

## Report on the 2023 Excavations at the Joseph Howland/ C-5 Homesite



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### Summary

The 2023 investigations at the Joseph Howland/ C-5 homesite were carried out from September 4-7 with a small group of descendants and non-Howland volunteers. The goal of this year's excavations was the further investigation of the possible hearth area identified in 2022 and the search for the south side/ front of the house. The 2022 excavations reinforced Derrek Wheeler's finding that many artifacts were missed and left in the backdirt by the 1950s and 1960s excavations by James Deetz, as a result, soils this year were extensively screened with only small pieces of brick, modern charcoal, modern bottle glass, and undiagnostic shell fragments not being saved. The 2023 excavations identified what appears to be the south side/ front foundation of the house and further defined what is left of the hearth base. It is recommended that the Pilgrim John Howland Society take at least a year off of any excavations, formal or informal, at the site and decide what the ultimate goal of the work at the site is.

### Background

Joseph Howland located his homesite on the west side of Howland Lane on Rocky Nook peninsula in Kingston, Massachusetts, approximately 27' above sea level on a west-facing terrace above wetlands associated with the Jones River. Joseph Howland initially built on, and occupied, the property, probably in the 1660s soon after he and Elizabeth Southworth married. Joseph was born across Howland Lane at his parents' homesite around 1640. He and Elizabeth, daughter of Captain Thomas Southworth, a prominent Plymouth resident, married ca 1665. This report assumes, and this is backed up by the archaeological data, that Joseph and Elizabeth were the first occupants of the property on the west side of Howland Lane, and that they built the house here soon after their

marriage in 1665. It was common in 17th century Plymouth Colony for newly married children to establish their own home, often in close proximity or even on their parent's land, upon marriage. Upon Joseph's death, the property passed to his son James who continued to live on the property with his family until he sold it to Benjamin Lothrop in 1735.

Two programs of archaeological excavations are known to have occurred at the site, although illicit, but limited, pothunting occurred as well. Local residents and Howland descendants knew of the site prior to the start of Deetz's excavations. Deetz succeeded in locating the original chimney and two cellar holes associated with the house but was unable to discern the footprint of the building itself. Deetz's work was followed a generation later by Derek Wheeler who focused his investigations, albeit accidentally, on the yard areas to the south and west of the house itself, providing us with an unprecedented glimpse into how Joseph organized that space around his house, while Deetz's work gave us a glimpse of the house itself.

Deetz's excavations at the Joseph Howland homesite began on July 30, 1959, and he finished the report by August 13 of the same year. In it, he presented a conclusion suggesting that two buildings once occupied the site, a view that he reaffirmed in his 2000 book *The Times of Their Lives*. The buildings, as he saw them, consisted of a main house represented by a 5' square hearth base at the east end and a 3' deep cellar hole 20' to the west. A jumble of stones that survived to not over a single course in height was interpreted as representing all that survived of the foundation. The chimney was constructed of brick and had a brick apron on three sides and stone paving inside of it. He estimated the entire structure measured 20' long (east to west) with an orientation perpendicular to Howland Lane. Deetz located what he believed was a second house to the northeast of the hearth, where he identified a 3' deep, artifact-rich, cellar hole. Deetz's conclusion was, that the building was built ca. 1676, and occupied for 30-40 years until ca. 1700, when it burned and collapsed while still occupied.

Deetz conducted further excavations in 1960 and found that the house had been built on the same site as an earlier Native camp. He reportedly recovered a bone awl and hammerstone beneath colonial material in the west cellar and found that one cellar was filled with compacted refuse while the other had complete or near complete artifacts. Returning in 1968, they focused work on the hearth area. At some point, excavators from Harvard, possibly Deetz's graduate or undergraduate students, excavated at the site.

Wheeler began work at the C-5 site in 2005 and spent the next eight years excavating for a week each year, for a total of 88 5 x 5' units being dug during that time.

### **2023 Excavations**

The excavations in 2023 focused on a 15' east-to-west by 7.5' north-to-south excavation area to the south of the 2022 excavation block and a 10' north-to-south by approximately 7.5' east-to-west area where it was believed that the hearth was located (**Figures 1 to 3**). Test excavations were also carried out to the east of this area closer to Howland Lane and to the west where one of Wheeler's excavation units (U132) was reopened to examine whether any traces of a cellar or foundation existed in that area.

Excavation to the south of the 2022 units consisted of six 2023 units (2023-1 to 2023-6) which had their grass root layer stripped off and then were excavated in natural levels to the subsoil. All of these units were found to have been previously excavated by Deetz. Three large rectangular stones



Figure 1. 2023 excavation area looking west.

