SHEEP PEN SITE, ERIE CANAL VILLAGE, N.Y.

by

DR. ELLIS E. MCDOWELL-LOUDAN

and

MR. GARY L. LOUDAN

APRIL, 1983

ABSTRACT

Emergency archeology continues in New York State. If historic Fort Bull I were found at the Sheep Pen Site within the Erie Canal Village Historic Park, the Victorian house scheduled to be relocated there might be placed elsewhere. An undisturbed prehistoric campsite fares less well. Ethical and historical considerations and the themes of human heritage are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

As many of you have tolerated two years of discussions about the search for Fort Bull I at Erie Canal Village, and as you were promised some update on Cathy Bair's analysis of the ceramics from the 1981 excavations and Gilbert Hagerty's on-going efforts to help us, this presentation will not be a complete disappointment to you on all counts. Mrs. Bair (Beauchamp Chapter) completed her 59 pages of struggle, apparently leaving no sherd unanalyzed, all of Gordon DeAngelo's, Peter and Marjorie Pratt's type collections, libraries, and brains picked clean, to present us with the unpopular conclusion that none of the ceramics from the 1981 excavations were appropriate to the 1750's Fort Bull I time (Bair manuscript). The site has a fine assortment of ceramics of interest to those studying the 1800's and early 1900's, however, and the analysis of these materials reveals that those who dumped on the site discarded or lost almost exclusively British materials, reflecting for us a narrow range of international trade for the residents. As far as Gilbert Hagerty's researches of the metal button and musket balls are concerned, he was not able to provide any definitive evidence, either.

Therefore, we concluded that where we worked in 1981 did not appear to have been where any recognizable materials from Fort Bull I remained. We conferred with personnel from Erie Canal Village, and by letter and telephone with the Rome Historical/Tourism Commission presenting our conclusions. At that time, we presented our evaluation of the most and least likely places to look next, and suggested that additional testing in places where they were considering placing the Victorian house would be helpful. All was quiet until the start of June, 1982. Then, the picture changed.

We received a frantic telephone call from Mary Reynolds of Erie Canal Village telling us that not only had a new area been chosen for the relocation of the Victorian house, but that architects had been there and the area was surveyed and staked out ready for action. Excavations for the foundation and footers was scheduled within the next two or three days. Could we come? We were in the midst of our work at Roberson Site in Binghamton (McDowell-Loudan 1982, 1983) but this was the mystery we felt duty-bound to keep fighting.

THE SHEEP PEN SITE

Due to these startling revisions in the planned relocation of the Victorian house at Erie Canal Village, Rome, Oneida County, New York, the SUNY Cortland Archeology Field School undertook a two-day emergency reconnaissance and salvage project within an area of the reconstructed village referred to as "the sheep pen". It had been the plan, as discussed earlier in the year, to locate the house in an open "island" of land between Clinton's Ditch and the site of Wood Creek Fort, as marked by the DAR Historic Marker.

Unexpectedly, it was discovered that limitations in the space available in that location due to the presence of an early 1900's brick-lined sewer paralleling Clinton's Ditch, and an abrupt change of plans occurred, surveying and landscaping procedures were started, and the new house location was staked out within the sheep pen, without consultation with archeologists. Concern over this omission led Village personnel to notify the writers urging that some checking of the house site occur before excavations for the house foundation took place.

On June 3, 1982, the writers, Gordon DeAngelo, the SUNY Cortland Archeology Field School crew, and students from the 1981 field school crew who were available, rushed to the Village to undertake emergency subsurface inspections. Mary Reynolds, Acting Curator of the Village, arranged for Clarence Brainerd, Village Caretaker, to strip the sod from areas where foundation digging was to occur. The first small scrape uncovered a <u>pile</u> of flint debitage and scattered fire-cracked rock; the second scrape, to the west of the first, yielded a <u>larger</u> concentration of flint debitage, tools, and broken tool fragments, ash, cracked rock, and a curved area of greasy, ashy soil. The scraping action had dislodged much of the material but it was possible to create approximate maps of the concentrations and to measure their horizontal and vertical distributions. Once this was done, the artifactual material from these two distinct loci was bagged by locus and notes were taken as to the appearance of the subsurface soils.

On June 8, 1982, with even more of the 1981 field school crew appearing as volunteers, the crew returned to the site to shovelexcavate test pits at intervals along the perimeter of the stakedout house foundation area. This location, we noted once the vegetation had been cut and the topography had been revealed, was slightly higher than the land outside the staked sections. The difference in elevation is no more than two or three feet, however, often less than that. As the test pits were scattered outward from this high point, the cultural content declined, suggesting that the higher ground marked the location of a camping site or habitation of some sort.

