



A.S.C. NEWS

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Newsletter of the Archaeological Society of Connecticut

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

January 30, 2023

Dear Members,

I am very happy to announce that the ASC has received a generous grant from Connecticut Humanities! As we did last year, we plan to use this grant to supplement our general operating budget and support our pre-contact and historical archaeological field schools exclusive for ASC members this summer.

While I know the pandemic continues to affect many of us, I am also gladdened that archaeological societies are beginning to more regularly plan in-person meetings, while still including virtual options. I hope many of you were able to attend the Eastern States Archaeological Federation (ESAF) and Council for Northeast Historical Archaeology's (CNEHA) respective conferences last fall. Connecticut archaeology was especially well represented at CNEHA, with seven presentations! Please also keep an eye out for the program announcement for the Conference on New England

Archaeology's (CNEA) annual conference, which is planned for May 2023 in Durham, NH on the University of New Hampshire campus.

Speaking of conferences, the ASC is very pleased to announce our Spring Meeting will be held on May 6th at the Wood Memorial Library and Museum, in South Windsor. As many of you know, we held our Spring Meeting at the Wood last year, and it was a great success. The Board of Directors are currently planning, and we will have a full slate of talks and activities for the meeting. A detailed program and list of speakers will be provided in our April Newsletter.

We are also happy to announce the return of our virtual lecture series! We will have two zoom lectures in March of this year, tentatively scheduled to start on Wednesday's at 7 pm. Please keep an eye out for announcements via email, social media, and our website for speakers, topics, and dates.

I would also encourage you all to look through the 2023 Unearthing History lecture series the Avon Historical Society,

Avon Free Public Library and Avon Senior Center are again hosting this year. We've included the Unearthing History flyer in this newsletter and it looks like they once again have a great slate of talks planned, starting in March and ending in October.

ASC members who have been conducting archaeological research should consider submitting an article to the Editor of the *Bulletin*, Sarah Sportman, electronically at sarah.sportman@uconn.edu or to our Newsletter Editor, Lee West at lfwest@sbcglobal.net. The 2022 Bulletin will be mailed to members at some point in the early spring, but now is a good time to think about your 2023 submissions and contributions.

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Finally, please make sure you peruse the research articles that are included in this Newsletter. There are several separate research briefs, outlining interesting work being conducted on historical and pre-contact archaeological sites within our state.

On behalf of the ASC Board of Directors, we hope that you enjoy this newsletter and we hope you will tune in to the virtual lectures in March!

*David Leslie
President*

ASC ON-LINE RESOURCES

[ASC Bulletins at UConn Digital Archives](#)

New! Bulletins #77-80 (2015-2018) added to archive this year Complete collection back to 1934 now available.

[ASC Newsletters at UConn Digital Archives](#)

Newsletters from 1939-1954, 1999-2018 currently available

NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE ARCHAEOLOGY

Happy New Year! Winter is upon us (sort of) and we have been busy in the lab and collections. We wrapped up the 2022 fieldwork season with a metal detector survey at the Hollister Site in December, with Dr. Kevin McBride and some of the expert metal detectorists who worked on his battlefield projects. It was an incredibly productive day that added new dimensions to our research at Hollister. We found a

number of musket balls and several Indigenous artifacts, including another brass arrowhead, numerous fragments of worked brass scrap, two brass pendants, and a lead pendant. When considered along with the materials we recovered during our summer excavations at Hollister, which included more Indigenous pottery, evidence of wampum manufacture, and stone tools knapped from European flint, it has become increasingly clear that there was a 17th century Indigenous presence at the Hollister Farm.

OSA was involved in several public events this fall, including the very successful 2022 Connecticut Archaeology Fair at Old New-Gate Prison on October 8th. The fair drew over 300 visitors throughout the day. We had activities for children, a number of exhibitors, and a series of excellent lectures by Connecticut archaeologists, including Ken Feder, Nick Bellantoni, Stephanie Scialo, and Elizabeth Reed. We also featured several short presentations on local archaeological field schools at UCONN, Southern Connecticut State University, and the Mohegan Tribe. In addition to the Archaeology Fair, I gave several presentations including a talk in October on 40 years of Archaeology at the Prudence Crandall House Museum for the Museum and the Last Green Valley. Then, on November 2, Nick Bellantoni and I gave a talk on the Revolutionary War-era Ridgefield Burials at the State Armory in Hartford. We're hopeful that in 2023, the research on the Ridgefield burials will really move forward, with forensic, genetic, isotopic, and radiographic analyses.

In November, I attended the Council for Northeast Historical Archaeology's annual conference in Plymouth, Massachusetts. We had great Connecticut representation at the conference and three ASC Board members gave presentations. I spoke about the Indigenous materials we recovered at Hollister this year and David Leslie gave a presentation on the European flint assemblage from Hollister. Additionally, Elic Weitzel presented on his dissertation data, which includes faunal material from several Connecticut sites, including Hollister and the Morgan Site.

For the last couple of months we've had volunteers working in the lab and they've made great progress washing and processing the materials from this summer's fieldwork. We're nearly finished with the field bags from 2022. Our graduate research assistant, Stephanie Scialo, has been working to finish inventorying the Hollister materials from 2021 and Dr. Kevin McBride and the students in his Lab Methods in Archaeology class are also working on artifacts and soil samples from Hollister. This winter, we are also working with Dr. Raquel Fleskes to conduct a DNA study on pipe stems from the site.

We're also continuing our collections work. FOSA volunteers, led by Scott Brady, have been building our new shelving and this spring, we'll start moving all of the State, Museum, and OSA archaeological collections into one building on UConn's campus. Once that is accomplished, we'll begin replacing damaged boxes, consolidating collections into



Scott Brady, Lee West, and Jim Trocchi building new shelving for the OSA/CSMNH collections.

fewer boxes, and replacing any old packaging that has deteriorated or is inappropriate for collections storage. This spring, we're also going to process a lot of old soil samples that are held in the collections. This will not only save space, but also provide samples that are ready for analysis, if a researcher is interested in the site. We're

excited to have the opportunity to look through all of the old collections and anticipate making

some exciting "new" discoveries in our own collections!

We've been discussing plans for fieldwork in the spring and we're hoping to return to the Two Wrasslin' Cats site for a few days, as well as a new site in Hebron. Also, look for an earlier field season at the Hollister Site this year. Due to the oppressive weather we had last

July and August, we plan to be out in the field in late May and early June.

Finally, with the support of FOSA and iCRV Radio, Scott Brady, Glenda Rose, and I have continued to host our monthly radio show on the *Archaeology of Connecticut* (now almost four years old!). Our recent episodes covered a range of topics including archaeology around Lake Waramaug, video games and archaeology, and a round

table discussion with several members of the Connecticut archaeological community on their experiences working in the field. Our December 2022 show featured the Mohegan Archaeological Field School and our February 2022 will feature Drs. Ken Feder and Bill Farley for a discussion of the Netflix show *Ancient Apocalypse*. If you missed a past show and want to catch up, they are all archived on the FOSA website at https://www.fosa-ct.org/iCRV_Slideshow_1.htm.

I hope to see you at our upcoming virtual presentations and in person at the annual meeting this spring!

Best,

Sarah Sportman
State Archaeologist



See announcement below for new course offering and flyer on next page for the FOSA Annual Meeting, March 25, 2023.

FOSA Continuing Ed. Program - Lithics – Introduction to Lithic Analysis

FOSA is offering an intensive seven-week program, consisting of one evening zoom class per week, beginning March 8, 2023. At course conclusion, a weekend lab session will be scheduled for hands-on study. The objective is for members to gain basic facility with terminology, classification, and analysis of stone tools and lithic debitage.

For registration details please see the FOSA website: <https://www.fosa-ct.org/>.

