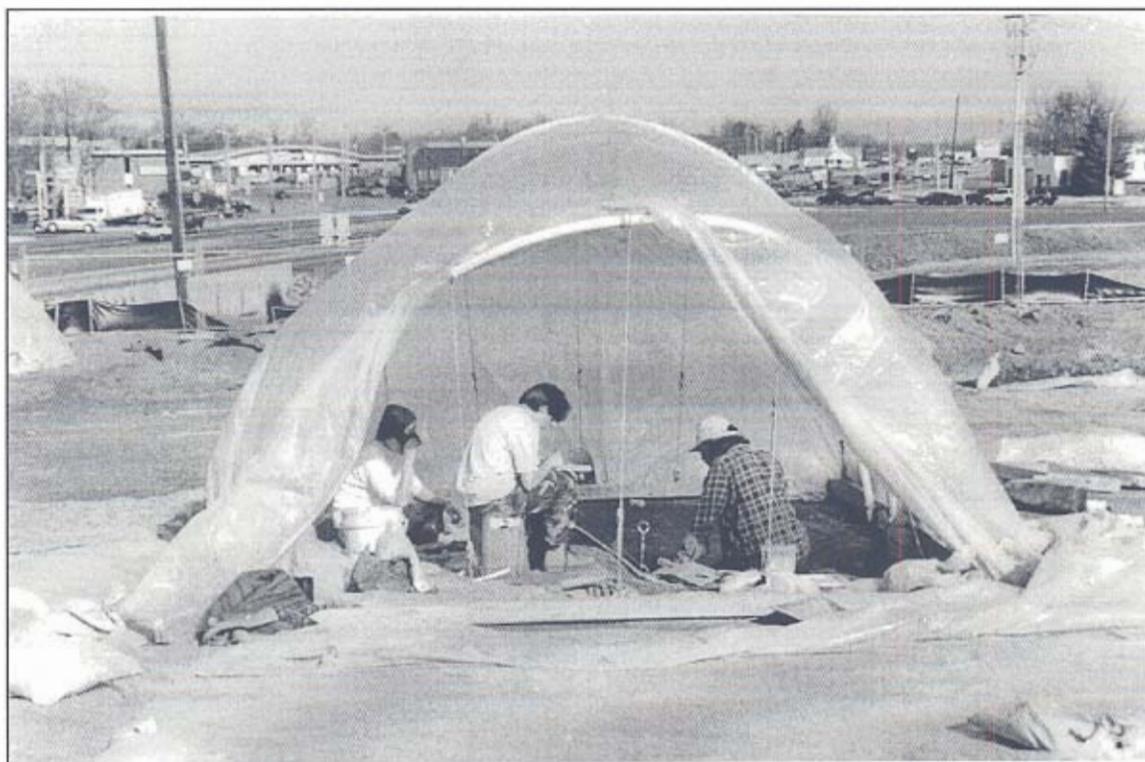


PLATE 9: Excavating Feature 7, a Trash-Filled Tree Hole

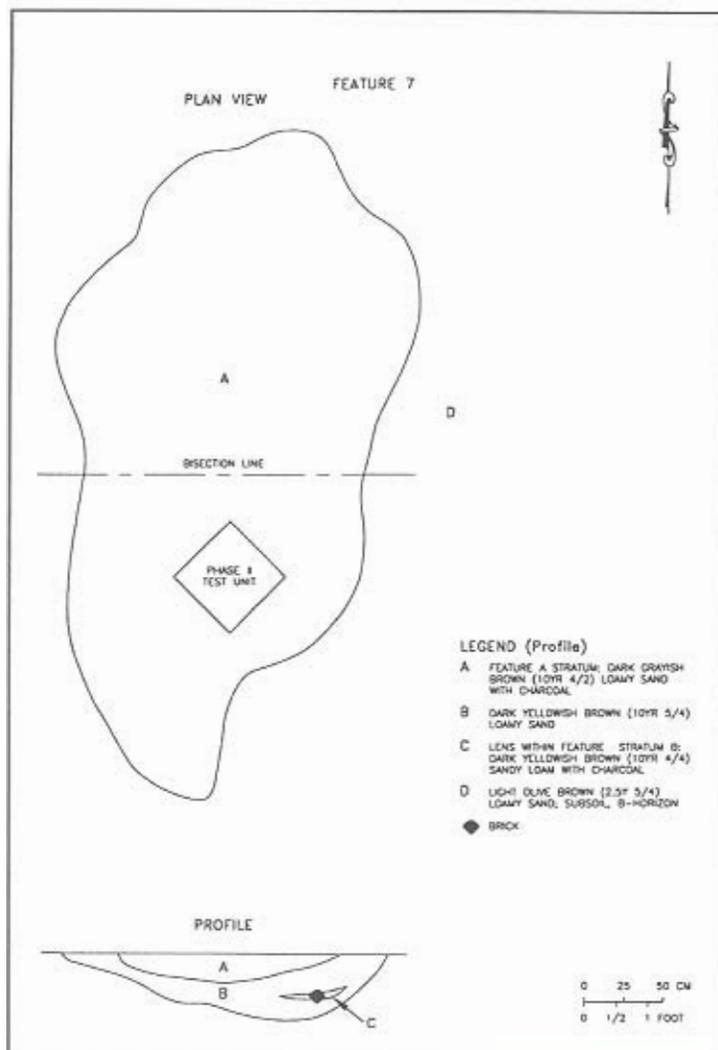


FIGURE 11: Plan and Profile of Feature 7, a Tree Hole Used as a Trash Pit

that was then filled with trash. The artifacts in the pit appeared to date to early in the site's history, before 1760, because they included delftware, combed slipware, and white salt-glazed stoneware, but no creamware. In all, we found about 520 artifacts in the feature, including 260 ceramic sherds, and 1,350 pieces of bone. The artifacts included a 1721 English halfpenny, tobacco pipe fragments with the maker's mark TD, 95 handwrought nails, and several metal objects. Feature 7 contained more bottle glass than any other eighteenth-century feature on the site—65 pieces in all, or more than 12 percent of the total; by comparison, bottle glass made up only 3 percent of the artifacts found in the cellar.