On June 9, 1982, the field crew had to return to the Roberson Site, but fortunately, Gordon DeAngelo returned to Erie Canal Village to monitor the trenching operations and observe cultural associations. Due to heavy rain and erosion after excavations had occurred, the trenches were severly undercut in some areas. DeAngelo mapped and photographed them, profiling walls and plotting artifacts in situ. His notes are informative at this point and are quoted here:

"While scraping down the west wall a discoid biface knife was found embedded in the wall about a foot below the surface. Beauchamp member, Peter Pratt, suggested that it is of Paleo-Indian origin. Due to hydrostatic pressure, large slabs of the clay subsoil kept falling into the trench leaving the six to eight inch occupation layer undercut and held together with turf rootlets. Because of this, dirt and stones kept falling out of the roots. At one point, while (I) was trowelling down a profile (I) heard a patter of dirt accompanied by the clink of flint and felt something hit (my) foot. It was a three inch perfect projectile point...'It probably knew there was somebody there who cared--and didn't want to be left behind'. The typology of this point is questionable. From a distance the shape looks like an Early Woodland Meadowood point--but is much thicker than the usual Meadowoods.

As one 'wag' put it: 'It is either the worst Meadowood or the best Brewerton side-notched I've ever seen.'"

Excavations and controlled collections occurred in twenty different locations, consisting of 16 test pits (3' squares) and 4 other loci resulting from the scraping operations. Gordon's trench monitoring may be located, along with these other testing areas, on the map.

Preliminary analysis of the materials from the two-day excavations and mappings yielded the following information: flint was utilized almost to the exclusion of all other lithic materials. For example, there were 2,391 flint flakes, 9 jasper flakes, 2 quartzite flakes, and 1 quartz flake retrieved, as well as 18 flint points or segments of points, and 2 chalcedony point fragments. Of the utilized flakes or worked pieces, 41 were flint, and 1 was jasper.

There appears to have been a steaming or roasting pit or trench present and vast quantities of water and heat-shattered rock were found in this trench and distributed around the site. As we undertook experiments with lithic materials similar to those found in this area, noting that the shattering product appears to require both water and heat, we feel confident that some sort of steaming process was carried out at the site (McDowell-Loudan 1983). Therefore, in addition to some flint tool-manufacturing (debitage, a flint core, two hammerstones, a flint nodule, and numerous broken flint tools were found) at the site, especially in areas near squares 8, 10, and 14, as well as loci #1 and #3, food-processing with steam was occurring in and near locus #3 where the trench was encountered. Locus #3 was also where the majority of the flint projectile points and other worked objects were found (14 points, 26 worked or utilized pieces of flint, and 1 core).

Scattered in the uppermost portions of the topsoil, were slivers of clear (7) or green (37) glass, 35 diverse fragments of rusty metal, tiny brick bits, kaolin pipe fragments, and 2 tiny china fragments, the historic component. We expect Cathy Bair to devote another 59 pages to analysis of these two china fragments.

Of unknown age and species, in most cases, are the 49 fragments of bone and animal teeth. There are definite rodent and ungulate teeth but others are unidentified, so far.

The nature, quantities, and variety of the artifactual materials suggest temporary site usage, probably on more than one occasion, with at least one occupation including a relatively large steam-cooking event. Tool manufacture and repair occurred here, too, with what appears to have been the discard of exhausted tools, or broken ones, in a refuse pit or pile near the steaming pit. As the site is located within a pen which had contained sheep as part of the atmosphere for the Village, and since the area was part of a cattle and pig farm prior to its use for sheep, the scatter of historic materials may reflect the scant human usage, except indirectly for livestock maintenance, one might predict in such areas. In contrast, there were hundreds of pieces of broken crockery, glass, and metal found in the 1981 excavations in the "island" where dumping had been concentrated.

From what can be determined from Mary Reynolds and Clarence Brainerd, it appears that the Sheep Pen Site has not been plowed or modified extensively for the past twenty or thirty years. We did not note evidence of plowing during our testing, either. The shallow locations of concentrations of flint debitage, the presence of the rock-filled trench, and the apparent clustering of materials throughout the site, seem to point to relatively undisturbed soils.

DISCUSSION

We had hoped that this strategically-located prehistoric site, with its discrete activity areas illustrating camping, tool-making, and cooking-heating by pre-European groups, would warrant further archeological study and incorporation into the Village's portrayal of human heritage. For a site within a center for historical study to be destroyed without this consideration seemed very unfortunate. We were told that the only thing which would stop the Victorian house project would be clear evidence of Fort Bull I. Although we found two musket balls, we did not locate any other Revolutionary War or 1750's materials. What we did find was too early to interest the decision-makers, it appears.