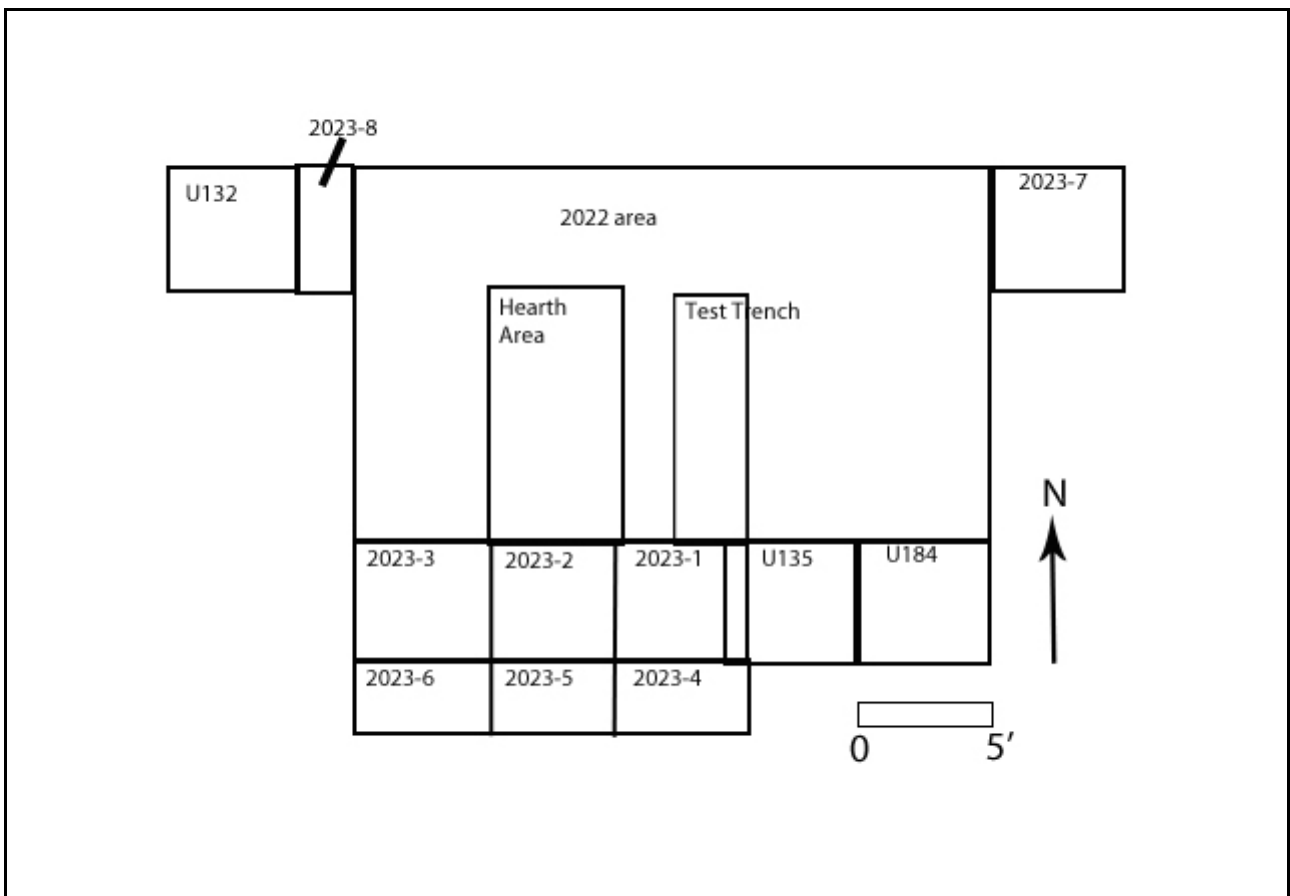


Figure 2. 2023 excavation plan



Figure 3. 10' long section of south/ front wall of Joseph Howland house.

running roughly east to west were identified (**Figures 4 and 5**). Excavation beneath one of the stones found that the soil beneath them had not been previously excavated and that they were in the same places as they were when the house was built. It was found that the stones had been set in a shallow foundation trench that only extended 2-3" into the subsoil, just enough to seat them and keep them from shifting (**Figures 6 and 7**). Deetz noted that the traces of the foundation that he found were limited to a jumble of stones that survived not over a single course in height. These larger stones may be part of what Deetz was talking about. A fourth large stone was found to the east of these three at a slightly skewed angle to the others. This stone had been first identified by Wheeler in his Unit 135. This Wheeler unit was also re-excavated to the subsoil and the stone was mapped and photographed in relation to the other three. All appear to form a 10' length that was interpreted as representing the south/ front side of the original Joseph Howland house. The tops of these stones were found to be roughly at the same depth-approximately 1 meter below the datum (which was the northwest corner of the Howland monument).

Four additional stones were found running roughly north to south to the immediate west of these stones (**Figure 8**). These stones were much smaller and were found to sit on top of backfilled soils, indicating that they were not in their original locations but were placed there after the site had been backfilled in the 1950s or 1960s. These stones may represent a conjectured wall laid out by Deetz or other contemporaries in the 1950s or 60s to leave a surface representation of the outline of the house.

Excavations in the area that were believed to represent the hearth revealed a relatively jumbled area of stones that had been previously excavated, moved, and redeposited by Deetz's work (**Figures 9 and 10**). Little in the way of undisturbed soil was identified in this area and it appears that Deetz essentially took apart most of the hearth in order to try and understand its construction and determine if it represented one or multiple builds of the structure. Careful excavation of a section just at the eastern edge of the large stone concentration found that Deetz excavated this section to a



Figure 4. 2023 excavation looking west.



Figure 5. Plan of 2023 excavations.

