

5. TALKING BRICKS AND BABBLING BOTTLES

*Detailed analysis of artifacts
from the site provided details
about the lives of its former occupants.*

Gross analysis of surface-collected artifacts identified at least three distinct activity areas, one of which was the probable Nathan Williams site between 850 and 1000 feet along the base line (Figure 9). This area contains the highest elevation of the property. This was the same area where the first survey identified an apparent line of early artifacts east of the road.

Concentration of bricks at the north end of the site could be identified as the pulverized remains of the chimney to the Williams house. Because of their probable association with the house, the bricks received special scrutiny.

Between 600 and 700 feet was a smaller concentration. The materials here consisted of a sparse scattering of the earlier materials found on the north end.

The other artifact concentration appeared south of 400 feet. The materials here were distinctly newer.

The driveway is identified as the remanant a cart road, shown by Beers, that served the property before the present McKee Road was opened. Nathan Williams' house apparently faced this road.

The Delaware State Museums accession number is 97.28. Artifacts are catalogued from the surface survey in terms of the base line. Each ten-foot increment along the line was staked, and in some cases the surface collection was as much as four ten-foot squares wide, numbered 0 to 3. Thus an artifact labelled 97.28.640.3 would be from the unit beginning at 640 on the base line, and the fourth unit to the east. For purposes of discussing distributions, only the distance along the line is given.

PROBABLE WILLIAMS BRICKS

The brick collection consists entirely of country bricks, mostly overfired or other kinds of wasters. Such bricks would commonly be found during the eighteenth century in the neighborhood of brick clamps. Only the two-inch (thickness) dimension survived on any of the samples. Presence of a

Surface Collected Brickbat Analysis	
<i>Surviving Unit Dimension(s)</i>	<i>Comments and Finish</i>
900.3.....2"	Handmade, hard fired grey
930.....	Handmade, glazed, dark red
930.1.....2"	Handmade, hard fired grey
950.....1.5"	Handmade, hard fired, dark red
950.....	Very soft salmon, no finish
960.....	Handmade, dark red, glazed
960.1.....2"	Handmade, glazed salmon
960.1.....	Very hard, no surface, grey
970.....	Handmade, dark red
980.....	Handmade, dark grey
990.....2"	Handmade blue glazed voussoir
990.1.....	Handmade, overfired, sand finish

voussoir indicates a level of refinement above the ordinary.

If this brick collection were found without accompanying artifacts, on an undocumented site, the obvious conclusion would be that it was an eighteenth-century context, related to construction of a building with some architectural refinement.

However, since all the bricks were rejects, it is more logical to conclude that this site's occupants were salvaging bricks from an old clamp. Most likely this clamp was very near, also on the Loockerman property. There are several patches of Fallsington soil, which could contain brick clay, nearby, including the woods immediately to the east.

Fallsington soils are likely to have contained brickmaking sites. The two nearest brickyards shown on the 1868 Beers *Atlas* were on Fallsington soils, east of the main road, now Route 13.

DOMESTIC ARTIFACTS

Early artifacts on the site included a white clay bit-end pipe stem fragment with a 6/64" bore diameter. This fragment was found in the midst of the supposed house site, at unit 970.2. A single pipestem, especially a bit end, is no indicator of age, but stems of this bore diameter generally were made before the middle of the eighteenth century. Bit-ends sometimes are somewhat larger in bore diameter than the internal diameter, which degrades their usefulness as measures of date. In any case, the pipestem belongs to a period before the time of Nathan Williams.

Nineteenth-century glass remains on this part of the site included a piece of a clear panelled bottle in unit 950.2 with the raised letters "SYR" surviving, probably from the word "syrup," in an

indented panel. After the middle of the nineteenth century such panel bottles were the common container for medical liquids.

All the utilitarian wares in this area of the site were red earthenwares. One sherd was covered in a brown clear glaze, with a trail of white slip. The rest of the red earthenwares with surviving glaze was black-glazed.

Refined wares from this part of the site included a white vessel with brown transfer printed decoration. All the materials in this range were produced after the "pearlware" period at the beginning of the nineteenth century (i.e., mid-century).

Just to the south, between 800 and 900 feet, the artifacts were less numerous and there were fewer features. All the brickbats with identifiable surfaces were from handmade bricks, and were predominantly overfired.