From the viewpoint of a theme at the Village, our latest contributions to the understanding of what occurred near Wood Creek prior to 1800 is of interest. Throughout prehistoric as well as historic times, waterways have been significant for travel, subsistence, and rendezvous. Erie Canal Village was constructed to tell part of the story of early historic travel, trade, and settlement, along Clinton's Ditch, the Erie Canal, and the Barge Canal. For increased time depth to the desplays at the Village, Fort Bull (Hagerty 1971) is commemorated with a DAR marker located on the site of a slightly later fort, Fort Wood Creek. Efforts are made, within the museum exhibits at the Village, to tell the story of the Oneida Carry and its trials and tribulations resulting from competition for land, wealth, power, of European groups and their varied Amerindian allies or enemies. Travel, trade, competition, changing land use, engineering skiils, settlement patterns, are all stressed, as are the changes in the artifacts which reflect these developments. Why, then, is it any less important and any less significant to portray the earlier usage of the Wood Creek/Oneida Carry sites as they were exploited long before Europeans began to do so? Certainly, those who visited Erie Canal Village were excited by the historic and prehistoric evidence our field school crew was finding in both 1980 (searching for part

of the original Clinton's Ditch) and 1981 (attempting to find evidence of Fort Bull I) as we made our test excavations and described what we were doing to visitors. The children in school tours, a large number from 5th grade and other classes which have units on archeology and New York State Indians, were fascinated by our work, some even returned with their families on other days to see us. Their teachers were pleased to have an opportunity to illustrate things discussed in classes, something which the Village could incorporate into their fine display system without extensive changes in current practices.

To have located a discrete prehistoric camp site, overlooking the creek, adjacent to the known fort, and beyond the current extent of the (later) Village buildings, was an event which might have provided a new tourist attraction based upon the previous theme of the Village and expanding upon it. Setting a relocated Victorian house on the spot seems much less advantageous and informative. The house is some distance away from the reconstructed Erie Canal itself, which the house is supposed to have overlooked in its original siting. By the time Victorian homes were the style, the Erie Canal had undergone extensive changes, expansions, and modifications, and was about to be replaced with the Barge Canal System (Wyld 1967: 13-15). To provide a chronological sequence of displays around the Village, placement of the Victorian house in a location more distant from the earliest displays might have been appropriate. Then, one might have moved from the modern areas near the parking lot, through the set of "canal-time" buildings, including the Victorian house (perhaps behind the earlier buildings), to the site (s) of the forts, and the earlier Indian camps, providing a range of human heritage which encompasses prehistoric and historic groups and their interactions. We were saddened that there was no opportunity to contribute this type of expanded perspective.

REFERENCES CITED

Bair, Cathleen J. 1982 Erie Canal Village Ceramic Analysis from the Archaeological Excavation of June, 1981. manuscript of file at SUNY Cortland.

Hagerty, Gilbert

1971 Massacre at Fort Bull: The deLery Expedition against Oneida Carry 1756. Mowbray Company, Publishers. Providence.

McDowell-Loudan, Ellis E.