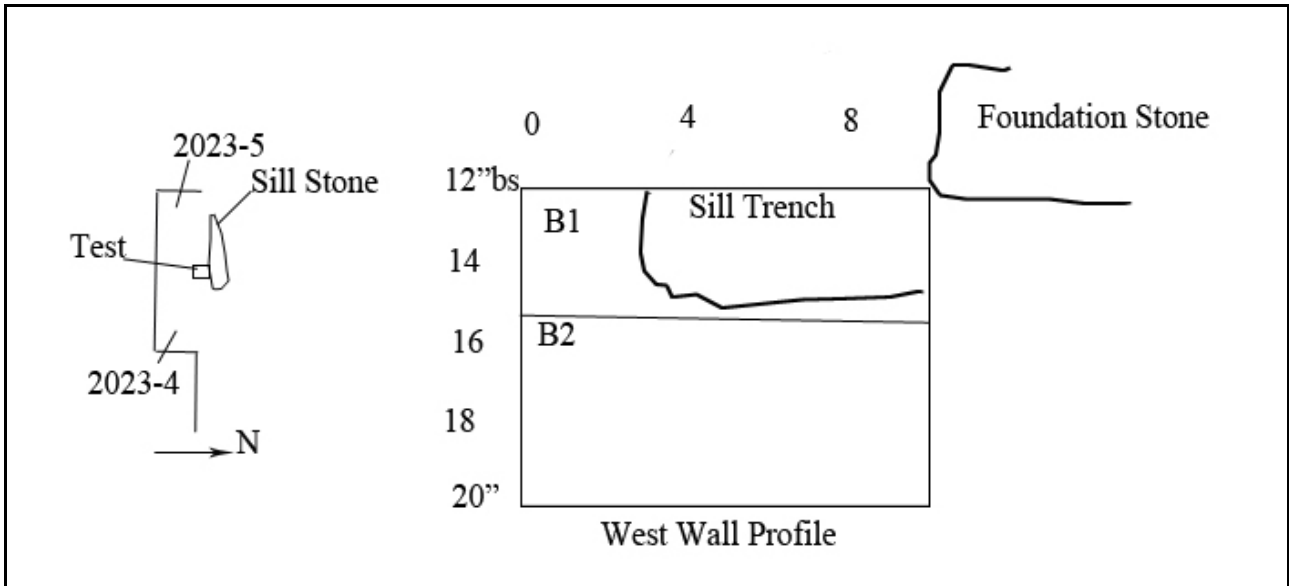


Figure 6. Foundation trench test.



Figure 7. South wall of Joseph Howland's house looking north. Test of foundation trench to the foreground of center stones.



Figure 8. Excavation beneath small stones to west of foundation showing them lying on top of 1950s/ 60s backfill.



Figure 9. Jumble of hearth stones.



Figure 10. Profile of backfill on top of hearth stones with excavation trench in foreground.

depth of 20" below the surface stopping well into the C1 subsoil when the foundation appears to have shifted to the west (**Figures 11 to 13**). The foundation of the chimney base appears to go further down below the 20" level. The remainder of the hearth base to the west of this area consisted of a jumble of stones that did not appear to have any order other than being redeposited into the hearth base area excavated by Deetz. This area was found to be an additional six inches deeper than the foundation stones to the south, indicative that this area had been excavated out by Deetz.

Excavation carried out to the west of the hearth excavations in the area of Wheeler's U132 failed to reveal any traces of a foundation here but did find an unexcavated section between this unit and the 2022 excavation area. This 2' wide section had never before been excavated and gave us a look at the intact soil stratigraphy that was hinted at by Deetz but not formally recorded. Larger pieces of ceramics and a lead scale weight were recovered from this excavation.

Excavations to the east of the main excavation area found that the area had been extensively excavated by Deetz with many pieces of brick being found along with pea-sized gravel, possibly indicative of gravel dumped from the excavation screens during the earlier excavations. No trace of a foundation or cellar hole was found in this area.

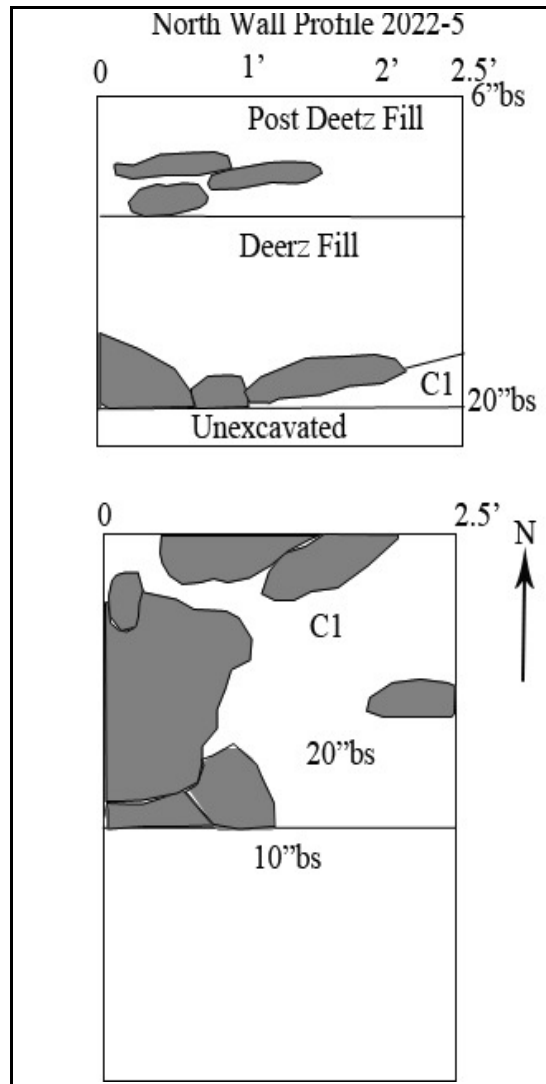


Figure 11. Test trench plan and profile drawing.