2. Feature 9, Pit

Feature 9 was a pit located 50 feet east of the cellar. We had come upon it during the extended Phase II testing, and a 50x50-centimeter window was excavated in the feature at that time. Because the feature contained a fair amount of brick rubble, we suspected that it might be part of the foundations of a building. However, complete excavation showed that the pit had a very irregular outline, suggesting that it was a tree hole or some other kind of natural disturbance. We did find a moderate quantity of brick rubble throughout the feature, including three whole bricks, so some kind of building with brick foundations (perhaps the missing malthouse) may have stood nearby. The 300 artifacts recovered from the pit included creamware, delftware, white salt-glazed stoneware, combed slipware, and a pair of brass cuff links, as well as more than 50 nails, providing further evidence that a building of some kind had been located in the vicinity. We also found more than 250 bones in the pit, including fish scales and turtle bones.

3. Feature 10, Pit

Feature 10 was a broad, shallow pit a short distance east of the cellar. The plowzone here was thin to nonexistent, so the feature fill was penetrated by grass roots and the upper portion may have been disturbed. The feature fill was also hard and compact, as if trucks had been driven over it. The feature was divided in half and completely excavated. What remained of the feature consisted of ashy brown soil containing nearly 600 artifacts and 400 animal bones. Among the artifacts were more than 300 ceramic sherds. These were mostly pieces of coarse red earthenware and white salt-glazed stoneware (1720-1805), but we did find four pieces of creamware (1762-1820). The other finds included a well-preserved bone-handled fork, a gunflint, some large pieces of scratch-blue stoneware, and smaller fragments of coarse earthenware.

4. Feature 13, Shallow Pit

Feature 13 was a broad but shallow pit, measuring 7 by 10 feet and 11 inches deep. It was about 60 feet east of the cellar, just east of Feature 10. The feature contained nearly 500 artifacts and 190 animal bones, but it had been rather extensively disturbed. Among the artifacts from the pit were pieces of modern bottles, 27 wire nails (post-1850), and 130 pieces of what was probably barbed wire. It also contained a quantity of eighteenth-century ceramics, including a single sherd of creamware, two pipestem fragments, and an eighteenth-century brass button disk.

5. Feature 18, Possible Human Burial Pit

Feature 18 was an oblong pit located in the heavily disturbed southeastern portion of the site (Figure 12; Plate 10). The pit measured 8.3 by 3.3 feet, with the long axis laid out east to west. The fill in the feature consisted of mixed soil closely resembling the surrounding subsoil. The feature appeared to be a grave. When it was excavated, however, no skeletal remains were found. The feature had straight sides and a flat bottom, again like a grave, and it was 14 inches deep. The fill contained a small number of artifacts, all colonial. No buttons or other clothing remains were found, nor any coffin nails. In the bottom of the feature was a very thin layer of brown loam, within which were tiny white flecks that could have been bone fragments. The most likely interpretation of the feature seemed to be that it was a burial, and that the bones had simply been dissolved by the highly acidic soil. However, no evidence of clothing was found, and although eighteenth-century graves were often much less than six feet deep, this feature was still shallow for a grave. It is also possible that it was an unfinished grave or an intended grave that was never actually used. Sherds of creamware (post-1762) were found in the feature, so if it was a grave, it cannot have been Thomas Dawson's.