1982 The Roberson Site. Chesopiean 20(3-4).

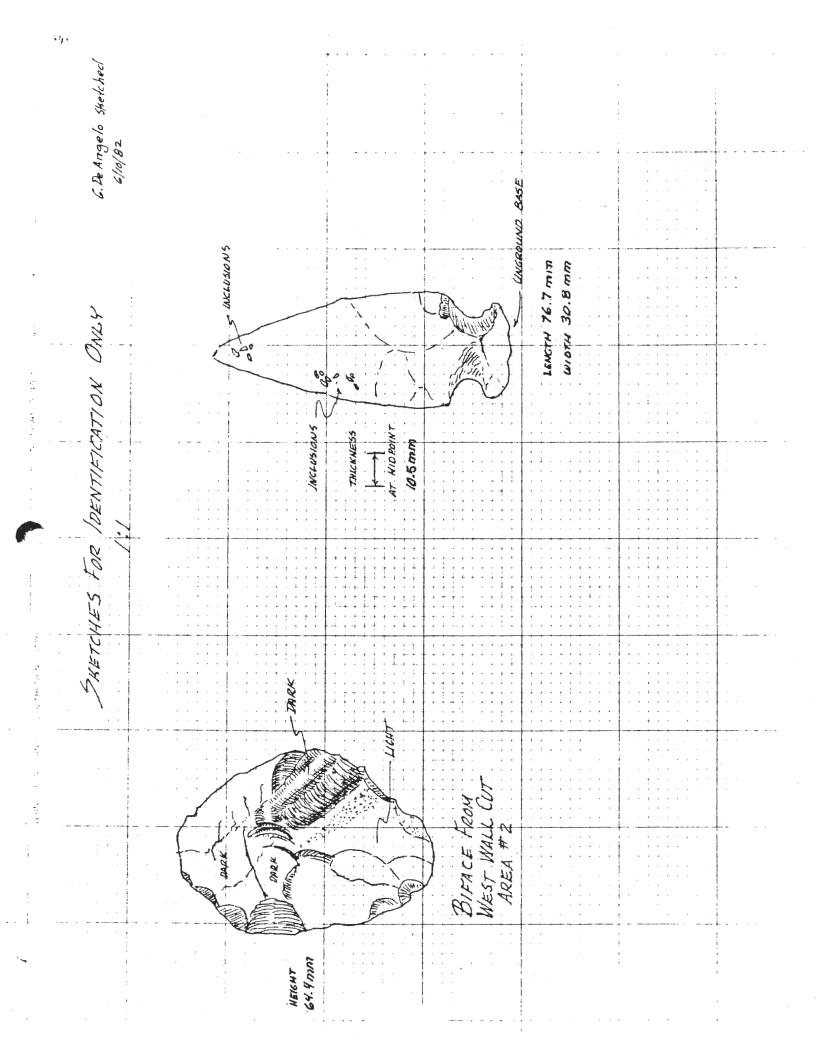
McDowell-Loudan, Ellis E.

1983 Fire-Cracked Rock: Preliminary Experiments to Determine its Nature and Significance in Archeological Contexts. Chesopiean 21(1): 20-29.

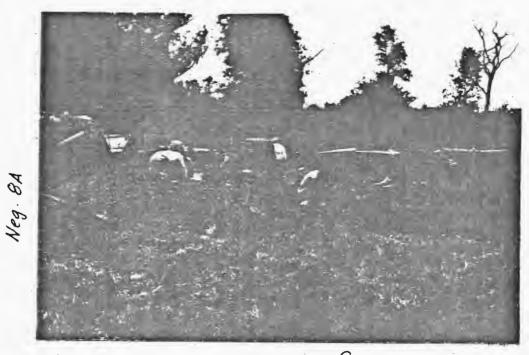
Wyld, Lionel D., editor

1967 40' X 28' X 4': The Erie Canal--150 Years. Oneida County Erie Canal Commemoration Commission. Rome.

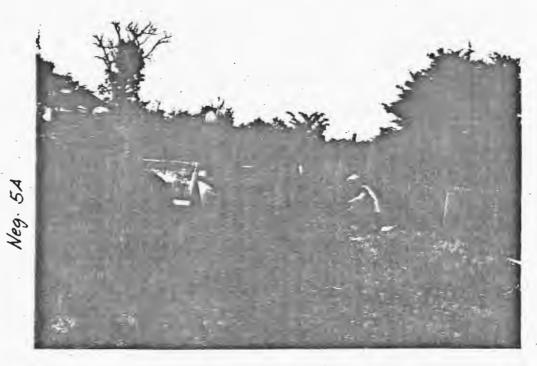
1.54 30 6. De Angelo drafted 4 4 8 82 6/10/82 and parallel to it SCALE 1"=10'-End of Profile Fire cracked rock 5 1111111 line Bottom of Excavation ? 9-6 2"dia Biface JUBSOIL DARK STAINED TOPSOIL 2' TWEST OF M EAVY CLA ULIANS they of charcod 107 -WAL M. M. M. ALLIN ,95.9' ELEV. E-F LINE NEST UNHODIFIED AREA # 1 ROCK Poct) A. A. Martin



Photos 1-4, ,1982



(1) Looking SW Point A in foreground Point B right background



(2) Looking WNW



Looking SW. Point G right foreground Point E in background. (3)