Figure 12. Test trench plan. C1 subsoil on east side. Hearth base on west side.



Figure 13. Test trench north wall profile. C1 subsoil at bottom right. Hearth base on left.

### Artifact Analysis

A total of 83,229 artifacts were recovered during the years that Deetz and Wheeler excavated the site and Wheeler's artifact assemblage complements Deetz's in terms of materials recovered, quite well. Deetz recovered his assemblage from within and immediately around the house while Wheeler's represents a yard scatter/ midden deposit.

A total of 1266 artifacts (Table 1, Appendix A) were recovered in 2023, representing modern material deposited at the site after the 1960s excavations (modern beer bottle glass, charcoal, and plastic), debris deposited at the site during the excavations (a wooden stake, tin can fragments, whiteware, miscellaneous metal pieces), artifacts related to the original occupation (ceramics, bone, shell, nails, etc.), and artifacts from the Native occupants of the site (flakes of stone). Most of the artifact types were those which had been previously recovered from the site. Two new artifact types, a silver book clasp, and a silver shoe buckle, were the only two new types of artifacts found. Other notable artifacts included two scale weights used by merchants, half of a horseshoe, and a variety of ceramics. One brass disc was found that was initially believed to be a coin, but further cleaning determined it to be a stamped decorative brass disc that was originally glued onto a larger artifact probably dating from the 1950s or 1960s. This disc was found in backdirt from the 1950s/ 1960s excavations.

Table 1. A comparison of recovered material from the previous and the 2023

Artifact	Wheeler/ Deetz	2023
<b>Prehistoric</b>	<b>210</b>	
Argillite CD	1	
Attleboro Red Felsite CD	1	
Chert Biface	1	
Chert CD	522	7
Chert Shatter	3	
Chert Point Tip and Midsection	1	
Chert Uniface/ Utilized Flake	2	
FCR	1	
Pestle	1	
Plummet	1	
Slate Weight	1	
Net Weight	1	
Hornfels Celt	1	
Hornfels CD	1	
Mudstone CD	4	
Quartz Biface	3	
Quartz Core	2	
Quartz CD	162	2
Quartz Levanna	2	
Quartz Shatter	72	
Quartz Small Stemmed Point	2	
Quartz Squibnocket Triangle	7	
Quartzite CD	89	5
Quartzite Core	1	
Quartzite Hammerstone	1	
Quartzite Orient Fishtail	1	
Quartzite Sinewstone	1	
Quartzite Late Archaic Point	1	
Rhyolite CD	1019	14
Rhyolite Biface	2	
Rhyolite Point Tip and Midsection	1	
Rhyolite Small Stemmed Point	1	
Rhyolite Atlantic Point	1	
Rhyolite Levanna	2	
Rhyolite Shatter	7	
Saugus Jasper CD	7	

Saugus Jasper Late Archaic Point Tip and Midsection	1	
Saugus Jasper Levanna	1	
Grit-Tempered Pottery	1	
Shell-Tempered Pottery	2	1
<b>Architectural</b>	<b>36191</b>	
Brick	22, 508	96
Mortar-Sandy	32	
Mortar- Shell Tempered	549	3
Window Glass	2303	39
Lead Kame	115	5
Hand Wrought Nails	10579	182
Hinge	12	
Hook	1	
Latch	1	
Lock Hole	1	
Pintle	1	
Staple	1	
Wood	88	
<b>Fuel</b>	<b>1194</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Foodways</b>	<b>19812</b>	
Bone	9445	390
Shell	9726	50
<b>Ceramics</b>	<b>7095</b>	
British Brown Stoneware	13	
Dutch Earthenware	1	
Faience	9	
Possible French Earthenware	1	
Iberian	3	
Jackfield	9	2
English Mottledware	67	4
North Devon Gravel Free	11	2
North Devon Gravel Tempered	112	2
Redware	13864	213
Redware-Slip Decorated	20	
Scraffito	46	3
Staffordshire Slipware	462	23

19 <sup>th</sup> Century Stoneware	1	
Bellarmino	27	4
Buff Stoneware	8	
Buff/ Gray Stoneware	26	1
Gray Stoneware	20	
Rhenish/Nottingham Stoneware	18	
Tan Stoneware	3	
Westerwald Stoneware	65	3
Fulham Stoneware	39	
Tin-Glazed	1253	29
Melted Vessel Glass	2	
Hand Blown Aqua Bottle Glass	323	
Hand Blown Olive Bottle Glass	20	
Hand Blown Medicine Bottle	2	2
Hand Blown Drinking Glass	1	
Case Bottle	19	1
Wine Glass	210	10
Wine Bottle	837	
S-hook	1	
Hearth Chain Link	11	
Hearth Chain Hook	1	
Hearth Tool handle	3	
Brass Kettle Fragments	46	1
Bronze Kettle	2	1
Cast iron Kettle Fragments	19	1
Iron Tripod	1	
Cast iron Skillet	1	
Fork	2	
Latten Spoons	31	
Pewter Spoons	10	
Knives	37	
Iron Striker	1	
Bone handle	7	
Barrel Strap	1	
<b>Personal Items</b>	<b>1423</b>	
Tobacco Pipes		
Undecorated Bowl	98	57
Mulberry Dot Decorated Bowl	2	