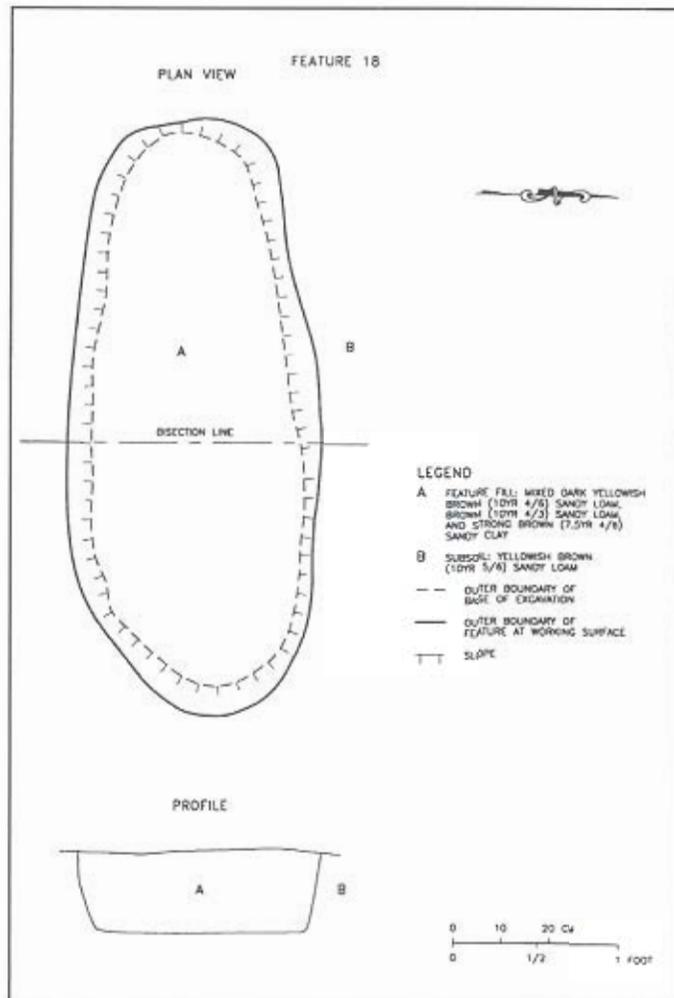


FIGURE 12: Plan and Profile of Feature 18, a Possible Burial

6. Feature 24, Angular Pit

Feature 24 was a pit with a distinct L shape located northeast of Feature 1 (see Figure 10). Because of the clear corner, it was thought that the feature might be the remains of a building foundation. Excavation showed, however, that the floor of the feature was irregular rather than smooth and even as one would expect in a foundation trench. The feature was therefore probably nothing more than a shallow disturbance, one of the many present on the Dawson Family Site.

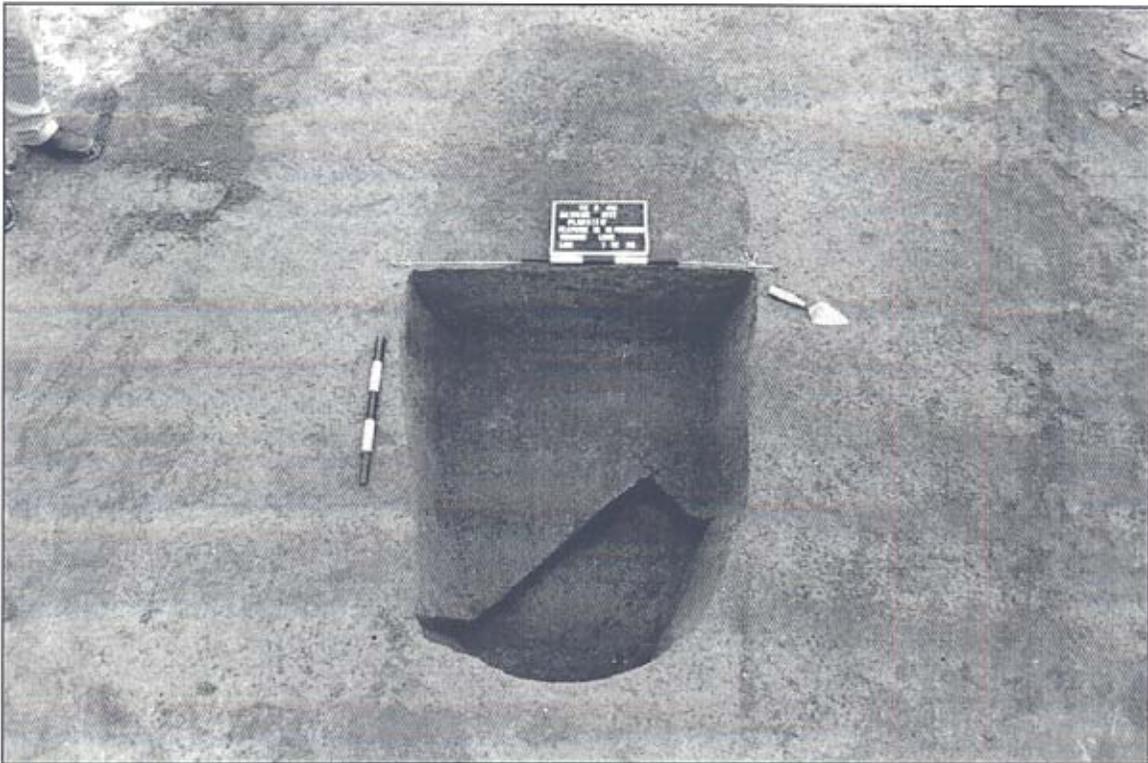


PLATE 10: Feature 18, the Possible Burial Pit

7. *Features 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29, Pits*

Features 11, 12, 15-17, 20-23, and 25-29 were all shallow pits containing eighteenth-century artifacts. Their dimensions and depths are given in Table 4. All of these features were completely excavated. About 1,100 artifacts and 500 animal bones were recovered from these pits. Most of the pits had some degree of modern disturbance, and wire nails or other twentieth-century artifacts were recovered from a majority of them.

8. *Features 8, 14, 30, Modern Disturbances*

Features 8, 14, and 30 were pits that proved, upon testing, to contain mostly modern artifacts. These pits were not completely excavated but were tested by the excavation of single 1x1-meter units.

9. *Posts*

Numerous postholes were noted at the Dawson Site, but they all appeared to be modern. Several

identifiable fences crossed the site, all probably part of the horse farm. At the north end of the site were what appeared to be two small post sheds. As the postholes at this location contained wire nails and other modern material, it seemed likely that they were the remains of sheds built by the Rudnicks behind their twentieth-century house.

E. THE HOUSE CELLAR

1. *Excavating Feature 1, the Cellar*

Feature 1 was a cellar hole located adjacent to U.S. 13, in the center of the site. We believe that it was part of the Dawsons' house, the house shown on the 1745 surveyor's sketch of the property. The cellar extended to the edge of the excavation, which had been taken as close as possible to the edge of the slope along U.S. 13.

