

VI. ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDINGS: SITE 7K-C-394

Site 7K-C-394, the Alexander Laws Farm, is a nineteenth- and twentieth-century farmstead. A house and barn were still standing on the site in 1968, when aerial photographs were taken for the Kent County Planning Commission, and the foundations of the barn were still visible at the time of the Phase I survey in 1990. The foundations were subsequently destroyed, and the entire site was plowed.

A. Previous Work

Site 7K-C-394 was discovered during a Phase I survey carried out by UDCAR in 1990. A total of 48 shovel test pits were excavated at 20- and 40-foot intervals in the location of the historic house. The tested area measured approximately 300x300 feet, and its northern edge was approximately 150 feet south of the barn foundation. The shovel testing located an area of high artifact density, yielding from 15 to 57 artifacts per shovel test, not far from the projected house location. No evidence of the house foundations was discovered, but one feature was located. The feature consisted of a shallow (0.4-foot) layer of highly organic, artifact-rich silty loam between the plowzone and sterile subsoil.

Artifacts recovered from the site were typical of late nineteenth- and twentieth-century domestic sites. The finds included sherds of whiteware, ironstone, yellowware, and American or English porcelain, mold-blown and machine-made bottle glass, wire and cut nails, coal, window glass, and brick. Numerous white milk glass canning jar seals and fragments of Mason and Ball canning jars were also recovered. Only three shovel tests yielded cultural material from below the plowzone.

B. Phase II Testing

Shovel Testing

A total of 65 shovel test pits were excavated at the Alexander Laws Farm Site during the Phase II investigations in order to further refine the boundaries of the site (Figure 7). The shovel testing showed that the greatest concentration of artifacts from the site, and architectural material in particular, was approximately 200 feet southeast of the barn foundation (Figure 8). The artifacts recovered from this location, almost all from the plowzone, include brick, window glass, cut and wire nails, and domestic refuse such as ceramics and bottle glass. In this regard the Phase II testing duplicated the findings of the Phase I survey. It was initially assumed that this artifact concentration represented the location of the house. However, this is not the location of the house shown on the 1968 aerial photographs of the site, taken by the Kent County Planning Department, or on the older USGS maps (see Figure 6). These documents show the dwelling to be located approximately 100 feet grid south of the barn, on the south side of a two-track lane

which served as the driveway to the house complex. Shovel tests in this location recovered only moderate numbers of artifacts. Unit excavations within the artifact concentration located several postholes, suggesting that the area was a barnyard, not a house site. The most likely explanation for the discrepancy is that the house was demolished with a bulldozer and the debris shoved around the site. The area of highest artifact density represents not the original location of the house but the place where trucks were loaded to haul away its remains. The small size of the high-density artifact concentration, approximately 40x80 feet, supports this hypothesis.

The additional shovel testing performed by LBA also further refined the artifact distribution north, east, and south of the house location. As a result of this effort, two minor artifact concentrations were defined which are peripheral to the artifact concentration associated with the main dwelling. These smaller clusters were initially thought to be possible outbuilding locations, but they were subsequently shown to be secondary deposits relating to demolition.

A field scatter consisting primarily of modern architectural artifacts was noted extending to the northeast of the main concentration and was tested with Shovel Test Pits (STPs) 19 to 36. The 1968 aerial photograph of the site shows that this area was then in a plowed field, as it is also shown to be on all the USGS maps, so it is unlikely that a modern structure ever stood at this location. There was also no archaeological evidence to suggest the presence of structures. This concentration was also interpreted as being the result of house or barn demolition.

On the south perimeter of the site, the shovel test grid was expanded in order to determine if prehistoric deposits relating to Site 7K-C-396 overlapped with the historic artifact concentrations on Site 7K-C-394. Only a few prehistoric artifacts were recovered.

Test Unit Excavation

After the completion of the supplemental shovel testing program, unit excavation was carried out to investigate areas of interest, especially areas of high artifact density, and to recover a sample of artifacts for analysis (Figure 9). The test units confirmed the artifact distribution pattern noted in the shovel tests. Artifact counts of more than 500 were recorded for Test Units 9 and 21, in the center of the high-density area.