18 <sup>th</sup> Century Heeless Funnel	3834	1
RT in Cartouche on Side	1	
IB in Cartouche on Side	1	
ER in Cartouche on Side	2	
Rouletted Rim Heeles Funnel	12	
Unidentified Mark in Cartouche	17	1
EB in Cartouche on Side	1	
Belly Bowl	3	
S- in Cartouche on Side	1	
Large Belly Bowl	10	1
M- in Cartouche on Side	1	
R Tippett in Cartouche on Side	2	
Stamped TO on back of bowl	1	
Stamped LE on back of bowl	1	
Medium Belly Bowl	3	
Small Belly Bowl	4	
Stem Fragments	92	6
4/64" Stem Bore Fragments	33	
5/64" Stem Bore Fragments	1409	9
6/64" Stem Bore Fragments	630	6
7/64" Stem Bore Fragments	542	4
8/64" Stem Bore Fragments	131	4
9/64" Stem Bore Fragments	11	
AK and Circles on Stem	1	
LE and Diamonds on Stem	25	
RT Heeless Funnel	45	
RT on back of bowl unknown style	13	
Hume Type 18 RT in cartouche on side 1720-1820 bowl style	6	
Hume Type 18 RT on back of bowl 1720-1820 bowl style	15	
Hume Type 17 RT on back of bowl 1680-1710 bowl style	6	
W Tippett in cartouche on side of bowl	1	
IA in Cartouche Hume Type 18	1	
R- in Cartouche on Side, include T	1	
Heeless Funnel	24	
EB stamped on Base	1	
Hume Type 7	2	
Hume Type 8 1645-1665	3	
Hume Type 10 1650-1680	11	
Hume Type 11 1650-1680	7	

Hume Type 12 1650-1680 Trade Pipe Style	10	
Hume Type 13 1680-1710	6	
Hume Type 14 1700-1770	13	
Hume Type 14 1700-1770 with cartouche on side	1	
Hume Type 14 1700-1770 with cartouche on side and RT on Heel	2	
Hume Type 14 1700-1770 with W/M on sides of spur	1	
Hume Type 15 1700-1770	1	
Hume Type 17 1680-1710 Heeless Funnel	76	
Hume Type 17 1680-1710 Heeless Funnel with cartouche on side	2	
Hume Type 18 1720-1820	212	
Hume Type 18 1720-1820 with cartouche on side	14	
Hume Type 19 1690-1750	7	
W/M on spur	1	
1680-1820 Heeless Funnel	138	
Heeless Funnel EB on Heel	1	
Rouletted Rim Heeless Funnel	1	
Large Belly Bowl	15	
Molded dots on stem	2	
Bowl with 5 parrallel stacked lines	1	
Heeless Funnel LE and diamonds on stem	1	
Heeless Funnel Stem/ Bowl Juncture	1	
IP in cartouche on side	4	
HI in cartouche on side RT on back of bowl 1720-1820 style	2	
IC in cartouche on side 1720-1820 style	1	
I*I in cartouche on side 1720-1820 style	1	
IS with diamonds and lines on stem	1	
Redware Pipes	11	1
Smoker's Companion	2	
Human Teeth	2	
Beads	7	
Bed Curtain Ring	3	
Iron Candlestick	1	
Chest handle	1	
Chest hinge	2	
Chest Lock	4	
Lock plate	1	
Keys	4	
Circular padlock	2	
Brass Drawer Pull	1	

Pull Plate	2	
Bone Fan Blade	1	
Bone Bodkin	1	
Bronze Bell	1	
Coin- Worn Smooth	1	
Coin- 1697 William III	1	
Bone Comb	6	
Pocket Knife	4	
Brass Compass	1	
Cufflink	5	
Book Clasp	10	1
Book Clasp Washer	1	
Bronze Alchemy Spoon	1	
Casket Hinge	1	
Brass Tack	10	
Lead Bale Seal	7	
Brass Buckle	17	
Pewter Buckle	1	
Silver Buckle		1
Glass Button	1	
Brass Button	6	
Iron Button	1	
Pewter Button	31	
Silver Buttons	4	
Slate Button mold	1	
Bone Awl	1	
Whittled Bone Plug	1	
Flat Worked Bone	2	
Scissors	32	
Brass Clothing pin	1	
Lead Whizzer	1	
Silver Threaded Lacing	1	
Iron Needle	2	
Common Pin	7	
Thimble	7	
Clothing Hooks and Eyes	18	
Leather	8	
Leather Knife Sheath	1	
Iron Links	1	

Balance Beam Hook	1	
Balance Beam Weight Loop	1	
Bronze Scale Weight	1	
Iron Scale Weight	1	
Lead Scale Weight	21	2
Lead and iron scale weight	1	
<b>Husbandry</b>	<b>38</b>	
Bridle Harness Tacks	9	
Silver Bridle Harness Tack	1	
Bridle Bits	8	
Horseshoe	38	1
Horseshoe Nails	133	2
Oxen Shoe	6	
Iron Buckle	33	
Iron Buckle Tongue	2	
Iron Ring	3	
Spur	4	
Stirrup	1	
Pewter Spur Attachment	1	
Silver Spur Attachment	1	
Pitchfork Tines	3	
<b>Tools</b>	<b>7</b>	
Burning Lens	17	
Chisel	4	
Drawknife?	8	
Ax head	1	
Beetle ring	1	
Brace bit	1	
Drill Bit	1	
Bung Hole Reamer	1	
Fleshing Knife	1	
Gimlet	2	
U-Shaped tool	1	
Plane Blade	3	
Spokeshave	1	
Saw Tooth set	1	
Scythe Blade	2	