**Jamestown, Our Nation's Birthplace:
Saving Our Shared History in the Face of Climate Change**

Presented by: Friends of the Office of State Archaeology

Saturday, March 25, 2023 at 3:00 p.m.
(Snow Date: Sunday, March 26, 2023)
2:00 p.m. FOSA Annual Meeting



Farmington High School Auditorium
10 Monteith Drive, Farmington, CT

Guest Speaker:
David Givens
Director of Archaeology
Jamestown Rediscovery

World-renowned as the site of England's first permanent American settlement in 1607, Jamestown was thought to have been lost to erosion until archaeological excavations in 1994 rediscovered the site. Since then, archaeological fieldwork has illuminated not only our understanding of the early years of James Fort but also of entanglement with First Peoples and the forcible arrival of enslaved Angolans in 1619. Located along the north bank of the James River in Virginia, much of Jamestown is low-lying, subject to erosion and flooding, and vulnerable to catastrophic hurricane damage. David Givens will address the climate change challenges that Jamestown faces and will discuss some recent exciting finds. He will also discuss collaborative efforts with Connecticut archaeologists and researchers to protect this critical site and help rewrite American history.

Directions to Farmington High School

From I-84 East or West:

- 1) Take Exit 39, proceed west on Route 4/Farmington Avenue for 3.9 miles, crossing Route 10 at about 1.5 miles.
- 2) Approximately 2.4 miles past Route 10, turn right on Monteith Drive.
- 3) Drive past Town Hall at right, to Farmington High School at top of hill. Follow signs to parking and auditorium.

From Route 4 East

Drive 1.25 miles east of Route 177, turn left on Monteith Drive.
Follow step 3 directions above.

General Admission - \$10.00

Non-Farmington Students with ID - \$5.00

FOSA, ASC, Connecticut State Museum of Natural History, Farmington students & faculty admitted free with ID

Co-Sponsored by: *Archaeological Society of Connecticut*

In the event of inclement weather, please check for updates after 10.30 a.m. at <https://www.fosa-ct.org/> or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/CTArchaeology/>.

If pandemic conditions appear to preclude an in-person meeting, there will be an update with Zoom instructions by March 1, 2023 at <https://www.fosa-ct.org/> and an e-mail updated provided to FOSA and ASC members.S

Unearthing History: The Discovery of a 12,500 year old Paleo-Indian Site Along the Farmington River in Avon, CT

7:00 pm EST via Zoom

Free to attend. Register at www.avonctlibrary.info

2021 series sponsored
by a grant from



MARCH 23

The LIDAR Revolution in Earth Surface Mapping, presented by Will Ouimet, Assoc. Professor, Departments of Geosciences and Geography, Univ. of Connecticut. He will explain the techniques used by LIDAR for locating historic human settlements and land use patterns. LIDAR = Light Detection and Ranging using lasers for 3D scanning.

APRIL 20

Hunting Techniques of the Paleoindian, presented by Richard Boisvert, retired New Hampshire state archeologist, who is very familiar with the discovery and analysis of the Brian D. Jones (BDJ) site and other Paleoindian sites in northern New England.

MAY 11

The Big Importance of Small Things: Microscopic and Blood Residue Analysis of Ancient Stone Tools, presented by Heather M. Rockwell, Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Cultural and Historic Preservation, Noreen Stonor Drexel Cultural and Historic Preservation Program, Salve Regina University. This presentation will examine the process and limitations of blood residue and use-wear analysis, and how they have contributed to our understanding of ancient people.

SEPT. 21

Paleoindian Sites, Site Patterning and Travel Corridors along the Southern Arm of the Champlain Sea, presented by Jess Robinson, Vermont State Archaeologist, Vermont Archaeology Heritage Center, Barre, VT. He will compare and contrast Paleo sites in Vermont with the Brian D. Jones site in Avon.

OCT. 12

Update on the scientific analysis of the Brian D. Jones (BDJ) site in Avon, CT 2019, presented by Eric Heffter, Senior Prehistoric Archaeologist, Archaeological and Historical Services, Storrs, CT. His presentation will be 90 minutes with time after for Q&A. October is Archaeology Month in Connecticut!

Watch the webinars from the 2021 and 2022 series on the Avon Library's YouTube Channel: www.youtube.com/user/afplct

In partnership with



Webinar series created by : Avon Historical Society, Avon Free Public Library, Avon Senior Center



Anthropology Day Lecture with Frederick M Wiseman, Ph.D.

February 16 @ 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

Dr. Frederick M. Wiseman (Abenaki Nation of Missiquoi) was trained as a Paleoethnobotanist at the University of Arizona's Laboratory for Paleoenvironmental Studies. Since 1987, he has focused on the Indigenous Wabanaki people of the far Northeast, having published popular and academic books, curricula, and film on modern Indigenous culture and prehistoric archaeology, as well as Contact Period ethnohistory, politics and technology. Additionally, since 2009, Dr. Wiseman has worked with various Indigenous communities in the Northeast to re-configure a nearly lost Northeastern agricultural heritage. Dr. Wiseman's current activity focuses on the creation of the Vermont Indigenous Heritage Center and Botanical Gardens in Burlington, VT. In recognition of International Anthropology Day, we welcome Dr. Wiseman for a virtual presentation on this Center's mission to learn and teach elements of Vermont Abenaki culture that have a deep-time presence in the state, from music and dance to subsistence. This program will give a brief introduction to how evidence-based research and education may, in part, uplift and defend endangered Indigenous Communities. Join Dr. Wiseman for a presentation and discussion to be hosted on ZOOM.



In order to obtain a ZOOM link, please visit our website to register via Eventbrite. Questions? Please call (860) 868-0518 or email events@iaismuseum.org.

CURRENT RESEARCH

New Perspectives on Woodruff Cave Elizabeth Reed

When Edmund Swigart began excavating Woodruff Cave in New Preston in 1974, it is unlikely he realized the breadth of the site nor the impact it would have nearly fifty years later. Swigart's ambitions to bring local archaeology to the public, through excavation and dissemination of archaeological research, resulted in his founding of the American Indian Archaeological Institute in 1975. Hundreds of volunteers descended upon Lake Waramaug between 1974 and 1976 to participate in the Woodruff Cave excavation

each summer. Students from CCSU wrote their term papers for ANTH335, Archaeological Methods, on the individual five square-foot units they were assigned. In the six years following the excavation, researchers from Yale, Harvard, the University of Wisconsin, and the Smithsonian all participated in analyzing sections of the massive faunal assemblage uncovered from the site. Yet Swigart only published one article on Woodruff Cave in the ASC bulletin in 1987, then housed the collection in the Institute.

Judging by the breadth of white-tailed deer ages in the faunal collection, Woodruff Cave was occupied year-round in the Woodland period, and was at least seasonally occupied during the Middle and Late Archaic periods. It can also be reasonably postulated, using observations pertaining to the level of preservation at varying depths, that much of the faunal collection dates to the Middle and Late Woodland periods. Swigart described the majority of bone and artifacts as coming from the “black,” greasy, and charcoal-ridden soil of Stratum 2, as opposed to the normal dark brown also of Stratum 2 which is described as a more typical B-horizon. The lithics and pottery were found in concentrations along the back edges of the rockshelter in small chambers where they would not be trodden upon. Swigart consulted historical documents to determine that there was no Contact-period occupation of the site as settlers did not arrive in the New Preston area until 1744, and all post-Woodland artifacts dated, at their earliest, to mid-19th century. Some Archaic period artifacts, including Otter Creek and Brewerton-like points and steatite vessel fragments, were mixed with Early-Woodland artifacts in the bottom levels of the black layer. There were also a few Middle Archaic artifacts in Stratum 3, which was described as an orange C soil. It was suspected that an older occupation lay beneath the most artifact-heavy units but an Early-Middle Archaic period rockfall prevented deeper excavations. The presence of two Hardaway-Dalton points in the lithic assemblage suggests Swigart was correct. Few prehistoric features were noted as the black soil layer was too thick and homogenous to be considered a feature, but did suggest there was evidence for a line of hearths along the back wall of the rockshelter characterized by fire cracked rock, high counts of calcined bone, and charred nuts.