Photos 5-19 JUNE 9, 1982

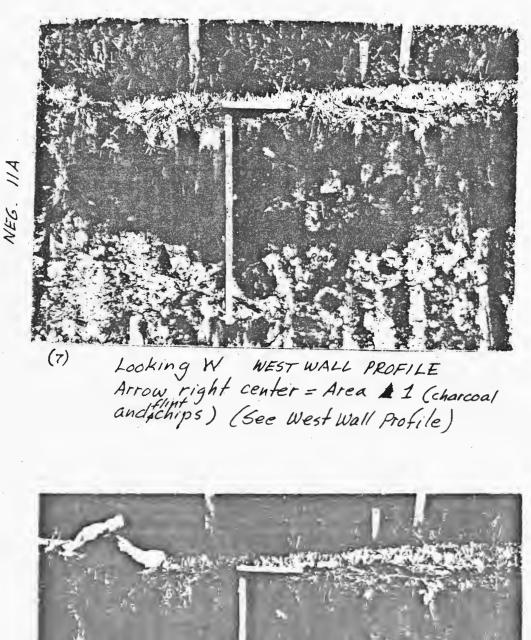


(5) Looking SW from entrance to Sheep Pen. Point A in foreground



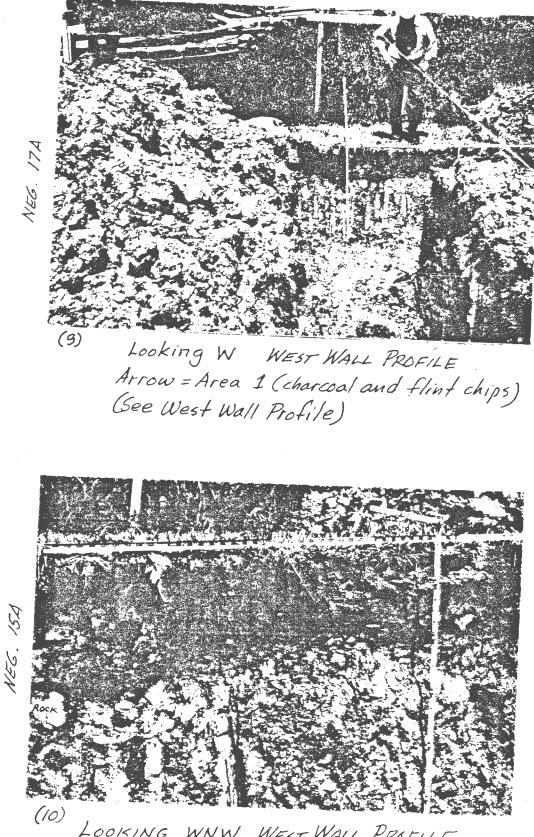
Looking WNW. Line F.G in foreground

94 NEG.



NEG. 12A

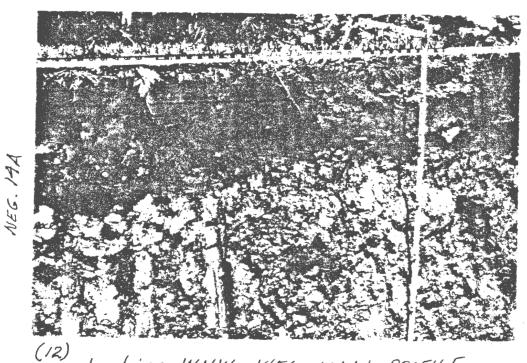
(8) Looking W WEST WALL PROFILE Arrow right center = Area 1 (charcoal and flint chips) (See West Wall Profile)



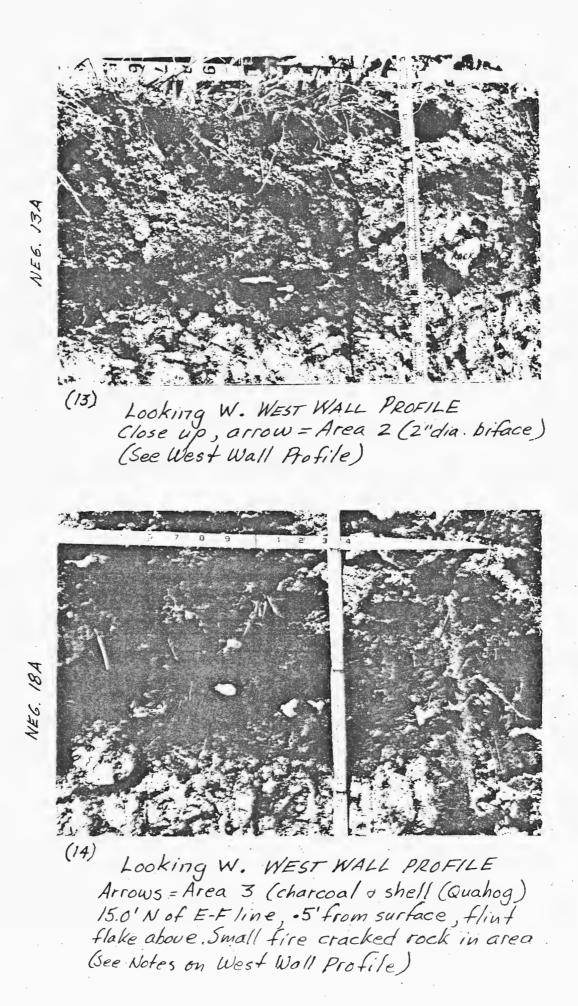
LOOKING WNW WEST WALL PROFILE Arrow to left = Area 1 (charcoal and flint chips) Arrow to right = Area 2 (2"dia. bitace) (see West Wall Dr. (11)