The stratigraphy in the center of the site was different from that on the periphery. On the periphery the soil consisted essentially of a plowzone over sterile, light yellowish brown silt subsoil. In the center of the site, however, the stratigraphy was more complex. Between the recent plowzone and the subsoil was a B stratum of compact silt loam, brown to olive brown, with some subsoil mottling (Figure 10). Few artifacts were recovered from this stratum, none in most units. This B stratum appeared to be identical to the "feature" noted in the same area by the Phase I investigators. In Test Unit 4, a plow scar was noted in the bottom of this B

stratum, intruding the subsoil. The B stratum appears to be an older plowzone. The field had certainly been plowed when the house was built in the 1850s. In some parts of the yard, soil built up during the occupation of the house, so that after the house was destroyed the plow did not reach to the bottom of the old plowzone, leaving a remnant stratum. Since this older plowzone predates the main occupation of the site, it contains few artifacts.

Test Units 24, 25, and 26 were excavated toward the southern end of the site, where shovel tests had detected a thin scatter of prehistoric artifacts. However, only three prehistoric artifacts were recovered from these test units, all from the plowzone. One chert flake and a projectile point resembling the Brewerton side-notched type were recovered from Test Unit 24, and one chert flake was recovered from Test Unit 25. These units did locate large quantities of brick and concrete rubble, more than 200 pieces from Test Unit 24 and more than 20 gallons from Test Unit 25. The large quantities of rubble recovered from these peripheral units is further evidence that structures on the site were demolished with heavy machinery; some of the rubble was then bulldozed into the woods around the edge of the field.

Feature Excavations

Fourteen features were discovered and excavated on the site. Features 10 and 11 were natural. Seven of the features, Features 2, 5, 6, 8, 13, 14, and 15 were postholes with visible post stains. Three further features, Features 3, 4, and 7, were pits similar in size and appearance to these postholes, but without visible post stains; they are also interpreted to be postholes.

Test Units 2, 5, 6, and 7, which formed a 6x6-foot block southwest of the main artifact concentration, located a concentration of five features, all probably postholes (Figures 11 and 12). Feature 2 was the largest, a roughly rectangular pit measuring 2.5x2 feet, with sloping sides and a flat bottom 1.2 feet below the bottom of the plowzone. The fill in Feature 2 and all the other postholes consisted of mixed subsoil and plowzone. A round hole near the center of Feature 2, one foot across, was filled with slumped plowzone, indicating that the soil had been disturbed when the post was removed. Below this disturbance was a true post mold 0.5 feet in diameter (see Figure 12). Feature 3 extended only half a foot into Test Unit 2 and was only partially excavated. The excavated portion closely resembled Feature 2, although no mold was visible. Feature 5 was a rectangular, straight-sided pit, measuring 1x0.75 feet, 1.2 feet in depth, with a distinct post mold 0.4 feet in diameter. Feature 6, which was immediately adjacent to Feature 5 and cut through a portion of Feature 2, was an oblong, straight-sided pit measuring 1.5 by 1.2 feet, 1.5 feet in depth, with a square post mold 0.4 feet across. Feature 7 was a rectangular, straight-sided pit, one foot in depth, resembling the nearby features but without a visible post mold. None of these features yielded many artifacts. All of the postholes were dug with a shovel rather than posthole diggers, which suggests that they date to the nineteenth century.

Feature 4 was a square or rectangular pit located south of the dwelling concentration in STP 4 and Test Units 4 and 8 (Figure 13). The feature measured 2.8 feet in length; since the feature was only partially excavated, its width is not known. It had straight sides and was 1.2 feet in depth. The fill was mottled brown loam and brownish yellow silty sand, similar to that of the postholes found on the site. The feature cut through the remnant older plowzone present in Test Unit 4. Although no post mold was exposed, the feature was probably a posthole.

Feature 8 was a posthole located in Test Units 11 and 13, within the main artifact concentration. The feature was roughly round, 1.3 feet in diameter, with sloping sides and a depth of 0.7 feet (Figure 14). A square post mold 0.4 feet on each side was located near the center. The feature fill was mottled plowzone and subsoil.