Due to nearly unprecedented bone preservation for this region, the collection is daunting; originally, Swigart suggested there were about 11,000 individual bone fragments but my estimates suggest there are about 24,000 bone fragments to be examined. According to the 1974 Shepaug Valley Archaeological Society newsletter, alongside the faunal assemblage, 611 sherds of pottery from 32 vessels were identified during the first field season. After including those sherds mistakenly bagged with the faunal remains and debitage, an estimate of about 1,5000 sherds overall might be closer to the reality. The same newsletter counted 266 diagnostic points, two atlatl weight fragments, and four steatite vessel fragments, suggesting close to 1,000 diagnostic lithic artifacts and an unknown count of worked stone and debitage. My weekends for the last year and a half have been spent attempting to get a handle on a collection this size and then uncovering yet another baffling aspect of Woodruff Cave that changes my interpretation once more.

The assemblage is heavily dominated by bone flakes created during the bone tool production process and by calcined bone fragments that have been burned beyond recognition, because of this, 92.5% of the bones I have looked at so far are unidentifiable beyond mammal/avian/reptilia, etc. When excluding those bones from analysis, we find that white-tailed deer heavily dominates the identifiable bones, making up almost 78% of the assemblage. Other species that make up a significant-ish portion of the list are elk, red fox, eastern cottontail, and box turtle. One of the red foxes in the assemblage was found semi-articulated, potentially indicating that foxes were hunted for their pelts rather than the meat. The presence of elk is particularly of note because we had previously assumed that most of this region was dominated by hardwood forests; elk, however, prefer more open, deciduous forests with occasional grassy fields. This indicates that elk remained in the region for longer into the Woodland period than previously thought. I must note that the identification of elk was made by researchers with the Smithsonian in the 80s, and if true, have meaningful implications for the environment of the inland of southern New England during this period.

Unusually, there have only been three individual fish bones in the sample that has been analyzed so far, and they came from one inch below the surface. Swigart did mention in his article that the woods where Woodruff Cave is located was a popular picnic spot; given their preservation, it is unlikely these fish bones are archaeological, and instead were deposited by more recent visitors. We had expected, with the level of preservation of the archaeological bone, that there would be more fish remains due to the site's proximity to the river and Lake Waramaug. The article identifies bass and catfish bones in particular, but I have yet to come across either in the collection thus far. This can perhaps be attributed to my own accidental exclusion by happening to pick boxes that did not contain the fish bones. The most unexpected species was undoubtedly the Tiger shark, which is represented by a singular tooth that was misidentified as a long bone fragment and placed in a bag with 80-something other fragments from one foot below the surface in the unit with the highest concentration of bones.



The tiger shark tooth.



An awl fashioned from a rabbit tibia, with visible use-wear on the distal end

This past fall, my colleagues at the Institute and I were awarded the Brian D. Jones Grant by ASC to fund two types of testing in attempt to resolve several questions that arose during the first 25% of analysis. The first is regarding the presence of elk bones in the collection. With the funding from the grant, several samples of bone identified as elk by the previous researchers will undergo zoo-mass spectrometry (ZooMS) analysis for species identification. We will use two non-destructive methods to perform the same analysis on three bone tools from the collection that were modified beyond species recognition. Thus far, the collection has already produced tools made from diagnostic deer and rabbit bones.

The final question which we wish to elucidate is if the unusual bone preservation extended to fish bones. Fish bones are commonly underrepresented in faunal assemblages as they often do not preserve well, but as Woodruff Cave is already an anomaly in that regard, it is unusual to have not identified fish in this assemblage. Would people living on the convergence of Lake Waramaug with the East Aspetuck River not consume fish? Part of the funding has gone to performing absorbed residue analysis on several pottery sherds in the collection to find any evidence of lipids that may have absorbed during the cooking process.

This site provides important environmental and subsistence context to the many nearby sites, including Deer Run, Hopkins Field, and Templeton. In the upcoming year I hope to be able to share exciting results from this testing with you all, as I feel that Woodruff Cave will contribute invaluable knowledge of the archaeological landscape of western Connecticut to our current literature.

LATE AND TERMINAL ARCHAIC OCCUPATIONS ALONG THE TENMILE RIVER IN CHESHIRE, CONNECTICUT

BRENNA E. PISANELLI, MA, AND DAVID E. LESLIE, PHD
HERITAGE CONSULTANTS, LLC

Introduction

Archaeological investigations have resulted in evidence that suggest a shift in settlement patterns occurred in Connecticut during the Late and Terminal Archaic periods from interior wetlands to large river drainages. While sites dating to the Late Archaic period are common throughout New England, many questions concerning settlement patterns, occupational duration, trade networks, and potential causes for cultural and technological shifts are still up for debate between archaeologists. This is particularly true when we examine these shifts throughout the Late and Terminal Archaic periods in Southern New England, between 5,000 and 3,000 years ago. One area where the archaeological record is especially lacking in these time periods is the recognition and excavation of domestic architecture from sites within these time periods. Increased visibility and excavation of Late and Terminal Archaic houses, as well as understanding the types and sizes of these houses as they relate to seasonal and longer-term occupations may prove informative when studying shifts in technology and lifeways during these time periods.

Ongoing and recently concluded excavations by Heritage Consultants, LLC (Heritage), within the watershed of the Tenmile River in Cheshire, Connecticut (Figure 1), at two sites has the potential to shed further light on these research questions. Site 25-25, or the Tenmile River Native American Site, a Terminal Archaic site located on a terrace above the Tenmile River provides evidence of a large house structure, possibly occupied during a cold season (late fall, winter, or early spring). This site underwent Data Recovery excavations last year, and analyses are still ongoing. Preliminary excavations at site 25-20, also known as the Tenmile Field Site, resulted in the identification of the site as a Late Archaic site, indicative of Laurentian and Narrow Stem occupations. Data Recovery excavations at this site, scheduled to occur during the 2023 field season, may further our understanding of Late Archaic domestic architecture allowing us to examine questions regarding occupation types, duration, and usage of the Tenmile River through Late and Terminal Archaic periods.

A summary of these ongoing investigations is provided below.

Investigations at Site 25-25

Heritage recently conducted Data Recovery Program (DRP) excavations relating to Site 25-25, the Tenmile River Native American Site, in Cheshire, Connecticut during 2021 (George et al. 2022). Site 25-25 was first identified by University of Massachusetts Archaeological Services (UMAS) during Phase IB survey in 2008 and later delineated with a Phase II survey by UMAS in 2014 (Barker et al. 2008; Johnson 2014). Three separate loci of the site were identified and a total of 522 lithic artifacts were recovered from these loci during both surveys. Lithic raw materials recovered from the site included a variety of types, with chert, quartz, quartzite, hornfels, rhyolite flaked artifacts, as well as fire-cracked rock (FCR). Diagnostic material recovered during the UMAS survey included a narrow stem projectile point and an Atlantic projectile point from Locus B, as well as cultural features in Loci A and B. Portions of Site 25-25 including Locus C could not be avoided during a planned residential development, so they were targeted for a DRP by Heritage; Loci A and B will be preserved as open space and were not pursued during the DRP.

DRP excavations of Locus C of Site 25-25 included 20 additional shovel test pits (stps) to better delineate the locus, as well as 20 1x1-meter excavation units, which were targeted throughout the locus to maximize

the recovery of information about the site. A total of 558 artifacts (including lithics, FCR, calcined bone, and charcoal) were recovered during the DRP. Fifteen of the twenty excavation units were excavated around a potential feature identified by Heritage in Block 1, which resulted in the identification of 54 individual cultural features, including a central hearth, post-molds, and edge/exterior features (such as an entryway) that related to a large dwelling structure (Figures 2 and 3). Following the targeted excavation of this structure by Heritage, the Connecticut Office of State Archaeology (OSA), in conjunction with the Friends of the Office of State Archaeology (FOSA), conducted additional archaeological excavations around Block 1, to aid in the recovery of additional information about Locus C. While the analyses of these investigations are in progress, preliminary results related to Block 1 and the dwelling structure are presented here; OSA and FOSA artifacts have not yet been analyzed and are not included in this report.