Part of the cellar had evidently been destroyed during construction of the highway. The feature was excavated in 1x1-meter units, and within each unit the different layers of fill were excavated as

separate strata. These units were aligned with the orientation of the cellar hole, not the site grid (Figure 13). We eventually dug 17 1x1-meter units and one half unit (50x100 centimeters) in the cellar.

The first excavation made into the cellar had been Phase II Test Unit 81, within Backhoe Trench 4. A clear edge of the feature had been visible running across the trench at an angle of about 30 degrees to the site grid. That test unit had been dug during July, in the middle of a drought. The soil was dried out all the way to the bottom of the cellar, more than four feet below the surface. In bone-dry soil it is difficult to discern subtle soil distinctions, and for a while we had trouble seeing what we were doing. At the bottom of the plowzone it looked as if the feature ran all the way across our backhoe trench, but after we had dug down about a foot, we could see that we were actually on the southeast corner of the cellar (Figure 14). At the top the feature was eroded, and there were places where the surrounding subsoil had slumped into the cellar. Beneath that zone of erosion and slumping the feature had straight sides. Around the boundary of the feature was a layer of gray soil a few inches thick that we at first interpreted as a builder's trench. (A builder's trench is the space between a brick or stone foundation wall and the outside of the cellar hole.) However, as we found hardly any brick or stone in the cellar, certainly no walls, the "builder's trench" left us puzzled. We thought that the cellar had perhaps had wooden walls, now rotted away, held up by posts sunk into the cellar floor. One posthole was present just outside the corner of the cellar. It first became visible more than a foot below the bottom of the plowzone, beneath the slumped, eroded edge of the feature. Since it was underneath the cellar fill, we knew that it was contemporary with the cellar and was not a modern intrusion. However, as it seemed to cut through the "builder's trench," it was slightly

Table 4. List of Features at the Dawson Family Site

Feature Number	Description	Dimensions (feet)	Depth (inches)
1	cellar	13 x 16	48
7	tree hole	8 x 13	24
8	modern disturbance	12 x 13	22
9	possible tree hole	8 x 10	20
10	pit	10 x 10	15
11	pit	6 x 8	8
12	pit	5 x 7	15
13	pit	7 x 10	11
14	modern disturbance	16 x 23	7
15	pit	7 x 9	6
16	pit	4 x 4	4
17	pit	3 x 4	5
18	possible human burial	3 x 8	14
19	pit	4 x 5	11
20	pit	4 x 4	3
21	pit	4 x 8	11
22	pit	2 x 3	3
23	pit	4 x 6	3
24	pit	5 x 9	2
25	pit	4 x 5	12
26	pit	2 x 2	1
27	pit	4 x 4	3
28	rodent disturbance	6 x 5	12
29	pit	6 x 6	6
30	modern disturbance	11 x 23	12

later than the house itself. The posthole was roughly square and not very big, about 10 inches across. It was quite deep, however, and extended to approximately the same depth as the bottom of the main feature.

Inside the "builder's trench" was the main feature fill, which was brown sandy loam to loamy sand. Two clear lenses of darker soil containing oyster shells were visible sloping down toward the center



FIGURE 13: Plan of Excavations in the Cellar

bones in the fill, but all of these objects were small, giving no hint of what we would eventually find in the cellar hole.

One of the first things we did when we went back to finish the excavations was to set up a shelter over the cellar hole. It was made of PVC pipes bent into half circles, each end anchored to a long piece of iron rebar (Plate 11). Ropes held the pipes to one another and to more anchors at either end. The cover was clear plastic, held down by sand bags. The shelter stood up for the whole 10 weeks of the project with very little maintenance.

of the feature. We found a fair number of eighteenth-century artifacts and well-preserved

Once we had protected the cellar, we started excavating more units inside it. The first two



PLATE 11: Excavating the Cellar and Sorting Some of the Artifacts

units, 159 and 160, were intended to form a trench running south to north across the center of the cellar. We thought the south edge of Unit 159 was over the south edge of the cellar, but we were wrong. Whereas on the east side erosion had made the cellar hole look bigger than it was, on the south side the slumping subsoil made it look smaller than its actual size. It took us a couple of weeks to figure out these subsoil lenses and to learn to distinguish them from the intact subsoil outside the feature. When we did figure them out, we found that our attempt to align the units in the cellar with the cellar walls had not been very successful; it probably would have worked just as well to use the regular site grid. We also discovered that the southern boundary was more than a foot beyond the south edge of Unit 159.

Around the interior of all the cellar walls, we found the same deposit we had found in Test Unit 81 and called the builder's trench. When it was thoroughly moistened, we could see that this layer actually consisted of olive gray or grayish brown clay loam mixed with medium brown loam. It was usually about 8 inches thick, thicker than it had been in Test Unit 81, and varied from 8 to 20 inches in height (Figure 15). We continued to find little brick or stone in the cellar, and we found no more postholes, so we were still puzzled as to how the Dawsons' house had been built. The answer became clear when a substantial portion of the "builder's trench" had been excavated. All along the bottom of this layer, lying on the subsoil at the bottom of the cellar, was a layer of medium brown loam that clearly represented the remains of a wooden beam (Plate 12). This beam, which was probably 8 inches wide and about 12 inches thick, once ran all around the cellar. Such a beam would not have been placed at the bottom of a builder's trench. It must have been the sill that supported the structure of the house. What we had been calling the builder's trench was actually the wall itself. That wall had consisted of large beams, now decayed into brown loam, with clay nogging pressed into the spaces between them. The technique is illustrated in Figure 15, which shows the exposed beams on the right and the