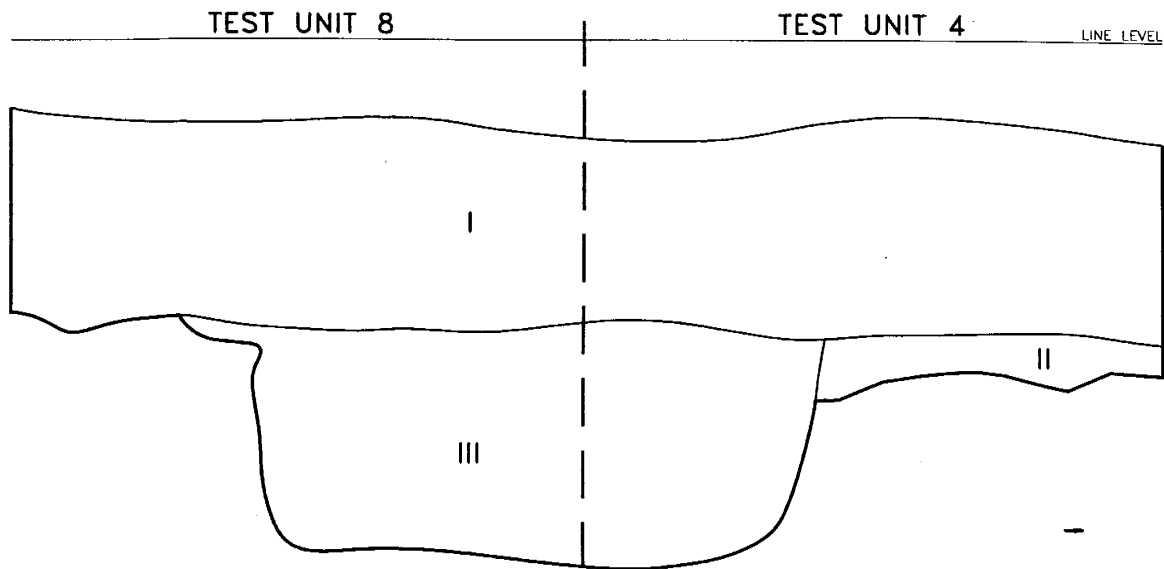
Feature 9 was a small ditch, filled with sand, located in Test Units 16, 17, and 22, just north of the main artifact concentration. The ditch was 2.4 feet in width and 0.7 feet in depth, with sloping sides (Figure 15). The ditch appeared to be a field drain. Feature 9 cuts through Feature 12, an uneven pit at least five feet across and one foot deep. The fill in Feature 12 was mottled and contained quantities of brick fragments and coal and several historic artifacts. The function of the feature is not known, but it appears to have been filled with destruction debris toward the end of the site's occupation.

Feature 13 was a posthole located in Test Unit 23. The feature extended beyond the test unit and was only partially excavated. The feature was 1.1 feet long, at least 0.9 feet wide, and 2 feet deep. The fill was mottled subsoil and plowzone, with a square post mold 0.5 feet across in the center. The feature cuts through the remnant older plowzone. Since this posthole was round and rather small it was probably excavated with posthole diggers, suggesting that it is more recent than the shovel-dug postholes in Units 2, 5, 6, and 7.

Features 14 and 15 were postholes located in Test Unit 20, within the main artifact concentration. Feature 14 was only partially excavated, but with its visible square corner and mottled fill it closely resembles the other postholes on the site. Feature 15 was roughly round, 1 foot across, 1.5 feet deep, with mottled fill and a square post mold 0.4 feet on each side. Feature 15 appeared to have been excavated with posthole diggers.

No patterns were discernible in the distribution of the postholes discovered, and they appeared to have been excavated at different times. Features 13 and 15 appeared to have been excavated with posthole diggers, while the others appeared to have been excavated with shovels. Feature 6 cuts through Feature 2, proving that it is of later date. The concentration of postholes in this area suggests that it was part of a barnyard where fences were used to direct the movements of animals.