A total of 472 artifacts were recovered by Heritage within Block 1 including 257 fragments of calcined bone, 151 lithic artifacts, 55 pieces of charcoal, and 9 FCR fragments. The calcined bone and charcoal artifacts are in the process of being analyzed, but nearly all were recovered from a central hearth feature within the interior of the dwelling. Individual samples of charcoal and calcined bone from the hearth were sampled for radiocarbon dates. Radiocarbon estimates from charcoal indicated a date range of $9,540 \pm 30$ BP (11,075 – 10,703 cal BP; Beta Analytic-621359), indicating a potential Late Paleoindian or Early Archaic occupation on the landform. However, due to the rarity of sites relating to these time periods and associated dwelling structures, and the previously reported Late and Terminal Archaic projectile points associated with Loci A and B, Heritage procured a second radiocarbon date from calcined bone recovered from the hearth. This sample returned a date range more in line with previous estimations of Site 25-25, with a date of $3,650 \pm 30$ BP (4,086 – 3,885 cal BP; Beta Analytic-623327), indicating a likely Terminal Archaic occupation of the landform; the earlier Terminal Pleistocene radiocarbon date probably represents intrusive carbon into the feature.

Lithic artifacts recovered from Locus C within Block 1 include 120 pieces of chert, 26 pieces of basalt, four quartz flakes, and one quartzite artifact. Unfortunately, only three tool fragments were recovered during the excavation of Block 1, including a large chert biface tip, a chert projectile point tip, and a quartzite side scraper (Figure 4). While debitage analyses are preliminary, they indicate that the majority of artifacts relate to biface manufacture and retouch of tools, although the low number of artifacts indicates that this was not a large focus of time or energy for site inhabitants. It is also possible that periodic cleaning of the structure resulted in the removal of artifacts from the interior floor over time. This is likely, as high numbers of artifacts were recovered at the interior edges of the house, within deeper feature soils, that probably accumulated from periodic cleaning.

While analyses of the Heritage and OSA/FOSA excavations are ongoing, some preliminary interpretations about the site are possible. The 54 identified features provide compelling evidence for a large, round dwelling structure dating to the Terminal Archaic period, likely the Atlantic Phase. An Atlantic Phase is the most likely occupation, due to the previously identified Atlantic blade in Locus B, the radiocarbon estimates from calcined bone, the high proportion of high-quality Normanskill (Hudson River Valley) chert recovered from within the structure, and the delicate platform preparation and overall reduction strategies by flint knappers at the site, the latter is generally restricted to Paleoindian, Terminal Archaic, and Middle Woodland flint knappers within the Northeast. An Atlantic Phase fits best with the data recovered from the site. Also, based on the placement of the hearth within the interior of the dwelling structure, a cold season occupation of the landform (late fall, winter, or early spring) is most likely. Botanical analyses of flotation samples recovered during excavation are planned to possibly better define the season of occupation. Individual features within the structure also provide evidence for the placement of interior support posts or potential bed posts, as well as an entrance to the structure facing due west.

The only comparable houses that have been reported in the literature in Connecticut include Structures 1 – 12 from the Kirby Brook Site in western Connecticut (Swigart 1974; Lavin 2013). These houses were

associated with Atlantic Phase occupations of the Terminal Archaic (based on artifact assemblages) and vary in their shapes from oval to round; ten of these houses were approximately 7 square meters and two were approximately 12 square meters in size. Estimates of the house size are preliminary, but based on the excavations Heritage conducted, and examination of OSA/FOSA excavation forms, the house is quite large, over twice as large as most from the Kirby Brook Site at ~18 square meters in size and circular, with a roundness ratio of 1.00. While this house size may be more in line with other Terminal Archaic houses sizes in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States (White 2014), it is clearly an outlier for known house sizes in New England (Farley et al. 2019). Future work will focus on better contextualizing the interior architecture of the house and season of occupation. If a cold season occupation is confirmed through additional analyses, this site may shed light on differences in house size, shape, and domestic life during cold versus warm seasons in Southern New England, as well as provide important information about seasonal uses of the Tenmile River drainage during the Terminal Archaic Period.

Investigations at Site 25-20

Recent Phase I and II investigations by Heritage uncovered additional evidence of Late Archaic occupations and settlement patterns along the Tenmile River at Site 25-20, the Tenmile Field Site, in Cheshire, Connecticut (George et al. 2022). Site 25-20 was first identified by Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc., (PAL) during a Phase IB survey conducted in 2015. PAL's investigations of the site resulted in 30 positive test pits, identifying two loci and the recovery of 55 pre-contact artifacts. Investigations by both PAL and later Heritage confirmed that the site is multi-component in nature and post-Contact material spanning the 18th and 20th centuries was recovered in light scatter, for the purpose of this paper and future planned investigations only the pre-contact component of Site 25-20 will be examined here.

The pre-contact artifacts recovered from the site during PAL's 2015 investigation comprised a lithic assemblage that exemplified a variety of raw material types, including quartz (n=27), basalt (n=11), chert (n=8), cryptocrystalline (n=1), quartzite (n=1), and rhyolite (n=1). Diagnostic material recovered by PAL included a complete quartz Wading River projectile point and a complete quartz Levanna projectile point, suggesting that the site is indicative of Late Archaic and Late Woodland occupations.

Heritage conducted further excavation of the site during the 2022 field season as part of a Phase IB and Phase II investigation for an impending development project. The Phase IB survey resulted in the excavation of 136 test pits, with an additional 75 test pits and four excavation units placed across the site during the Phase II investigation. These excavations resulted in the recovery of a total of 451 pre-contact era artifacts and ecofacts from Site 25-20 during the Phase IB and Phase II testing efforts. These consisted of botanical remains (n=94), faunal fragments (n=14), lithic debitage (n=329), and flaked tools (n=14). The deposition of artifacts ranged across the site, with the highest density of artifacts originating from the B horizon (n=271) and the Ap horizon (n=148); the highest density of artifacts was located on the southeastern portion of the site, likely due to the proximity of that area to the Tenmile River's bank.

Analyses of the botanical materials recovered during the flotation process of the soil samples from Site 25-20 identified charred wood (n=23), as well as unclassified partially charred (n=58) and uncharred (n=2) seeds. While the specific seed type was unable to be identified, their presence suggests that the site may have been occupied during the spring and summer months when plant resources are plentiful and easily accessible. Additional work is planned to further identify the seed fragments.

The pre-contact era lithic assemblage recovered from Site 25-20 is indicative of various stages and types of lithic tool production, manufacturing, and maintenance, from primary reduction to finished tools. A total of six lithic material types were identified throughout the site. Locally sourced quartz (n=257) was the dominant material recovered from Site 25-20, of which 28 artifacts were identified as quartz crystal, a higher quality variety of this materials. In addition, quartzite (n=55), chert (n=12), hornfels (n=11), rhyolite

(n=5), jasper (n=2), and argillite (n=1) were also present in the lithic assemblage. This variety of materials suggests that while the local quartz was the most abundant material, more exotic materials, some of them likely from the Hudson and Delaware river valleys and Boston Basin indicates reliance on formal trade networks or extra regional ranging patterns. The presence of exotic materials within the site is more consistent with Laurentian period settlement patterns as compared with those of the Narrow-stem tradition. Archaeological evidence and studies have indicated that people during the Laurentian sub period either had easier access to, or preference for, exotic material types such as chert for tool manufacturing in comparison to later Narrow-stem communities who tended to primarily use or prefer locally sourced materials such as quartz or quartzite cobbles.

Laboratory analyses of the lithic debitage indicates multiple types of reduction and tool production occurred on site. The most prominent debitage type on the site was bifacial reduction flakes (n=102) with bifacial retouch flakes (n=60), flakes (n=62), and unifacial reduction flakes (n=52) having the second largest presence. Primary reduction (n=21), angular debris (n=18), unifacial retouch flakes (n=8), micro flakes (n=2), as well as cores (n=2), and an exhausted core (n=1) were also present but not in a high volume. Taken together, the analyses of debitage recovered at the site indicates that bifacial and unifacial production of tools (reduction flakes), as well as the maintenance and reuse of these tools (micro and retouch flakes), were common activities on site.