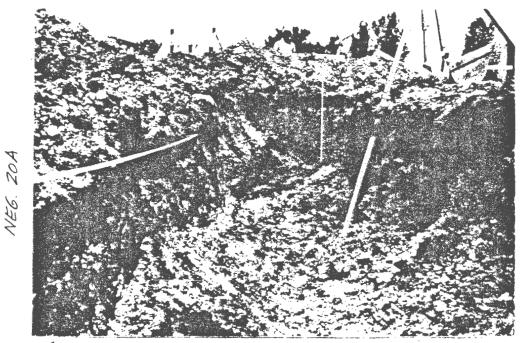


(11) Looking WNW. WEST WALL PROFILE Arrow to left = Area 1 (charcoal + flint chips) Arrow to right = Area 2 (2"dia bitace) (See West Wall Profile)

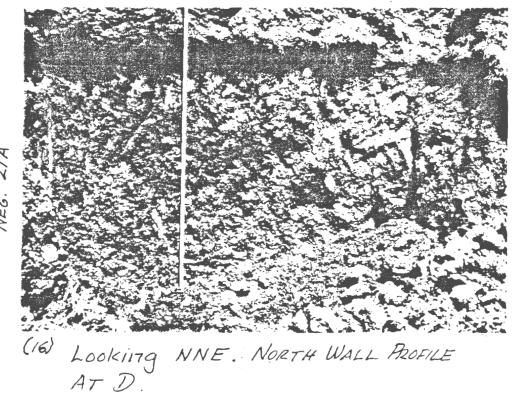


Looking WNW. WEST WALL PROFILE (As in 11 above)

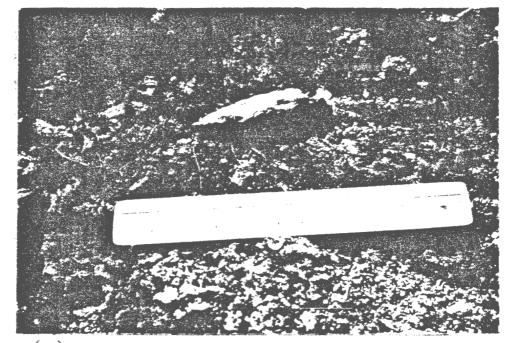




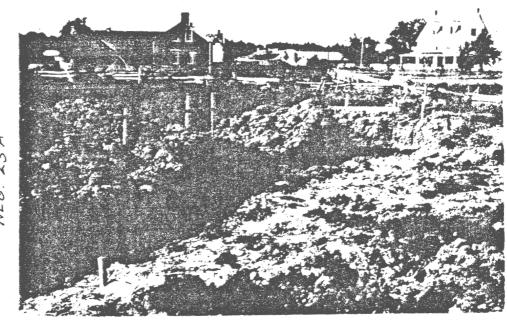
(15) Looking NNE along D-F LINE WITH NORTH WALL AT D IN BACKGROUND. WEST WALL PROFILE TO LEFT.



NEG. 21A



(17) CLOSE UP OF PROJECTILE POINT WHILL FELL INTO D-E TRENCH ER FROM EAST WALL OCCUPATION LAYER (See Plans) (22.0'N of E-F line)



(18) Looking N. Corner D in background

NEG. 23 A

NEG. 19A



(19) Looking NE. Corner D in left background Corner B in center background.

SQUARE	r I	1	1												ſ	1	(PIT)	(LOC)	\RE	AS)
LOCATIO.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	6/11	#1	#2	#3
POINTS						1f			1f	2 c								2f		14f
FLAKES	12f	lf	20f	3f	1f	27£	2qu	2 81f	53f	260£	4f	37£	5f	*117f	7£	2f	19f	500£	9f	1128f
CERAMICS	3*		2p							9j 1q 1k										12p2h
CORES												lf								1f
SCRAPERS +	1f		2f						1f	3f		1f	2f				lf			25f 1j
GLASS	22					1		1	1	2		1	1					2		13
METAL			2						1	7 1m	2	1					1	1	4	1m 14n
SANDSTONE							1					-			1					
JASPER									,						1					
CHARCOAL	8	1	7	1			3	9	6	7	1	13		9	6		2	13	16	38
HAMMERST.													1							1
TESTH/BONE										5										44
EISE-CRACK ROCK	3		13+	3		1+			1	6							+	68+	86	304+
OTHER			1b							30+ъ			10							lf dril