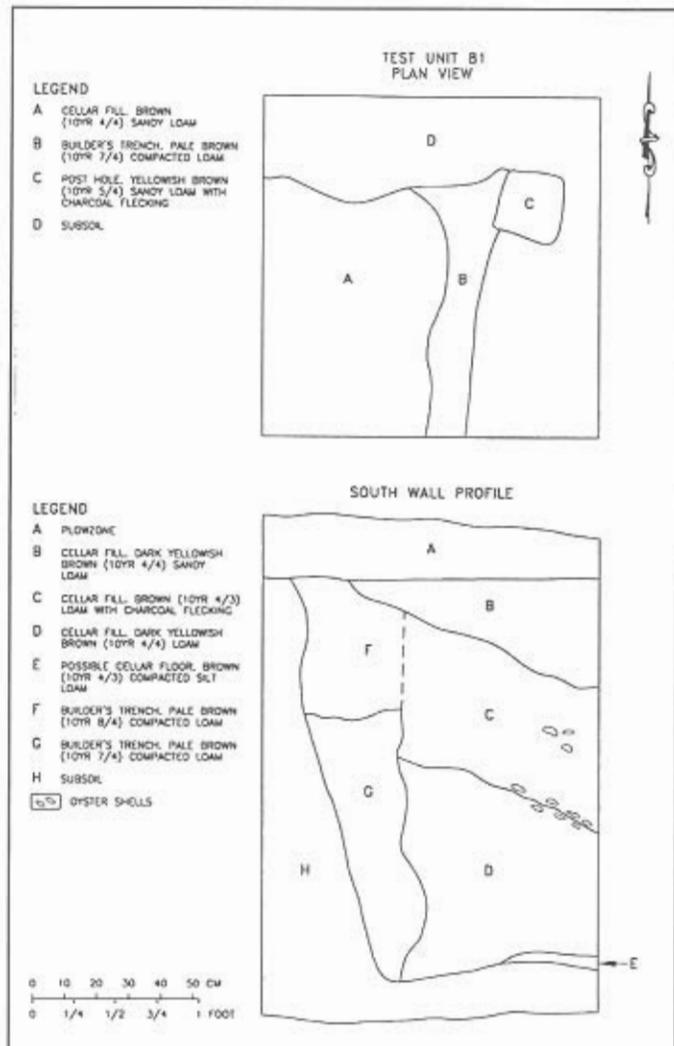


FIGURE 14: Plan and Profile of Test Unit 81, the First Test Excavation in the Cellar

beams and clay nogging on the left. Above the ground, the wall was probably covered in clapboards. It has long been known that colonial builders sometimes erected structures on sills laid directly on the ground, but after 250 years such structures leave little trace, and few have been found.

Test Unit 81 turned out to have been dug, not into the main cellar, but into an extension on the southeast corner. The southeast corner of the main cellar was in Unit 164. The extension was also rather puzzling. We thought at first that it might be a bulkhead entrance, that is, a set of stairs giving access to the cellar from outside the house

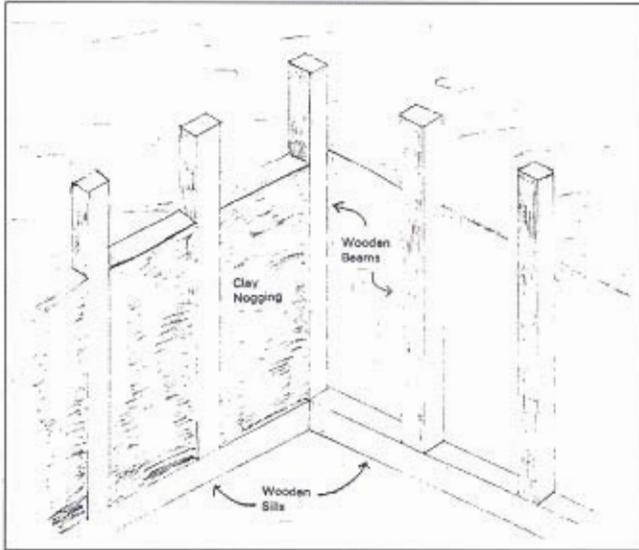


FIGURE 15: Proposed Reconstruction of the Foundations of the Dawson House

However, when we excavated Units 164 and 165, next to Unit 81, we discovered that a thin layer of dark brown soil ran across the floor of the extension. This soil was probably the remains of a wooden floor, and it extended across most of the

addition, at least. This floor had not been noted in Test Unit 81. However, Test Unit 81 had been excavated during a drought, and such a layer would have been very hard to see in the completely dry soil. We suspect that the floor extended all the way across the extension. The extension was probably some sort of storage closet.

We found the southwest corner of the cellar in Test Unit 173, and the cellar proved to measure 13.6 feet east to west, or 13 feet 7 inches. On the west end, just north of the corner, we found a pile of large stones lying against the cellar wall. The stones were up to two feet long, and bits of mortar clinging to them showed that they had once been part of a structure. We believe the stones were the remains of a chimney that stood along the west side of the house. Not enough stones were found to have made a whole chimney, but colonial builders regularly reused stones and bricks from old houses, and the rest of the chimney stones had probably been incorporated into some other house. In the southwest corner we also found