In addition, 14 flaked tools were collected from Site 25-20; these consisted of expedient tools (n=8), unfinished tools (n=4) and finished tools (n=2). The expedient tools consisted of a quartz spokeshave, scrapers (n=5), including end scrapers (n=1) and side scrapers (n=2), as well as a utilized quartz core and utilized quartz flake. The four unfinished tools from the site consisted of quartz biface fragments (n=2), 1 quartz preform, and 1 quartzite preform with a remnant platform indicative of the Narrow Stem tradition. In addition, two diagnostic projectile points were also recovered from Site 25-20; they included 1 complete chert Brewerton Side Notched projectile point of the Laurentian tradition and 1 quartz untyped (possible Wading River) Narrow Stem projectile point with a partial base (Figure 5). The presence of this artifact assemblage indicates a range of activities occurred on site, including expedient tools for cutting animal and/or plant remains (scrapers, utilized flake and utilized core), wood working (spokeshave) and hide processing for clothing or camping equipment, as well as hunting technology in the form of biface production and projectile point discards.

Review of the precontact era data recovered from Site 25-20 suggests the site was a small Late Archaic short term/seasonal multi-use camp site with evidence of both Laurentian and Narrow Stem occupations, which may have overlapped in time. Based on the recovery of charred seeds from subsoil contexts, inhabitants of the site likely resided in and utilized the area during the spring and summer months in order to take advantage of and extract the resources of the Tenmile River. The site is likely indicative of the major shift in settlement patterns that occurred during the Late and Terminal Archaic periods in Connecticut, from interior lakes or wetlands to river drainages (Cassedy 1999; Lavin 2013). Season base camps during this time “tend to be located on terraces of major stream drainages, with temporary or task-specific camps locates in floodplains and uplands.” (Cassedy 1999: 125). This shift was likely predicated on situating seasonal encampments to better extract aquatic resources and rich marshland beds. The preponderance of archaeological sites that date to the Late Archaic may also indicate that this ecological reorientation resulted in a food surplus allowing for a higher concentration of population density.

Ongoing Research

While no cultural features were identified on Site 25-20 during the Phase II excavations, Phase III investigation of the site will be conducted by Heritage during the 2023 field season. The Phase III excavation of the site will focus on further contextualizing Site 25-20 within the larger archaeological record of settlement and use patterns of the Tenmile River during the Late Archaic period. Particular

attention will be given to the investigation of potential structural and occupational features in hopes to shed light on settlement patterns within the drainage. We are also particularly interested in contextualizing Site 25-20 occupations in light of what we have learned from excavating Site 25-25. The presence of domestic features Site 25-25 and the potential for their presence at Site 25-20 may suggest a reorientation of people to the Tenmile River Drainage during the Late and Terminal Archaic periods. Future investigations of both sites will hopefully shed light on this shift and provide a better understanding of social and settlement changes during these periods.

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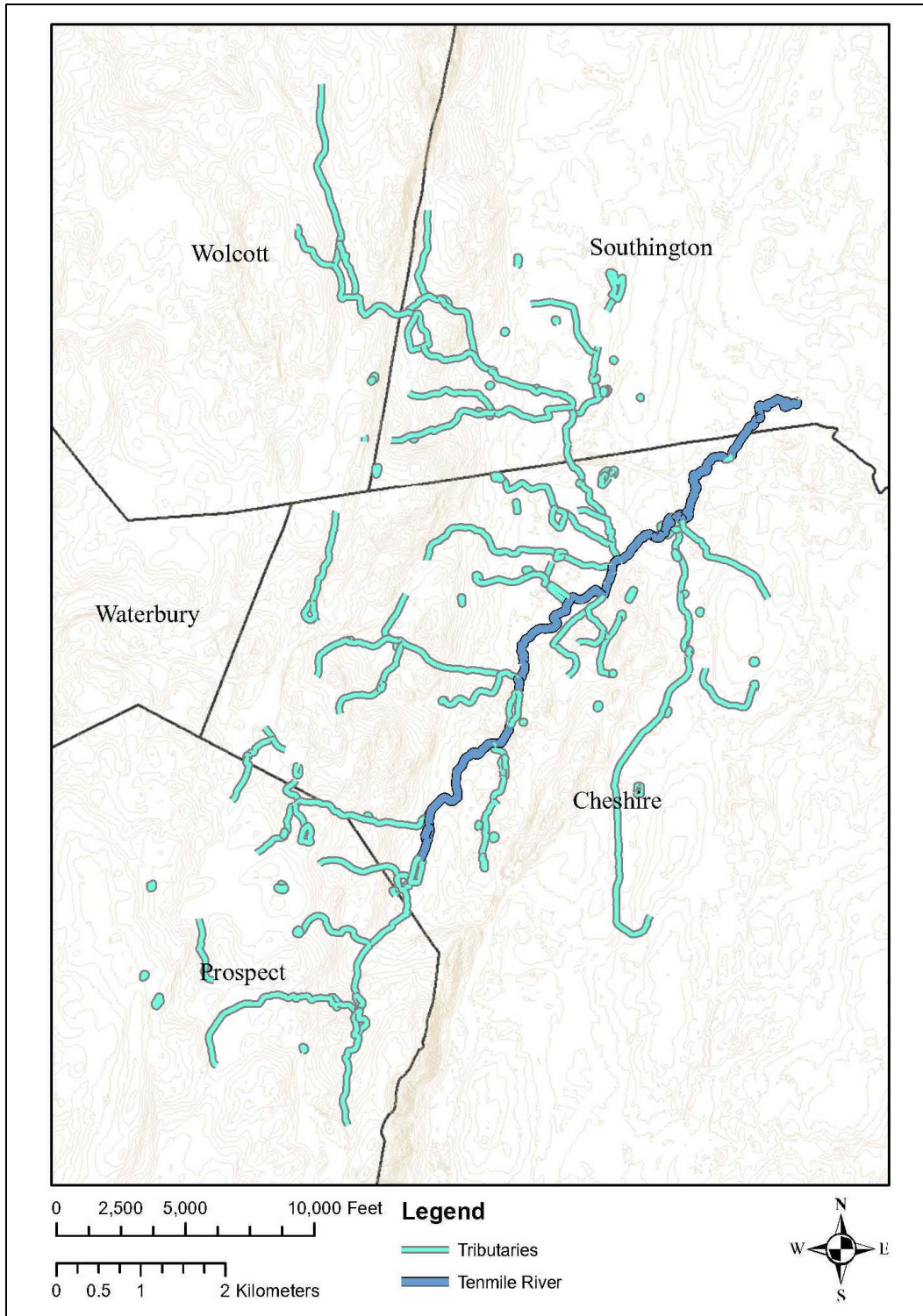


Figure 1: Topographic map of the Tenmile River and its tributaries.

**Bowman Stone Bridge Crossing
Phase III Data Recovery
Block 2
Excavation Units 3-6,8-12, & 15-20 Feature 1 Plan View at 40 cms**