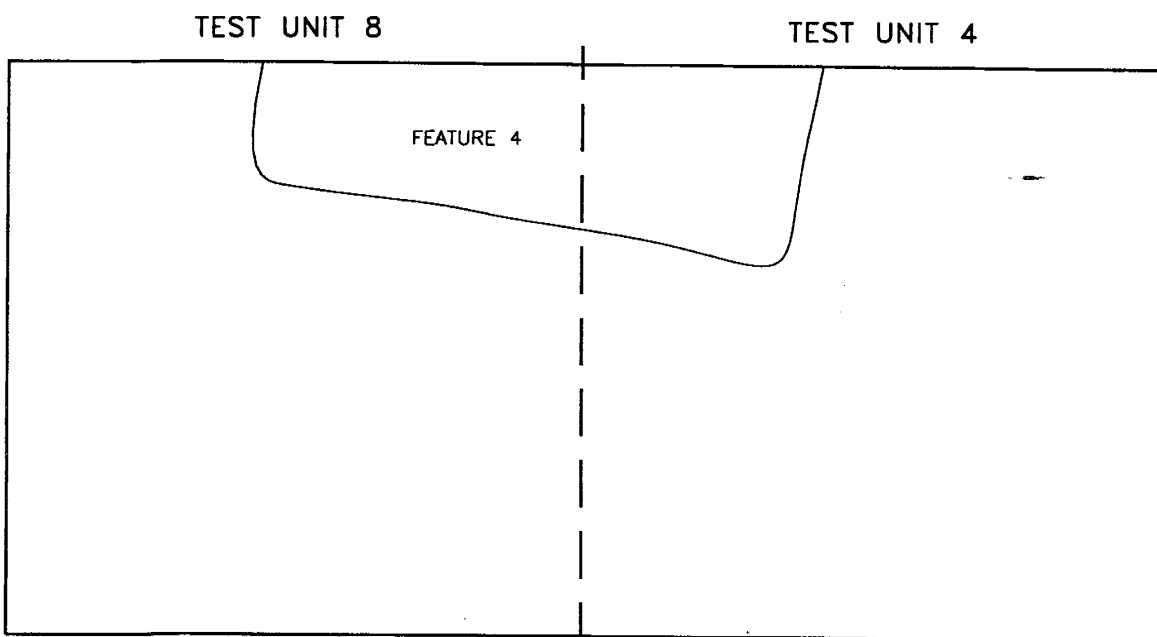
NORTH WALL PROFILE
TEST UNITS 4 AND 8



LEGEND

- I PLOWZONE: 10YR 4/2 GRAYISH BROWN LOAM GRADING TO 2.5Y 4/4 OLIVE BROWN SILTY LOAM
- II TRUNCATED OLDER A_p -HORIZON: 2.5Y 5/4 LIGHT OLIVE BROWN COMPACT LOAMY SILT MOTTLED WITH 2.5Y 5/6 LIGHT OLIVE BROWN COMPACT LOAMY SILT AND 10YR 6/8 BROWNISH YELLOW LOAMY SILT
- III FEATURE 4: 2.5Y 4/4 OLIVE BROWN SILTY LOAM MOTTLED WITH 10YR 6/8 BROWNISH YELLOW SILTY SAND AND 10YR 6/2 LIGHT BROWNISH GRAY SILTY LOAM AND 2.5Y 6/6 OLIVE YELLOW SILTY LOAM WITH A SMALL AMOUNT OF CHARCOAL