Flintknapping Hammer Head?/ Cobbler Hammer head	1	
Wedge	30	
Whetstone	5	
Spade Shoe	1	
Possible Tool Fragment	2	
<b>Weapons</b>	<b>87</b>	
Snaphaunce Spring	2	
Snaphaunce main Spring Vice Screw	1	
Snaphaunce Frizzen	1	
Snaphaunce Lock Bolt	1	
Snaphaunce Powder Pan	1	
Flint CD	91	3
Flint Core	13	
Flint Cobble	3	
Gunflint	27	3
Gunflint Fragment	3	
Gunflint- Advantageous	22	
Gunflint- Bifacial	15	
Gunflint- Spall	31	
Gunflint- Wedge/ Blade	1	
Flint Shatter	49	
Flint Strike-a-Light	7	
Lead Shot	7	
Lead Bird Shot	1	
Lead Shot Sprue	1	
Armor Fragments	33	
Eel Spear	1	
Fish Hook	7	
Pike Tip?	1	
Pole Cap	1	
Jack Vest plates?	6	
<b>Other</b>	<b>104</b>	
Clay Cone	1	
Brass Rod	2	
Brass Tube	3	
Brass Wire	2	
Copper Nail	1	

Copper Strip	1	
Iron Piece	1	
Iron Rod	22	
Iron Cone	1	
Iron Strap end	1	
Iron Fragment	272	
Iron Object	1	
Iron Pin	2	
Iron Finial	1	
Iron Wire	30	
Lead Scrap	42	
Pewter Lid Fragment	2	
Pewter Ring	1	
Pewter Fragments	7	
<b>Modern Material</b>	<b>1425</b>	<b>64</b>

## **Prehistoric**

Deetz and Wheeler excavations recovered 1927 pieces of prehistoric material. It should be no surprise that Joseph Howland chose to build his house on the most favorable location on the west side of the lane, on roughly the exact same spot as where the Native people had chosen to settle millennia before. The presence of a spring to the southwest of the homesite may account for both occupations.

Identifiable prehistoric tools consisted of three Late Archaic (6000-3000 years ago) Small Stemmed spear points, seven Late Archaic Squibnocket Triangle points, one fragment of what is probably a Late Archaic point, on Transitional Archaic (3500-3200 years ago) Atlantic point, one Transitional Archaic Orient Fishtail point, one fragment of a Late Archaic broad bladed point, five Late Woodland to Plantation Period (1000-400 years ago) Levanna arrowheads, a pestle, a celt head, a fishing plummet and a fishing net weight, a sinew stone, several biface fragments, one utilized flake, and one hammerstone.

The types of stones that the prehistoric inhabitants used were the same types used across the lane at John Howland's homestead. This really is not that surprising, since the sites are just 250' from each other and the people living at both sites seem to have relied on quartz and rhyolite, stones that could be easily collected on the beaches of Rocky Nook. Two other stone types, the green chert, and the Saugus Jasper, are more unique, but both were found at each site. This may indicate that the two locations were occupied, at least once, at the same time by the same group of people. Diagnostic artifacts, Late Woodland to Plantation Period Levanna arrow points, made of these materials found at the John Howland site, point to occupation and use of these materials during that period.

A total of 28 prehistoric artifacts were recovered from 2023 excavations. This total included one piece of shell-tempered pottery and quartz, quartzite, rhyolite, and chert flakes.

## **Architectural**

The majority of the architectural material consisted of brick fragments and hand-wrought nails. Deetz stated that the largest concentration of brick came from the collapsed chimney mound in the center of the site. He reported that the hearths had what appeared to be a one-brick wide "brick apron" on at least three of the sides and the average brick size he found was 8" long 4" wide and 2" thick.

The lengths of the hand-wrought nails recovered from the site were comparable between Deetz's and Wheeler's excavations. This indicates that they all came from the same source. A total of 2762 (26%) of the 10,579 nails recovered were burned. Of the nails Deetz recovered, 31.9% were burned, but only 6.4% of those recovered by Wheeler were burned. This distribution- more burned nails in association with the house versus the yard- supports Deetz's conclusion that the original house burned in place.

The distribution of burned nails by size shows the majority were found by Deetz with a higher percentage of the shingle and the framing nails being found by Deetz while more of the plank nails, possibly those used for roof boards, were found in the yard by Wheeler. This distribution may reflect the way the house fell during or after being burned.

Unfortunately, while numerous lead window kames were found, which can bear the initials of the manufacturer and the date of manufacture, none of the 115 kames bore either.

The 2023 excavations yielded hand wrought nails and nail fragments, window glass, lead kames, shell-tempered mortar, and brick fragments. Only larger, diagnostic brick fragments were collected.

### **Fuel- Charcoal**

If we believe that the house burned, then it is surprising that very little charcoal (n=85) was recovered, or mentioned, by Deetz. Deetz did recover, or at least he collected, 28 pieces from the west cellar hole, and many pieces were found in the north yard. It is quite possible that he may have seen more but did not collect it. It is strange that he did not note any burning or ash layers being present in the cellars, which you would expect to be present if the house burned. But, it is possible that the entire house did not burn, but only the superstructure. Maybe the fire was put out or went out before it reached the floor or maybe the fire did enough damage to an old house to make whoever was living there to abandon instead of repair it. That the occupants abandoned and razed the house is proven by how the cellars were filled, as will be discussed further below. Wheeler recovered substantially more charcoal (n=1109) but he also noted the presence of modern campfires on the site.