Bottle glass in this area included some identifiable pieces. An aqua Rumford baking powder bottle finish was the only marked piece in this group (870). A fragment of a thick dark green (black in reflected light) wine bottle appears to be from a cylindrical vessel (840).

A grey saltglaze vessel fragment

Surface Collected Brickbat Analysis	
<i>Surviving Unit</i>	<i>Comments and Dimension(s) Finish</i>
800.2.....	Hard grey, overfired
800.3.....	Dark red, very hard, with pebbles
820.3.....	Handmade, grey, overfired
820.3.....	Handmade red, sandy black glaze
840.2.....2"	Handmade, grey & red, blue glaze

exhibited a nearly black smooth interior glaze (890.1). American-made utilitarian stonewares of the nineteenth century were frequently dark glazed on the inside.

The only button was a four-hole white ceramic specimen (840.3). There was a plain pearlware sherd (830), apparently from a fairly thin vessel. Another piece of pearlware was polychrome decorated (850), typical of the early nineteenth century.

These remains are consistent with a middle nineteenth-century house site, occupied during the period when sketch maps show a house in this vicinity.

FEATURE AT 990 FEET

The only feature on the site to yield a significant collection of artifacts was an irregular pit at about 990 feet. The materials in this pit appeared to be a secondary deposit, since there were no large fragments of vessels.

Materials in the feature included some coal, some clinker, cut nails, and brick fragments. There was some delicately printed white earthenware and a sherd from a thick black-glazed

red earthenware vessel. There was a small white milk glass button and some purple sponged white earthenware.

While the feature is not clearly twentieth-century, its contents apparently represent yard trash accidentally buried during an operation that probably was the planting of a tree. The later materials in this pit indicate that the yard was occupied late into the nineteenth century, which is consistent with the duHamel survey evidence (figure 5) that shows a house here in 1882.

MINOR CONCENTRATION

Between 700 and 800 feet along the line, there was a small concentration of gross artifact count. Most of the material was black-glazed red earthenware, oyster shells, and bricks.

This may be an outlying element of a site, but there was no particular evidence of a structure. It is near enough, and similar in content, to classify it as part of the Williams toft site.

UNSTRATIFIED

Among the unstratified materials are two categories that have nothing whatever to do with the site's history. First of these categories are the roadside clutter, or litter. Whenever these were found during the surface collection, they were silently discarded and ignored. Some of the materials in the collection, of course, could be unrecognized roadside litter. Of course, it could be argued that litterbuggery of the roadside is a human activity and therefore worthy of documentation. We do not choose to follow that line of reasoning.

More significant is the manuring spread that is expected on any site

Surface Collected Brickbat Analysis		
<i>Unit</i>	<i>Surviving Dimension(s)</i>	<i>Comments and Finish</i>
700.2.....		Overfired, black, no glaze
710.....		Salmon, no finish surviving
720.2.....		Overfired, dark red, glaze one face
740.3.....		Overfired, dark red, no surfaces
760.....		Salmon, no finish surviving
760.3.....	2"	Overfired glaze two faces, dark red
780.3.....	2"	Overfired, dark red, no glaze
790.....		Salmon, no finish surviving



Plate 8

Jimi Ale sets the stakes along the edge of the field to mark units for the surface collection.

owned by scientifically-oriented farmers. This property did not come into such hands until mid-century, but there was plenty of material that could be attributed to manuring. Most prominent among these materials will be coal and clinker, which were used to lighten clay soils.

The most interesting artifacts, according to archaeological folklore, always are found without context. In the "general surface" bags were examples of shell-edged pearlware, annular wares, and many refined white earthenwares. These materials indicate that a house here was occupied during the early years of the nineteenth

century, and that fine English china was being used, possibly second-hand.

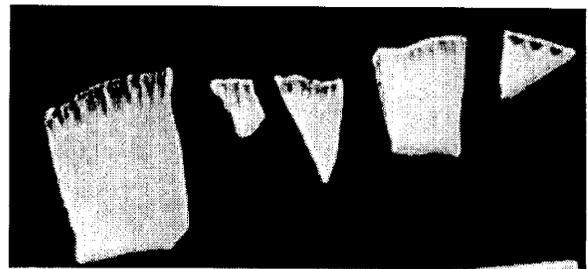


Plate 9

Shell edged pearlware found on the site reflects a wide date range for this material.