PLANVIEW

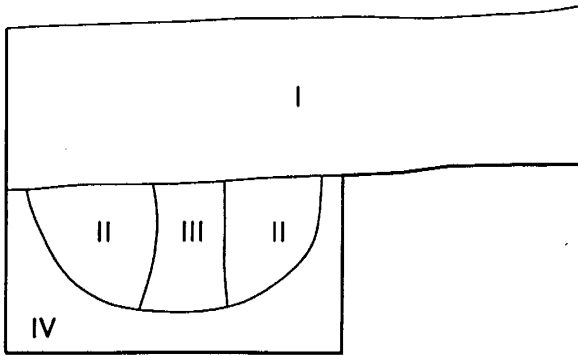


0 1/2 1 FOOT



FIGURE 13: Plan and Profile of Test Units 4 and 8 and Feature 4, Site 7K-C-394

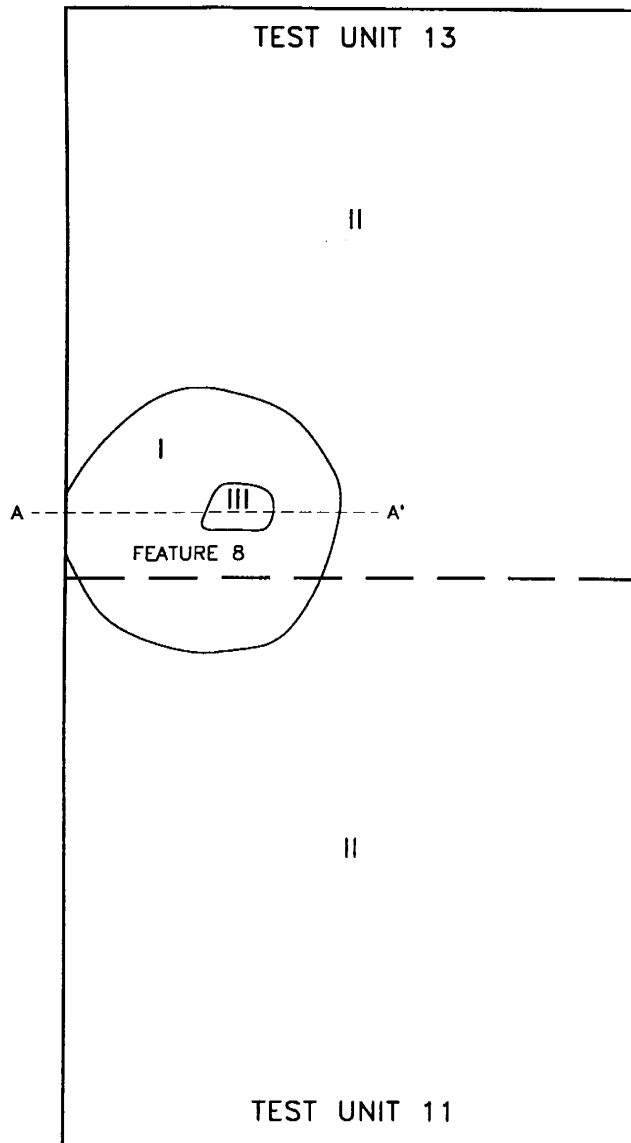
NORTH WALL PROFILE
TEST UNIT 13



LEGEND

- I PLOWZONE: 10YR 4/3 BROWN LOAM
- II POSTHOLE FILL: 10YR 5/3 LIGHT BROWN CLAY SAND MOTTLED WITH 10YR 6/4 LIGHT YELLOWISH BROWN CLAY LOAM
- III POSTMOLD: 10YR 7/2 LIGHT GRAY ASHY SAND MIXED WITH 10YR 4/2 DARK GRAYISH BROWN SAND AT BASE
- IV SUBSOIL: 10YR 6/4 LIGHT YELLOWISH BROWN COMPACT CLAY SAND

PLANVIEW



LEGEND

- I 2.5Y LIGHT OLIVE BROWN LIGHTLY MOTTLED WITH 2.5Y 6/4 LIGHT YELLOWISH BROWN CLAY SAND WITH CHARCOAL SPECKING
- II 2.5Y 6/4 LIGHT YELLOWISH BROWN CLAYEY SAND
- III MOTTLED 2.5Y 7/1 AND 7/2 LIGHT GRAY CLAYEY SAND