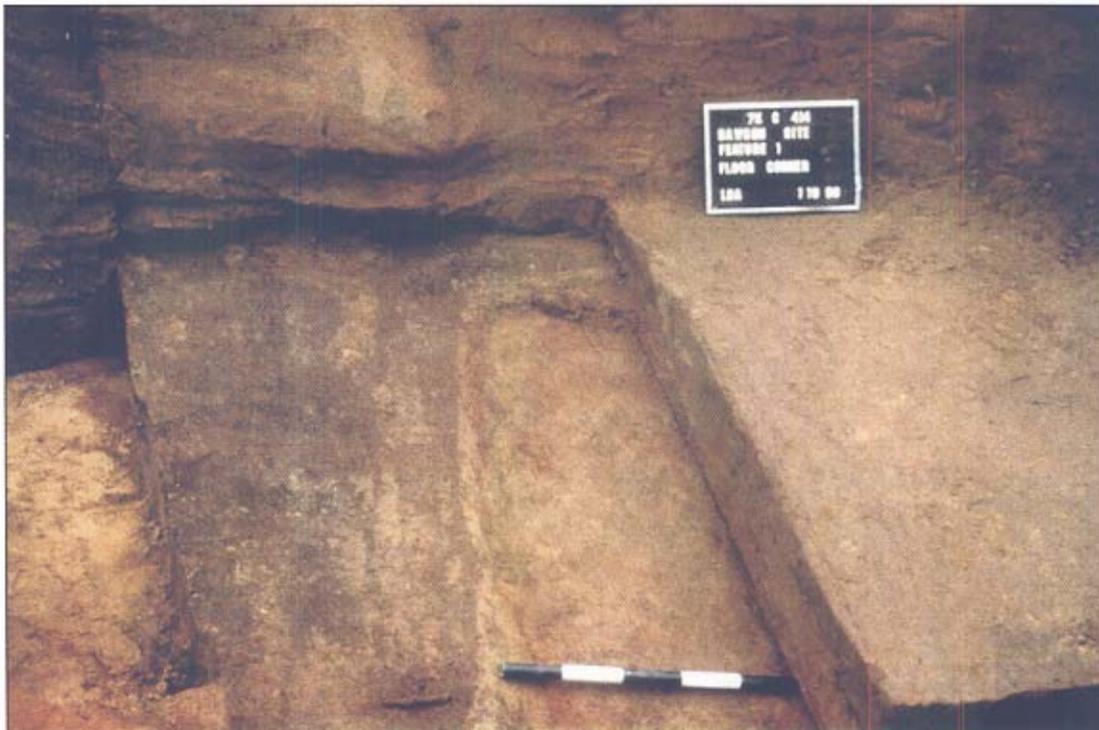


PLATE 12: Remains of the Beam at the Bottom of the Cellar Wall

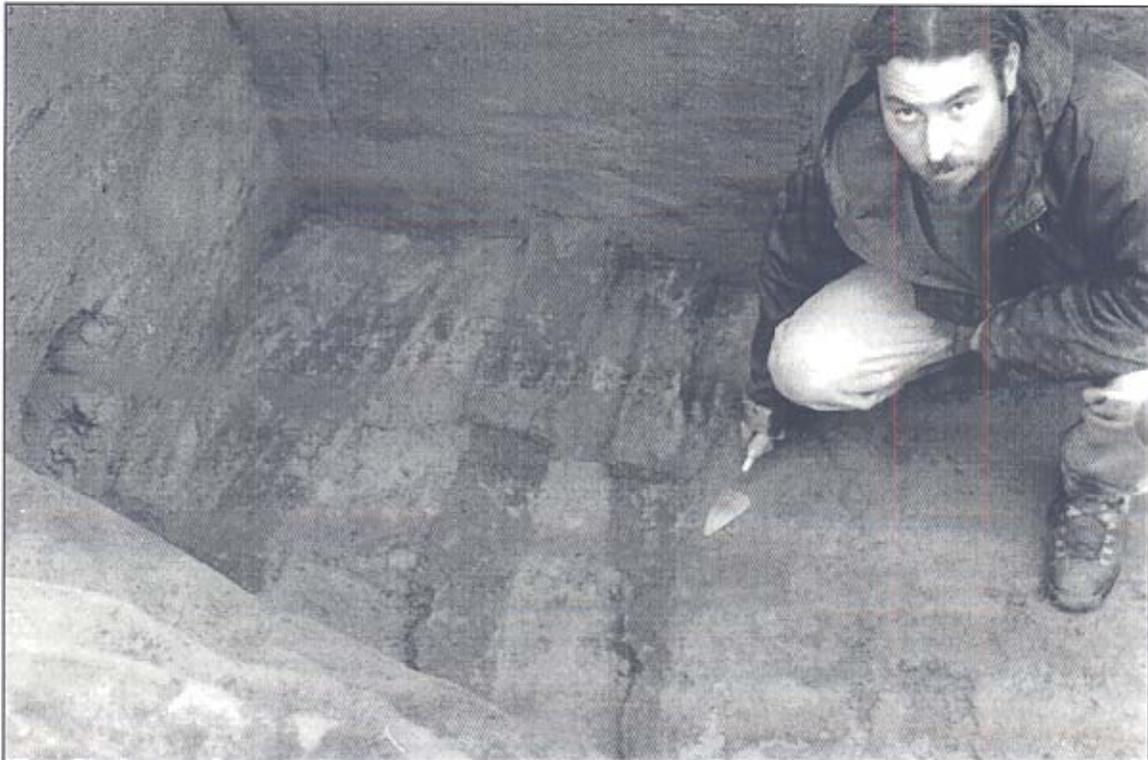


PLATE 13: Stains Left by Sawn Boards on the Cellar Floor

another piece of structural evidence lying on the cellar floor. In the bottom of Test Unit 173 were the clear brown stains left by three boards. The boards were about eight inches wide and less than an inch thick, and their regularity suggested that they had been sawn, not split (Plate 13). They provided a further indication that the house was frame, covered in clapboards, rather than made of logs.