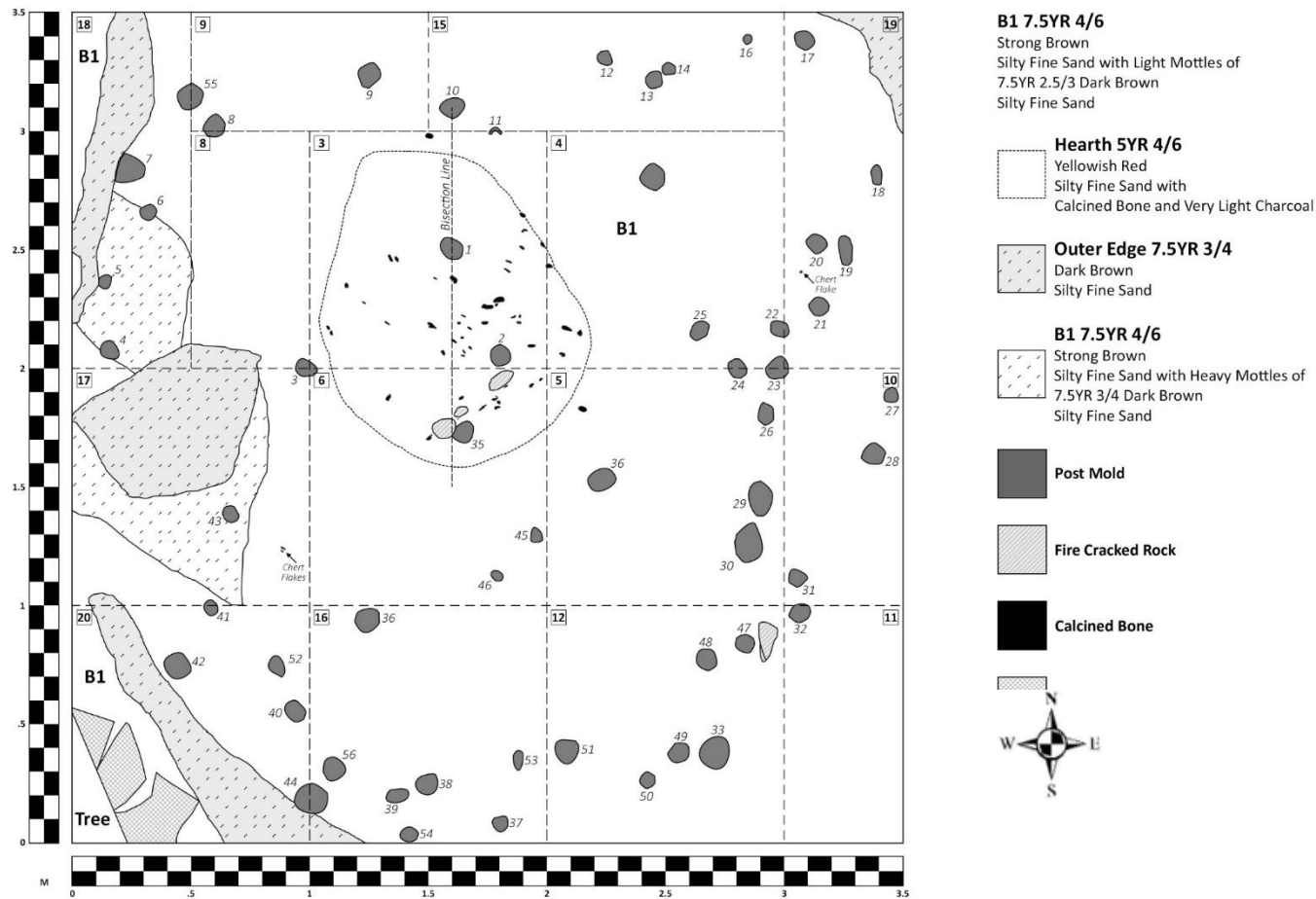


Figure 2: Plan drawing of Excavation Units at Site 25-25, with interior and exterior domestic features indicated.



Figure 3: Photograph of domestic features at subsoil interface at Site 25-25.



Figure 4: Tools recovered from Site 25-25, including a quartzite scraper (top), large chert biface tip (left) and chert projectile point tip (right).



Figure 5: Projectile points recovered from Site 25-20; left possible quartz Wading River and right chert Side Notched Brewerton.

THE HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY OF FORT DECATUR: AN UNDISTURBED WAR OF 1812 OCCUPATION IN LEDYARD, CONNECTICUT

DAVID R. GEORGE, MA, SUSANNAH C. GOETERS, BA, AND ERICA A. LANG, BA

HERITAGE CONSULTANTS, LLC

While at a ball in Washington, DC in December of 1812, President James Madison's wife, Dolly, received a communique relaying that Captain Stephen Decatur, as a result of masterful seamanship, tactical surprise, and grand heroism, had captured an important British warship, the HMS *Macedonian*, 500 miles south of the Azores. The HMS *Macedonian* was escorted back to New York harbor by Decatur's ship, the USS *United States*, for repairs after having been at sea for a considerable time. When Decatur disembarked at New York, a large spontaneous reception was held to exalt the Navy's newest hero. By late spring of 1813, repairs and refits to the *United States* and the newly renamed USS *Macedonian* were completed and the ships were once again prepared for action. Decatur, now elevated to the rank of Commodore, set sail with the *United States* and the *Macedonian*, as well as a sloop-of-war of 18 guns named the USS *Hornet*. Decatur attempted to run the British blockade of New York, but could not pass Sandy Hook due to the presence of the vastly superior British fleet. Instead, the three ships in the squadron sailed through Hell's Gate and out into Long Island Sound, where Decatur aimed to enter the Atlantic between Montauk Point and Block Island.

Upon reaching the eastern limits of the Long Island Sound, Decatur was stopped in his tracks once again when he and his crew sighted a squadron of ships under the command of Sir Thomas Hardy. They included the HMS *Ramillies* and the HMS *Valiant*, both 74-gun third class British ships-of-the-line, as well as two frigates, the HMS *Acasta* and HMS *Orpheus*. Decatur quickly surmised the disparity in the two forces and on June 1, 1813, made a run for New London, which was under the protection of the guns of Fort Griswold and Fort Trumbull. Several days later, Decatur thought he saw an opening in the British line and made ready to sail the *United States*, the *Macedonian*, and the *Hornet* back out of New London to head for the Atlantic. Before getting far he noted the presence the *Ramillies*, not far behind the *Valiant*. Decatur realized he was again out matched, and he returned to the safety of New London Harbor.

By mid-June of 1813, Decatur understood he could not break through the British blockade of New London and decided to alter his position. The *United States*, the *Macedonian*, and the *Hornet* were all lightened and sailed across the shallows of the Thames River upstream approximately eight miles to Gales Ferry in Ledyard. There, sheltered behind Allyn's Point, Commodore Decatur's squadron anchored. Decatur further strengthened his position by erecting a fortification, today called Fort Decatur. This defensive position was established on the crest of Dragon Hill (today Mount Decatur), which provided excellent views of the Thames River and approaches from both land and sea. Decatur ordered cannons be brought up to the fortification from the ship. This arduous task was done by a contingent of his men and teams of oxen. Local tradition also holds that Decatur's men drove iron stakes and rings into the bedrock on each side of the river and suspended an iron chain across the narrows to prevent British vessels from entering the area where Decatur and his men were entrenched.

While bottled up near Allyn's Point, Decatur and his men did not languish, but kept busy making preparations for returning down the Thames River and back into the Long Island Sound to rejoin the war. Between June and October of 1813, Decatur kept his men in a high state of readiness and frequently conducted maneuvers and live fire training exercises so that any sudden attack by the British on their position could be repelled. Decatur even established a makeshift school at Gales Ferry for the teaching of his officers and midshipmen. He also kept a garrison at the fort and his row guard on high alert for any sudden attack by the British.

In October of 1813, wanting to return his men and ships to the open sea, Commodore Decatur led the *United States*, the *Macedonian*, and the *Hornet* back down the Thames River in hopes of escaping the British blockade of New London that had sidelined them from the war. By mid-November, the three ships had safely returned to New London Harbor. They remained in the harbor for nearly a month, when Decatur finally determined that December 12th would be the night to break through the British line. As he moved his ships southward, Decatur reported seeing "blue lights" on either bank of the harbor and reported that they represented warning signals to the British of his intent. In the days and weeks following the incident, tensions ran high in New London and Decatur realized his presence there was a

liability. As a result, he once again turned his ships northward and returned to a point on the Thames River to the north of Fort Decatur and the iron chain, where he had the masts and yard arms removed from the *United States* and the *Macedonian*. They were stowed below decks and the two ships were laid up side by side along the river's edge. Only the *Hornet* remained ready to sail; it eventually slipped the British blockade in November of 1814. Shortly thereafter, Decatur returned to New York by land, and the effects of the war in New London were all but over.

Nearly 85 year later, on February 28, 1898, the Belton Allyn Society, G.A.R. (Grand Army of the Republic) of Gales Ferry memorialized the location of Fort Decatur and the events that took place there during the War of 1812. They commissioned the engraving of a large boulder on site with the following: *This boulder was marked by the Belton Allyn Society of the G.A.R of Gales Ferry as being the northern boundary of Fort Decatur that was erected in the years 1813 and 1814 to protect Decatur's fleet from the British. February 28, 1898.* The location of the boulder as the northern extent of the fort must have been correct because only three years later, in 1901, John Avery in his *History of Ledyard, 1650 to 1900* reported that the "old fortification is still extant, though in quite a dilapidated condition." Avery went on to describe the fort, saying "One side, fronting eastward, is 130 feet, more or less, in length. Another, fronting toward the southwest, and lying nearly at right angles with the river, is about 110 feet long. The remaining side, parallel with the river, is about 90 feet long. The fortification has long borne the name of Fort Decatur."