+=and others

*=burned

feilint

c=chalcedony

k=kaolin

h=historic

n=nail/rusty

b=brick bits

m=musketball

q=quartz

qu=quartzite

o=ocher/hematite

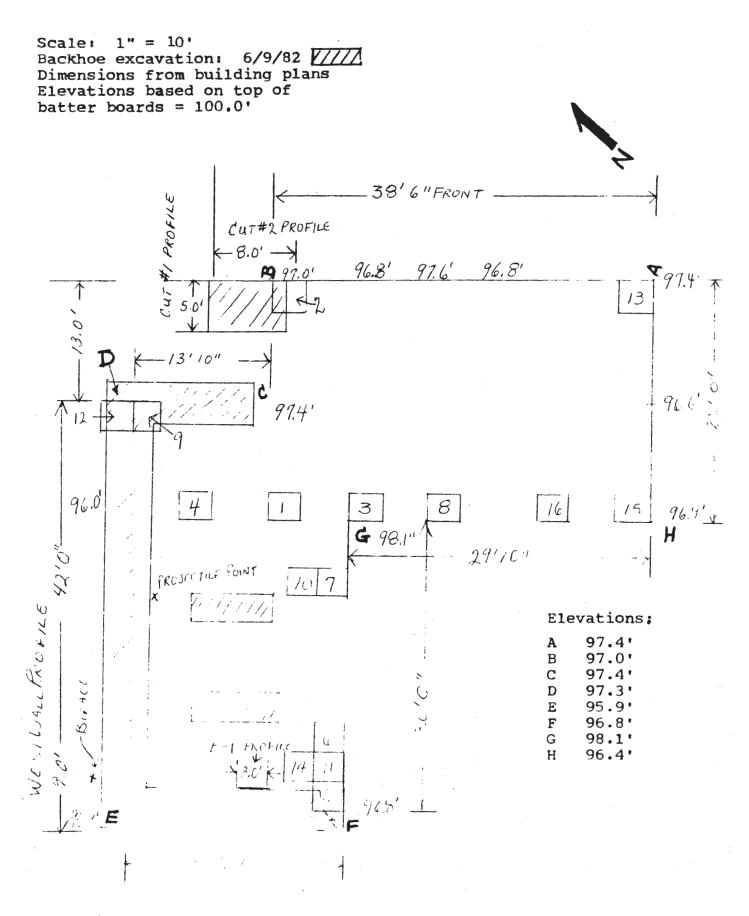
p=prehistoric/grit-tempered

SHEEP PEN SITE ARTIFACT DISTRIBUTIONS

1982 EXCAVATIONS

data added 6/10/82
by G.C. DeAngelo)

ERIE CANAL VILLAGE SHEEP PEN SITE



ERIE CANAL VILLAGE SHEEP PEN SITE

In the summer and fall of 1982, Sandra Buxton, an Anthropology Minor and Geology Major at SUNY Cortland, undertook an Independent Study of the diagnostic artifacts found at the Sheep Pen Site in Erie Canal Village during the reconnaissance and subsurface testing in June, 1982. Her concentration was upon the scant projectile points and other worked stone artifacts found during the investigations and utilized the <u>Typology and Nomenclature of New York State Projectile</u> <u>Points</u> by William A. Ritchie as a major source. Other sources of reference included booklets prepared by the New York State Department of Education, Archeology Section, in which discussion of projectile points and point typology occur. The analysis was overseen by Dr. Ellis E. McDowell-Loudan, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, of SUNY Cortland, and it was she who evaluated the work and advised the student during the research.

Attached are the work sheets prepared by Sandra Buxton, and a map of the Sheep Pen Site to enable the reader to refer to site locations while reading the analytical materials. The analyses are not necessarily accurate in all cases, but a general view of temporal and typological emphases may be gained from the opinions of Ms. Buxton.

From her evaluations of the materials found and the attributes of the artifacts she studied, most of the artifacts seem to relate to the Archaic Stage of Cultural Development. There are questionable specimens with broken and/or reworked features which could not be typed, but others seem to fit Ritchie's type categories quite well.

Her descriptions are relatively general; the "possible types" given in her statements are listed in the order of their closest similarity.