When we had dug all the units we planned to dig in the cellar, we had still not found any sign of the north wall of the cellar. We were beginning to accept the likelihood that we would not be able to determine how large the cellar was. Then, on the last day, after we had removed the shelter and shot the final photographs (Plate 14), we decided to dig just a little bit into the north wall of our excavation to see if we could find the cellar wall. We encountered it within five minutes, just beyond the limits of Test Unit 172. In fact, part of the wall had been inside our excavation, but we had not recognized it. The cellar measured 11.8 feet north to south, or 11 feet 9 inches.

The cellar was about four feet deep and contained five main fills (Figure 16). The top layer, Stratum A, was brown loam essentially identical to the plowzone. Stratum B was actually a group of lenses of fill, each consisting of mixed brown loam and light yellowish brown sandy loam similar to the natural subsoil. Stratum B also contained pockets of soil with a high charcoal content. A large number of artifacts were recovered from this stratum. Stratum C was subsoil that had slumped into the feature from both the east and the north sides. Stratum D was a layer of dark grayish brown soil containing large quantities of ash, oyster shell, and historic artifacts. Stratum F was a nearly sterile layer of sand and silt in the bottom of the cellar that had apparently washed in after the house had been abandoned. Besides finding the northeast corner on the last day, we also made one of our best artifact discoveries. Keith Googins, one of the excavators, saw a tiny piece of metal projecting no more than a quarter of an inch from the west wall of Test Unit 174 and said he thought it looked like part of the striking plate for a gun.