In December of 2021, 208 years after Decatur attempted to run the blockade at New London and 123 years after the fort was recognized by the Belton Allyn Society, G.A.R. of Gales Ferry, Heritage Consultants, LLC (Heritage) returned to the location to conduct archaeological investigations consisting of a visual reconnaissance of the upper limits of Mount Decatur, shovel testing, metal detection, and ground penetrating radar (GPR) survey. Almost immediately, visual reconnaissance of the area resulted in the relocation of the boulder inscribed by the Belton Allyn Society, G.A.R. of Gales Ferry. Pedestrian survey to the south of the boulder revealed a series of low ditches and stone work in roughly the shape of a diamond. Inspection of the fort remains also resulted in the identification of a series of stacked stones forming a circle at the southern tip of the fort. This feature was identified as a protective bastion for the fort and appears to have been designed to repel attacks from the south. The wall ditches were relatively shallow and measured approximately 1 meter (3.3 feet) in width. Finally, the southeastern wall of the fort was located atop a sheer bedrock outcrop measuring approximately 2.4 meters (8 feet) in height. From a visual perspective, the location and configuration of the fortification was well defined and appeared to remain in a good state of preservation (Figure 1).

Once Fort Decatur was identified, Heritage archaeologists fanned out and examined the remainder of the Mount Decatur area. Inspection of the area to the northwest of the fort revealed the presence of a large glacial erratic that had a semicircle of stones attached to its northern edge (Figure 2). The semicircle consisted of two to three courses of fieldstones placed strategically to provide what appeared to be the base of a protective structure. Numerous other stones appeared to have fallen downslope from this structure as well. This small structure measured approximately 2 x 2.5 meters (6.6 x 8.2 feet) in area. Because of its location on the northern slopes of Mount Decatur and its defensive character, this structure was determined to represent possible sentry or guard post that was associated with the use and occupation of Fort Decatur.

Heritage archaeologists excavated 50 x 50-centimeter (20 x 20 inch) shovel tests near the sentry/guard post and the fort. A shovel test in the center of the North sentry/guard post yielded 12 pieces of daub (Figure 3), charcoal, a machine cut nail, and two kaolin pipe bowl fragments that cross mended. The pipe bowl fragments could not be dated specifically, but they contain an embossed eagle and shield, which suggest that they dated from the early National period and not the Colonial era. The dense charcoal fragments, recovered from within a relatively thick layer, suggests the presence of a hearth feature between the large glacial erratic and the ring of stones that formed the boundary of the sentry post. Based on the ring of stones, disassociated stones down slope, hearth, and daub artifacts, this sentry/guard post was likely a partially enclosed structure. Shovel tests placed within and near Fort Decatur itself yielded only three artifacts, including two precontact era quartz bifacial thinning flakes and a single shard of bottle glass. This was interesting because, despite the obvious presence of the fort as represented by the inscribed boulder, the trenchwork, and the southern bastion, very few artifacts were collected during shovel testing.

After collecting very few artifacts from shovel tests, Heritage archaeologists turned to metal detection. This proved to be a very fruitful avenue of research. Metal detectorists recovered numerous examples of clothing items, fasteners,

military objects, and miscellaneous and unidentified items from Fort Decatur and the northwestern sentry/guard post. The clothing related items included a copper alloy buckle and a pewter button. The latter dates from ca., 1800 to 1830 and correlates well with the date of occupation of Fort Decatur. Fasteners collected from the Fort Decatur area, as well as near the sentry post, included whole and partial machine cut nails dating from the 19th century and an iron tack. The fasteners may have been used in the construction of the fort or the sentry/guard post. The metal detecting survey also resulted in the recovery of nearly two dozen examples of musket balls, some of which were consistent with the buck and ball loads commonly carried during the War of 1812 (Figure 4). Most of these were intact and may have represented accidental losses; however, some were flattened because they were fired and struck a hard object. As described above, Commodore Decatur purportedly trained cadets in the area, which may explain the impacted musket balls. Miscellaneous objects recovered from the area included an iron tube fragment and what appeared to be a complete copper tube measuring approximately 10 centimeters (4 inches) in length. The latter had a wooden dowel on its interior that clearly served some function. The exact purpose of the tubes remains unknown. The other miscellaneous objects recovered during the metal detecting survey included an early iron chain link, the purpose of which was unknown. Finally, the metal detecting survey result in the recovery of 12 unidentified objects made of iron, cast iron, and lead. Most of the artifacts described above were found clustered around the fort location and the sentry/guard post, indicating that these two locations were the primary activities areas of soldiers on Mount Decatur (Figure plan). These artifacts also clearly demonstrate that both locations were occupied by American soldiers. They are rare examples of items related to a military occupation dating from the War of 1812.

Heritage archaeologists also conducted limited GPR survey across Fort Decatur, including six transects that cut across the fortification. Of these, two transects proved particularly important for understanding the soil stratigraphy associated with construction of the fort. These two transects clearly displayed evidence of the trenches that comprised the fort. That is, vertical cuts in the stratigraphy are evident in both trench areas, as well as increased dielectric contrast. The latter was indicative of mixing of plowzone and subsoil sediments in the trench areas, which would be expected as the local soils were disturbed by trench excavation. The GPR survey also revealed important information on the eastern side of the fort, where it was built atop a bedrock outcrop. The bedrock outcrop was represented by the long linear reflection in the GPR data, and it was no doubt an important feature in determining the location of the fort by Decatur; it provided a naturally defensible position (Figure 5). The radar profile associated with the outcrop also may indicate that fill soils were deposited on top of the outcrop, as part of the fort construction, to elevate and level off this area. This soil may have been transported from a large borrow pit that is located approximately 17 meters (56 feet) to the west of the fort.

Heritage archaeologists also conducted an inspection of the shoreline of the Thames River. They identified a large iron ring pinned into a large glacial boulder along the waterline at Point Breeze on the opposite side of the river from Fort Decatur. The iron ring was situated to the north of a wharf the purportedly dates from Colonial times. Unfortunately, no matching ring has been identified to date on the eastern side of the Thames River below Fort Decatur, but the find made by Heritage indicates that the story of Decatur stringing an iron chain across the river at the narrows may just be true.

The recent archaeological investigation of Fort Decatur and the various associated landscape features demonstrate that they exhibit a remarkable degree of depositional and historical integrity, perhaps the best-preserved example of a War of 1812 fortification remaining in the nation. There is no other War of 1812 fortification within the United States that has such a short occupational history and is a single component site; nearly all other fortifications during this war were built or occupied on top of or within Revolutionary War era forts, or were reused during the Civil War. The Fort Decatur site is of National significance, and it bears witness to some of the important, but little remembered, events of the War of 1812 in New England. Heritage continues to work in tandem with the owner of the land on which Fort Decatur is located to preserve it in perpetuity so that the tangible remnants of the events that took place there endure into the future.