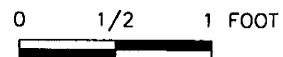
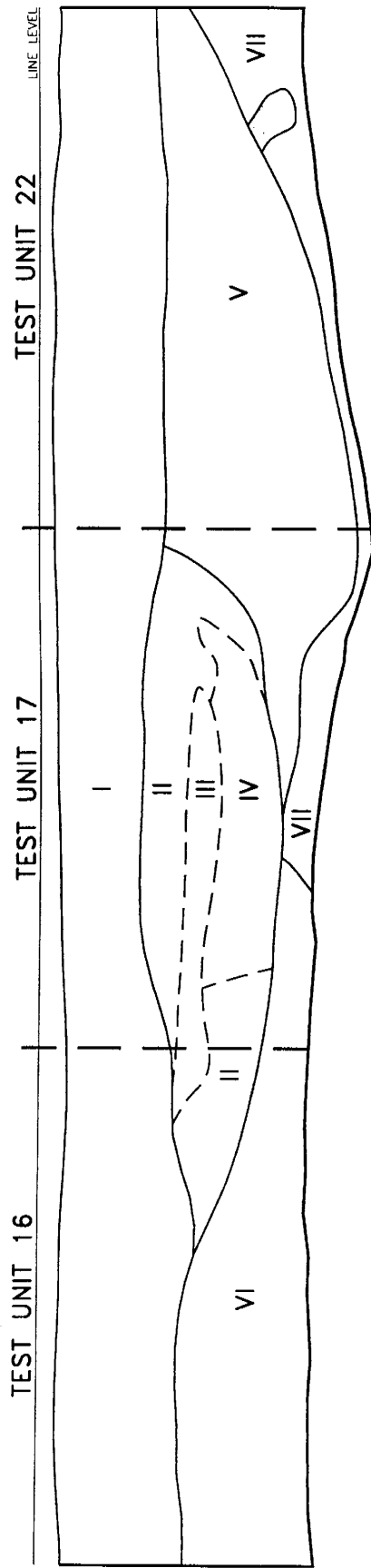


FIGURE 14: Plan and Profile of Test Units 11 and 13 and Feature 8, Site 7K-C-394

EAST WALL PROFILE
TEST UNITS 16, 17, AND 22



LEGEND

- I PLOWZONE: 2.5Y 5/2 GRAYISH BROWN SILTY LOAM
- II FEATURE 9, FIELD DRAIN: 10YR 4/3 BROWN SILTY SAND
- III FEATURE 9: 10YR 4/2 DARK GRAYISH BROWN SANDY LOAM
- IV FEATURE 9: 10YR 6/6 BROWNISH YELLOW SAND MOTTLED WITH 10YR 7/4 VERY PALE BROWN SILTY SAND AND 10YR 6/3 PALE BROWN SILTY SAND
- V FEATURE 12, HISTORIC PIT: 10YR 5/3 BROWN SILTY LOAM MOTTLED WITH 10YR 4/4 DARK YELLOWISH BROWN SILTY LOAM
- VI NATURAL SUBSOIL, TEST UNIT 16, STRATUM B, LEVELS 2-3: 2.5Y 6/6 OLIVE YELLOW COMPACT LOAMY SILT MOTTLED WITH 2.5Y 6/8 OLIVE YELLOW AND 2.5Y 7/4 LIGHT GRAY COMPACT LOAMY SILT
- VII NATURAL SUBSOIL, TEST UNIT 22, STRATUM B, LEVEL 2, BENEATH FEATURE 12: 10YR 5/6 YELLOWISH BROWN SANDY CLAY MOTTLED WITH 7.5YR 5/6 STRONG BROWN SANDY CLAY

☐ RODENT DISTURBANCE

— CLEAR TRANSITION

- - GRADUAL TRANSITION



FIGURE 15: Profile of Test Units 16, 17, and 22, Showing Features 9 and 12, Site 7K-C-394

C. Artifact Analysis

General

A total of 6,432 historic artifacts were recovered from Site 7K-C-394. Of this total, 6,008 artifacts, or 93 percent, were recovered from the recent plowzone (Stratum A). The remainder were recovered from the older plowzone (Stratum B) and the features. Of the features, only Features 9 and 12, respectively a drainage ditch and an unidentified pit, yielded substantial numbers of artifacts, more than 100 between the two. (Since the stratigraphy of that portion of the site was not understood until after the features had been largely excavated, the exact counts are not reliable.) None of the postholes contained more than a dozen artifacts. The artifacts in Stratum B were not older than those from Stratum A; in fact, all the objects that date to the early phase of the farm's history, including the creamware (1762-1820) and pearlware (1775-1840), were recovered from the plowzone or the postholes.