PLATE 14: The Dawson Cellar After Excavation

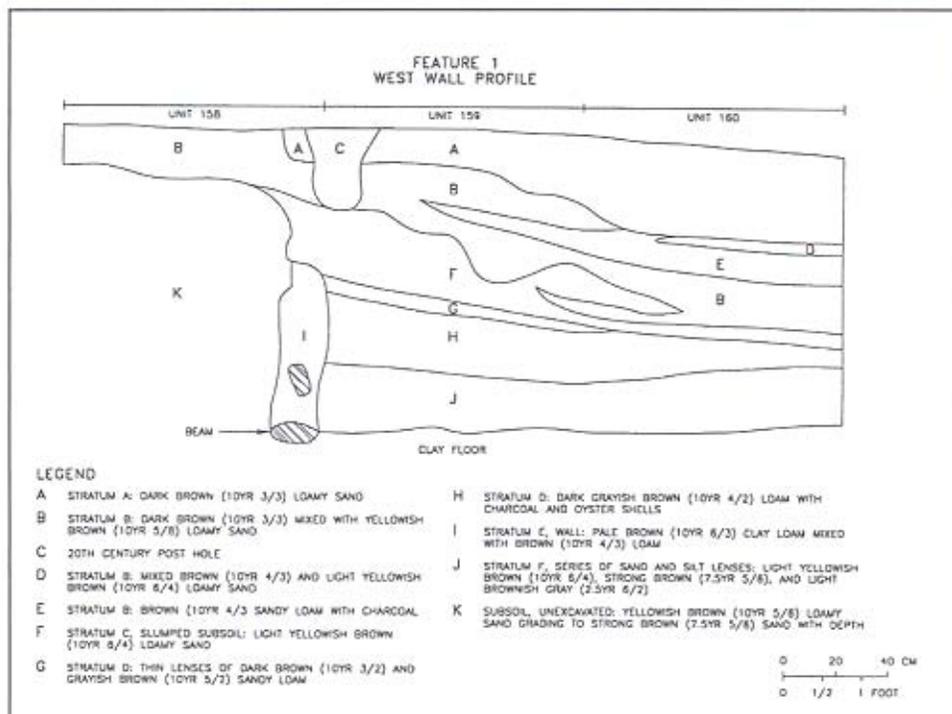


FIGURE 16: Profile of the Cellar Fills

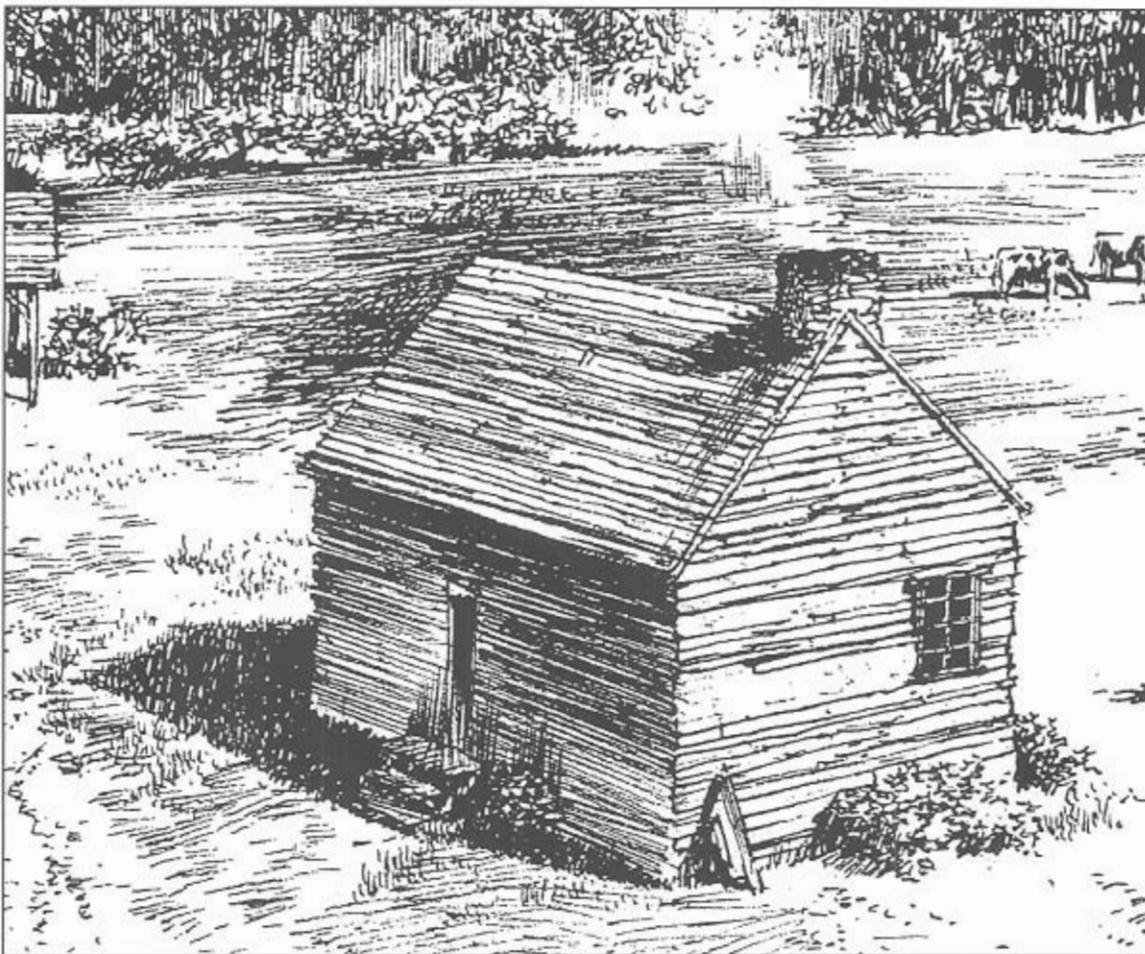


FIGURE 19: Reconstruction of the Dawson House

1981). The tenants who lived on the site after 1756 must have built a new house, probably on the part of the site that has been destroyed by U.S. 13. We found 1,219 hand-wrought nails in the cellar, more good evidence that the house above it was frame. We found only 18 pieces of window glass, a very small number for a historic cellar. The Dawsons' house probably did not have many glass windows, perhaps only one.

2. *Interpreting the House*

What kind of house stood over the Dawsons' cellar? The feature presents many problems of interpretation. First, 11.8 by 13.6 feet seems too small to have been the entire area of the house. Eighteenth-century houses often had only a single room, and these one-room houses were very small

by our standards, but they were still almost always larger than the Dawson cellar. They typically measured 15 to 20 feet square. The first house at the McKean/Cochran Farm, which was built around 1750, measured 15 by 18 feet (Bedell et al. 1998a), and that house was the smallest that has been excavated to date in Delaware. At Bloomsbury, a tenant residence in Kent County occupied from about 1765, the excavators found some evidence of a house measuring about 12 by 20 feet, but even this small house would have been 50 percent larger than the Dawson cellar.

The Dawson cellar actually has one close parallel in Delaware, the confusing house remains unearthed at the John Powell Site (Grettlar et al. 1995). John Powell, who lived in Kent County from about 1690 to 1720, was also an ordinary

farmer. The remains of his house consisted of a group of shallow pits. These pits filled a roughly rectangular area measuring about 15 by 30 feet. Within the pits were dark stains, like those in the bottom of the Dawson cellar, tracing out a rectangle of 10 by 11 feet (Figure 17). These stains were almost certainly the remains of wooden beams used as wall sills. The sills were laid, not in the bottom of a deep cellar, but in a shallow hole no more than a foot deep, perhaps 18 inches before the site was plowed. Otherwise the two structures are quite similar. Just as at the Dawson Site, the sills at the Powell Site define an area too small to be a complete house. At the Powell Site there is some indication of a larger structure, but no good evidence to indicate exactly where or how big the complete house was.

Besides the archaeological remains of the cellar, we have one other aid in reconstructing the Dawsons' house: the small sketch made by the surveyors in 1745. This sketch shows a one-story frame house with a chimney on one end (Figure 18). The end chimney matches the stone rubble we found along the west cellar wall. It seems reasonable to assume that the sketch is approximately accurate, and the combination of

the sketch and the archaeological data allows us to imagine how the Dawsons' house once looked. The house in the surveyor's sketch is distinctly rectangular, and since the cellar hole was more or less square, the sketch provides more evidence that the house had been built with only a partial basement. The archaeology showed that the house was frame, supported by beams that rested on wooden sills. In one half of the house, the sills lay in the bottom of the basement, and in the other half they presumably lay in a shallow trench.

The first floor of the house probably had two rooms, the "hall" and the "parlor." The hearth was in the hall, and it was there that the Dawsons probably cooked, ate, and congregated. Thomas and Mary's bed was probably in the hall as well. The parlor served as a second bedroom and a storage space. The sketch makes the house look rather low, so there was not much of a loft, but there was surely room for a low bed or two. Overall, the house was like most other farmhouses in mid-eighteenth-century Delaware. It was small, at least by our standards, wooden, roughly finished, and not built to last. It is shown reconstructed in Figure 19 as it might have been when the Dawsons lived within its walls.