Six pieces of charcoal were recovered from the 2023 excavations with many other pieces not being saved as they were in backfill and lacked context.

### **Foodways**

The foodways class encompasses the categories of artifacts related to the preparation, serving, and consumption of food, both solid and liquid.

### **Bone**

Bone was abundant in both of the excavations, with slightly more being found by Wheeler (n=5084) than by Deetz (n=4361). Excavations recovered 9443 pieces of bone from both domestic and wild species. Cattle, swine, horses, and sheep made up the domestic mammals. Common farmyard species were well represented at the homesite, and the ages at slaughter indicate the household raised cattle for meat, dairy, and as work animals; they raised sheep for wool and meat; and they raised swine for meat and suet. The household attempted to get the most out of each species and carefully managed breeding and slaughter.

The wild animals in the assemblage represent Howland's reliance on fresh and saltwater aquatic species- reptiles, fish, birds, and to a lesser degree, mammals. It appears that the occupants of both this site and the Dew Pond house across the lane enjoyed fowling, which may account for the lack of larger shot in the artifact assemblage and the abundance of gunflints.

The calcined and burned bone represents hearth waste thrown into the yard. These materials were most abundant in the North, South, and West yards, indicating that occupants periodically threw the ashes and waste from the hearth into those areas. Little calcined or burned bone was found in the hearth itself, possibly indicating that it had been cleaned out just prior to the abandonment of the site. Little calcined bone was found in the cellar holes, indicating that they were not filled with dirt dug out of the yards, at least not out of the yards that had calcined and burned bone, but that they may have been filled with household waste and subsequently had soil wash into and between the refuse.

Three hundred ninety pieces of bone were recovered in 2023 representing domestic mammals and wild fish and birds.

## Shell

Excavations recovered a total of 9724 pieces of shell from across the site, the majority of which came from the west yard. Shell was a rare find in the East Cellar but was more abundant in the West Cellar, where it may have arrived as part of a yard scraping used to fill the cellar itself. The principal species consumed at the site appear to be soft-shell clam (a minimum of 2064 individuals represented by hinges), quahog (a minimum of 70 individuals represented by hinges), and surf clam (a minimum of 41 individuals represented by hinges). The other species occurred in much smaller quantities with many of them (blue mussel, crab, mud nassa, scallop, oyster, slipper shell) possibly representing species accidentally brought to the site with loads of seaweed that may have been used as animal feed or fertilizer. They also could have arrived mixed in with salt marsh hay cut to feed to animals.

While most of the species present could be harvested either from the east or west shores of Rocky Nook, two individual shells did not come from the immediate area. The Olive shells are common along the southern coasts of the United States and may represent shells picked up as souvenirs by someone living at or visiting the site. They offer further support for the idea that someone at the site was involved in merchant activities, possibly to the southern colonies.

Fifty shell fragments coming from quahog and soft shell clam species were recovered in 2023.

## Ceramics

Archaeologists recovered 16,077 pieces of ceramics, with redware and tin-glazed wares making up the bulk of the assemblage. Sherds were found primarily in the North, South, and West yards at the site, indicating these were the principal areas of household refuse disposal. The analysis did not reveal differences in the distribution of earlier versus later wares. It appears that the yard area immediately around the house did not witness any perceivable changes in use patterns that would result in ceramics being differentially distributed at different times.

The excavation recovered similar types of vessels from the Joseph and John Howland homesites, with differences being a greater variety of older wares from the older, John Howland site and a greater emphasis on ceramic hygiene, food preparation vessels at the John Howland versus more solid consumption and solid storage vessels at the Joseph site. The difference in hygiene and solid consumption vessel types may be the result of the possible use of metal chamberpots at the Joseph Howland site and pewter or wooden plates/ trenchers at the John Howland site. Differences in the preparation class relate to the use of milk and baking pans at the sites. It is possible that John Howland placed greater emphasis on dairying (he did have a fully equipped dairy on the north side of the house) and baking pies in the oven, whereas Joseph Howland may not have dairied as much and may have used his parent's oven and pans. The occurrence of solid storage vessels (storage/ butter pots) at the Joseph Howland site may be reflective of the possible small-scale merchant activities that may have been undertaken.

Another difference in the assemblages was the much higher occurrence and variety of tin-glazed vessels at the Joseph Howland site, including vessels that may have originated in Portuga. It would appear that the occupants liked to show off their status through the use and display of brightly colored tin-glazed vessels and possible merchant activities may have provided greater access to vessels originating in Portugal. Because of the English Civil War (1640-1660), trade between England and the colonies was drastically curtailed, forcing colonial merchants to find other sources of the goods they desired. Portugal revolted against Spain in 1643 and became its own country and

with its newfound freedom was a need for goods- specifically wood for wine casks, fish, and wheat. The colonies in turn needed wine, brandy, luxury goods, and salt. It appears that the two countries quickly became fast economic allies, at least until after the Restoration in 1660 when the Navigation Acts severely limited with whom the colonies could trade. Because Portugal was not one of the countries that the acts specifically were aimed at (Netherlands, Spain, and France) trade probably continued relatively unhindered.

The 2023 excavations yielded 286 fragments of 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century ceramics from a variety of vessel forms.