The artifacts from the Laws Farm are typical of those recovered from domestic sites dating to the second half of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries, and suggest an occupation from circa 1850 to circa 1950. Pattern analysis of the collection, based on the categories of South (1977), is shown in Table 3. The largest groups within the total are Architectural (3,476, 54%), Kitchen (2,105, 33%), Faunal (199, 3%) and Unidentified (525, 8%). The unidentified objects consisted largely of small bits of rusted or corroded metal, such as one frequently finds around modern farms. The pattern shown in Table 3, with a majority of architectural artifacts, is characteristic of mixed contexts (that is, yard scatter or building debris rather than privies, trash pits, or other discrete disposal areas) on post-Civil War sites (Bedell et al. 1993; LeeDecker et al. 1990:81-90). The falling price of nails and window glass in the nineteenth century, and the introduction of asbestos tile, asphalt shingles, and roofing "tin" in the twentieth, led to greatly increased use of permanent building materials and a consequent skewing of artifact collections toward the architectural element.

Another factor influencing artifact patterns was the spread to ordinary rural residents of attitudes about neatness and proper trash disposal that originated with eighteenth-century elites (Deetz 1977). As people became less tolerant of living amidst yards full of trash, they made greater efforts to move their broken bottles and dishes away from their houses or to dispose of them in buried pits, leaving less lying about for archaeologists to find at house sites. The large quantities of late nineteenth-century glass and ceramics (see below) recovered from the plowzone at the Laws Farm shows that its residents maintained a messy yard until at least the 1890s, but the quantity of twentieth-century material was somewhat smaller. The dearth of identifiable domestic material from after circa 1920 suggests either a reduction in the domestic component of the farm (that is, the house was abandoned for periods or perhaps leased to a single person) or an increased emphasis on trash removal.

TABLE 3

HISTORIC ARTIFACTS FROM SITE 7K-C-394

Group	Number	Percent	Class	Number			
Kitchen	2105	33	Ceramics	559			
			Bottles	856			
			Other Glassware	52			
			Other	638			
Architecture	3476	54	Window Glass	949			
			Cut Nails	70			
			Wire Nails	145			
			Unidentified Nails	1902			
			Other Construction Hardware	25			
			Brick	249			
			Roofing and Floor Covering	93			
			Other	43			
			Furnishings	11	<1	Lighting	6
						Furniture Hardware	4
Other	1						
Arms	12	<1	Ammunition	12			
Clothing	16	<1	Fasteners	13			
			Other	3			
Personal	5	<1	Coins	1			
			Jewelry	1			
			Hygiene	3			

TABLE 3 (Continued)

HISTORIC ARTIFACTS FROM SITE 7K-C-394

Group	Number	Percent	Class	Number
Activities	83	1	Household Related	25
			Recreation	16
			Toys	4
			Hand Tools	1
			Other	36
Faunal	199	3	Bird Bone	5
			Mammal Bone	49
			Oyster Shell	134
			Other Shell	11
Unidentified	525	8		

Ceramics

A total of 583 sherds of historic ceramics were recovered from the Phase II testing at Site 7K-C-394 (Table 4). All were small fragments, and most (95%) were recovered from the plowzone. A majority of the sherds (60%) were whiteware, a refined earthenware used in tablewares and teawares, introduced around 1820. Other refined earthenwares—creamware, pearlware, and ironstone—comprised 9 percent of the collection. Creamware and pearlware are early types, with ranges of 1760-1820 and 1775-1840, respectively, but they were present on Site 7K-C-394 in such small numbers that they have no real chronological implications. The 8 sherds of creamware and 11 of pearlware could easily have come from heirloom dishes, as could the single sherd of comb slipware (1670-1795). However, this thin scatter of eighteenth-century material could date from the earlier phase of the Laws Farm. In that case the early artifacts could represent trash dumping along a fence or at a satellite barn, or they could indicate that the earlier house was not far, perhaps 100 yards, from Site 7K-C-394. Ironstone, sometimes called "White Granite," was invented around 1813 but did not become common in North America until after 1840 and is most common on sites from the 1850-1900 period.