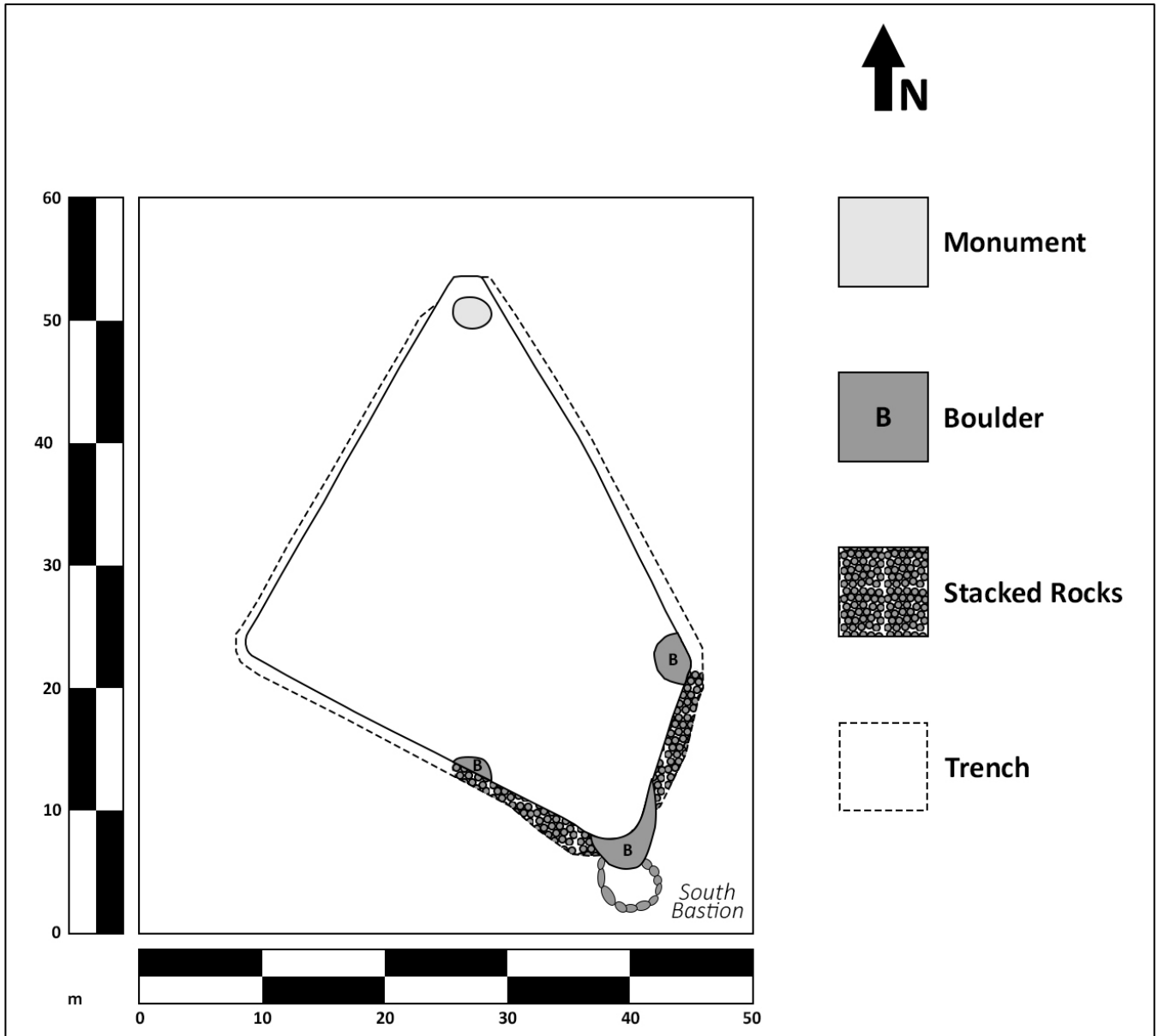


Figure 1: Plan drawing of Fort Decatur remnants.



Figure 2: Remnants of North Sentry post, on the northern slopes of Mount Decatur, looking east.



Figure 3: Daub recovered from STP within the North Sentry/Guard Post.



Figure 4: Buck and Ball lead shot recovered from Fort Decatur.

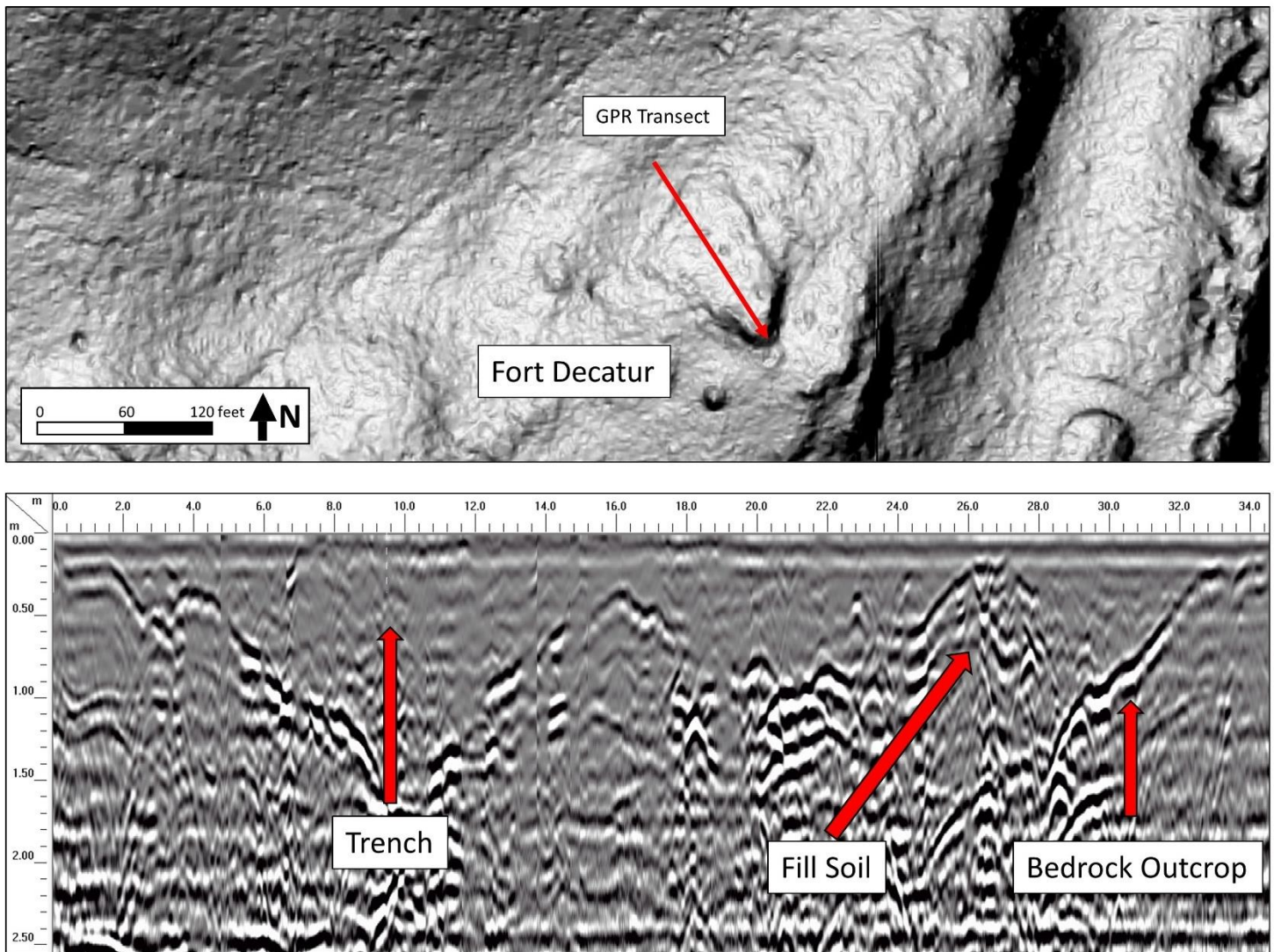


Figure 5: LiDAR map (above) of Fort Decatur, with relevant GPR transect indicated. GPR profile (bottom) displays interpretations of Fort Decatur Stratigraphy.

CALENDAR

To help members plan their calendars, we post the dates of meetings of interest in Connecticut and neighboring states, not mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter. Please contact the editor with any meetings you are aware of which you feel would be of interest to the membership.

March 9-11, 2023, Middle Atlantic Archaeological

Conference (MAAC), Ocean City, MD

March 25, 2023, FOASA Annual Meeting, Farmington, CT

March 29-April 2, 2023, Society for American Archaeology (SAA) Annual Meeting, Portland, OR

April 14-16, 2023, Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology Annual Meeting, DuBois, PA

April 21-23, 2023, 104st Annual Conference of the New York State Archaeological Association, Suffern, NY

May 6, 2023, ASC Spring Meeting, South Windsor, CT

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Membership Form

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