Dr. Ellis E. McDowell-Loudan

Erie Canal Village -tom 3 Etw Much F.C.R. 6/3/87 This lager produced an alundance of Prints and Parint pieces also found in this larger were Pieces of glass (some tinted grean), fine cracked rock, charcoal, muted nails; bone, clay pipe, china, a bullet and a parable drill and flates Points 1) Connot description: 13/4" in length; I" in midth at broadent point, across Shoulders. 6/16" thickness Slightly nounded upper lateral idea. Mark Shaulders; long, contracting, rounded stem. Nading River - Pate archaic. " asaible " inpes: Rosselle - Very Pate Ouchaic vana - Ening Woodland

@ Ground description: Upper parties of Present missing, Wildth of the 13/16 Witth a ross Abandolers (17/16". notched. That is the \sum Jossible types: Vistal - tate and Bruneton - Middle auton. 36 mend description: Upper portion of point missing. Width of hose 14/16 latual edges struight. Bose relatively Straight. Average Huckma. 3/16 Possible types: Stenkenv: 11e - Onchair? Genesee - Mid+late archa Comeser - Midslate anchance (4) Connal description: 2 haves both $\left[\right]$ with upper portion missing. Both have straight have mad Straight Love latent edges tapering to the undia ai mare au , 3/10" Alick.

I and the types. Comme - I ate Muddle Woodland Stanhenville - and and? Jacks Reef - Tate Middle Wiedland Dema Linniption Base of Paint broken off. Upper lat und edgin une rounded, converging to a tip. Therefores at neck is 3/16". I ength from tip to Showlder is 110/16". Width across "Showlder is 110/16". Width across this specimen is side a come notched. Possible types : Sylven - tete Cuchaic. Brementon - Whid Cuchaic. Comiser - mid + late anchaic Bare Istand - Mid + tate anchara General Description Pentagonal, Stemless. 16/16" in length. I" in milth (6)4/16" in the Kneed Base is relatively Straight tome set and edges are Stright and purchel suded. Upper lateral edges are straight and converge to a tip.

1

Demand description i I points. Lith with one come of Less missing. Roth have noticeally concine bases and istracht or Very Shightly concome lateral edges. - Congthe is from are 14/10th and 1/10. Wild that have u Impossible to determine due to broken come but probably measured about 12/16 Possible type: Levanna - Parte Middle Wordlan places making it deficult to determine Whether it was Straight, concare etc. Finely plaked Dimensions of broken piece; length 15/16 midth 14/16 - Thickness 3/16" Passible types: Beekman - Archance Hevanna - Pate Widdle Woodland Madison - tate Woodland > Mista

Square 6 618182 This square produced one broken point along with flakes, firecracked rock, clear glass Paint @ Commend description: appears to be broken at either one come of base on the other. Base is markedly concare. Pateral edges are slightly concare: thength is roughly 1" and width also about 1" 180 proves Thickness is about 3/16th of an inch Desille type: Madison - Pote Woodland > Xist. Passibly Levanna - tate Middle Woodla Passibly a Small drill. Square 9 Sod and toam tages 6/8/82

This larger produced one apparently intole pariet Other items found in this larger were charcol, glass, fire cracked rock and a motel spring-like gaget with thooks on either end.

Point



(10) Conneal description: This point is Small and triangular in shape. -fatual edges are Straight and base is Very Slightly concave. The point is "5/16" in length and "2/16" in width. It is 2/16" thick. D'me side is obviously side notched while the other sid lacks an obvious notch.

Passible type: Brementon Ean Notched - middle archaic

Square 10 5 od and toam fayer 6/8/82

This layer produced 2 pieces of bookin points. One piece is too small to type. Also found were pieces of bone and tath, since channel weeks, etc. sted in the

Point D General description This very colorful specimen is broken .- t both base and tip. Lippen lateral edges are gently rounded and seen to converge slightly Without the complete base it is difficult to determine whether the paint is notched, contracting stemmed, Straight Stemmed etc. Shoulder are obvious. Widthours shoulders is 14/16", Thickness 3/16 " and length as impossible to determine Possible types: Otten Creek - Early - Mid Onchain Town # 1 Think Frature 6/3/82 This low produced 2 fiers of broken paints along with a Ving large mucher of plakes, some Charcoal, tinted grass, considered metal and a large number of fire cracked rocks Pount.

(2) 6 mund des night on : Point is holden at Lisbroken point is broad and "Hib" thick. It is devices for not ched. 15/16" is it it across the shoulder. Upper tip and come of her and partly Shoulder latural edges are Shightly to mederately rounded. The base is very Slightly concave, almost Straight. Pasaible type: Brementon corner- not ched-mid lichan (3) General description: Point is broken about have. Auteral edges are Slightly rounded converging to a tip. Cannot be typed mithaut base.

SANDRA BUXTON SUMMER/FALL 1982