TABLE 4

HISTORIC CERAMICS FROM SITE 7K-C-394

Type	Number	Percent	Date Range
Creamware	8	1	1762-1820
Pearlware	11	2	1775-1840
Whiteware	347	60	1820-present
Ironstone	33	6	1813-present
Comb Slipware	1	<1	1670-1795
Porcelain (non-Chinese)	11	2	1760-present
Redware	104	18	-- --
Yellowware	4	1	--
Rockingham/Bennington	4	1	1812-1920
Stoneware	40	7	--
Other/Unidentifiable	18	3	--

The second largest constituent of the collection was redware, 104 sherds, or 18 percent of the ceramic assemblage. Most of the redware from the Laws Farm Site was coarse material from utilitarian bowls or jars, but four sherds of a refined, thin-bodied redware were also recovered, one of them a lustre-decorated specimen datable to 1790-1840. Several different types of stoneware were recovered, all utilitarian. Only 6 of the 40 recovered sherds were plain gray stoneware, and the remainder were coated on the interior with Albany (1800-1940) or Bristol (1835-present) slips. Nine sherds were recovered that had Albany slip on the exterior and Bristol slip on the interior, a combination introduced in 1880. Four sherds of yellowware (1827-1940), a ceramic used for bowls and serving dishes, were recovered, as well as four sherds decorated with mottled brown and yellow Rockingham/Bennington glaze (1812-1920).

The refined earthenwares from the Laws Farm were decorated using a wide variety of techniques. The techniques used on the whitewares recovered, which constitute the large majority of specimens, are listed in Table 5. Since some decorative types were more expensive than others, the relative numbers of the different types are sometimes used to estimate the wealth of the occupants of an archaeological site. However, because the Laws Farm had such a long and recent occupation, because the ceramics were almost all recovered from the plowzone and cannot be assigned to any particular occupation, and because the sherds are too fragmentary for minimum vessel count analysis, no such analysis is attempted here.

TABLE 5

WHITEWARE FROM SITE 7K-C-394—DECORATIVE TECHNIQUES

Decoration	Number	Percent	Date Range
Plain	258	74	1820-present
Shell Edged - Blue	5	1	1820-1900
Other Embossed Rims	13	4	1820-present
Embossed Body	4	1	1820-present
Polychrome Underglaze Handpainted (Early Style)	2	1	1820-1860
Transfer Printed - Blue	15	4	1820-present
Transfer Printed - Black	4	1	1820-present
Transfer Printed - Flowing Colors	3	1	1835-1910
Transfer Printed - Other Colors	2	1	1820-1915
Dipped	10	3	1820-1900
Simple Bands	5	1	1820-present
Sponged	4	1	1820-1940
Cut Stamps	2	1	1880-present
Liquid Gold	1	<1	1880-present
Decal - Overglaze	9	3	1880-present
Decal - Underglaze	1	<1	1897-present
Colored Glaze	6	2	1820-present
Other	3	1	1820-present

Glass

A total of 1,537 fragments of glass were recovered from Site 7K-C-394. The collection, described in Table 6, is typical of middle class domestic sites from the twentieth and second half of the nineteenth centuries. The artifacts were largely recovered from the plowzone and were highly fragmentary; the function of 41 percent of the collection could not be identified. Of those

TABLE 6

GLASS FROM SITE 7K-C-394

Type	Number	Percent	Type	Number	Percent
Bottle (General)	812	53	Lamp Chimney	4	<1
Wine Bottle	13	1	Prism	1	<1
Soda Bottle	1	<1	Tableware (General)	28	2
Bottle Handle	1	<1	Tumbler	24	2
Jar (General)	4	<1	Unidentified	634	41
Glass Liner/Fruit Jar	15	1			

that could be identified, most were bottle glass. Fifteen fragments of Mason jars used for canning fruits and vegetables were recovered, as well as 52 fragments of pressed glass tableware, which was very common in the early twentieth century.

The manufacturing method of most of the glass from the Laws Farm Site could not be determined. Ten pieces of wine bottle glass were identifiable as free-blown, probably dating to the eighteenth or the early nineteenth century. A total of 404 pieces of mold-blown glass—an ancient technique that was very common in the nineteenth century—were recovered, and 148 pieces of machine-made (post-1889) glass.

Prehistoric Artifacts

A small prehistoric component was present on the Laws Farm Site, mostly south of the main historic concentration, toward Muddy Branch. Eight prehistoric artifacts were recovered, and all but one were chert or jasper debitage. Two of the jasper flakes had remnant cobble cortex. The remaining artifact was a side-notched, jasper projectile point resembling the Brewerton side-notched variety (ca. 4000-2500 BC). The collection is too small for analysis, but resembles that from Site 7K-C-396.