### **Vessel Glass**

Hand-blown vessel glass, well represented at the site with 837 pieces, consisted of wine bottles, small general-purpose bottles, and wine glasses. Analysis arrived at an estimate of the minimum number of bottles represented in the assemblage by examining the rims and bases. It was found that over the 80 years that people occupied the site, a least 30 vessels were broken. The aqua, olive, and medicine bottles measured from 4-10 cm in body diameter and they would have held medicines, oil, vinegar, or virtually anything needed in smaller amounts.

Archaeologists recovered an appreciable number of wine bottles and wine glasses, including a wine bottle seal bearing an image of the goddess Fortuna, patron of merchants and sailors. The wine glasses all appear to date to the late 17th to early 18th century.

Thirteen vessel glass were recovered in 2023 representing case, wine and pharmaceutical bottles. Fragments of cast iron, bronze and brass cooking vessels were also found.

### **Pipes**

Deetz and Wheeler found over 7,500 tobacco pipe fragments and tobacco-related artifacts. The pipe bowl styles span the entire occupation of the site, showing that the property was occupied around the middle of the 17th century, a date that coincides with Joseph and Elizabeth's marriage ca. 1665. The most common style was a heeless funnel (1720-1820), which indicates that someone was using an appreciable number of pipes, or at least stored a large number of pipes, on the site after Joseph's death in 1703. This may have been his son James, but it is much more probable that the abundance of pipes from the first half of the 18th century is related to the occupation of the site by Benjamin Lothrop, a merchant, who would have had the best reason for having so many pipes in his home.

Tobacco pipes dating to the Joseph Howland period (pipe stems of the 9/64" to 6/64" stem bore; bowl styles 1, 7, 8, 10, 12, 17; redware pipes; and the Virginia pipe) account for 22.8% of the stem fragments and 12.5% of the dated pipe styles. The remainder of the pipe fragments date to after 1700 and presumably must be associated with someone other than Joseph. As his son James does not appear to have been as industrious as his father (showing up only a few times in colonial records) it is more probable that Benjamin Lothrop, a merchant, would be the one to whom many of the artifacts recovered at the site, including the tobacco pipes, are associated with.

The distribution of dated styles appears relatively similar for both the Joseph and Post-Joseph periods, which indicates no substantial changes in the way that people made use of the yards. The density analysis shows that the south yard may have seen slightly more use during the later period while the occupants may have used the North Yard more intensively during the earlier period. This change from the disposal of material in the North Yard to the South Yard may reflect either the movement of the household away from this site during Benjamin Lothrop's occupation (thus the

disposal of material on the South side of the house as the house is being abandoned) whereas the North yard reflects common 17th and 18th-century disposal patterns that favored that side of the house for refuse disposal.

An examination of the median dates of occupation of the site, as represented by the occupation ranges of various inhabitants and the median use dates of the tobacco pipes, offers further support to the interpretation that Joseph, James, and Benjamin Lothrop all lived at this site. The comparison shows that if only Joseph and Elizabeth occupied the site, then much earlier median dates would be expected for the pipes recovered in the cellar holes (similar to the earlier dates found at the John Howland house for Strickland's dig, which focused on the house, and Wheeler's at the same site, which focused more on the yard. The median dates of occupation for the cellar holes correlate better with an occupation that started with Joseph Howland, continued with James, and ended with Benjamin Lothrop, possibly due to the house being abandoned due to fire. The occupation of the Dew Pond correlates better with the occupation by Benjamin Lothrop versus James Howland. It is possible that Benjamin Lothrop began by living in the Joseph house and moved to the other side of the lane partway through his occupation of the property.

The similarity in the median dates for the East and West cellars indicates that they were both abandoned and filled at approximately the same time. Deetz felt that one cellar was older than the other, but the tobacco pipe data, and all the other data, do not support this conclusion.

Excavations recovered a few other interesting pipes and pipe-related objects including red clay pipes, a possible Virginia pipe, and two smoker's companions. The red clay pipes are only found on sites occupied during the ca. 1670s. These are believed to have been made in Charleston, Massachusetts as a local alternative to the imported pipes. Their short period of popularity (ca. 1670-1680) has been credited to the British enactment and enforcement of the Navigation Acts and the concomitant increase in regulation of colonial industries.

Ninety pipe fragments were found in 2023 coming mostly from kaolin stems and bowls with one redware stem being found.

### **Personal**

Personal artifacts are those that were used on a person's body or which may have had a more intimate association with the site's occupants. Deetz found the majority of the personal items from within and immediately around the house. This artifact class offers more evidence for mercantile activity at the site in the form of scale weights, bale seals, numerous pairs of scissors, several combs, a padlock and chest locks, and lenses. This final artifact is interesting as they were identified as optical lenses possibly for a telescope, by Deetz. What they are, are burning lenses used to start fires by focusing sunlight. These were often used as trade items for the Native people.

When John Howland died in 1673, there were a large number of books present in his library, and a question I always had, was what became of those books. We know that some of the books listed later show up in his wife Elizabeth's probate when she died in 1687. A total of 10 brass book clasps were recovered from the Joseph Howland site, several of which were matching pairs. It appears that part of the mystery of what happened to John Howland's library is solved, they probably ended up at Joseph's house and were eventually thrown out (at least the covers or the clasps were anyway).

Personal items recovered in 2023 were limited to one silver book hinge and one silver shoe buckle fragment. The latter may have been cut up for its value in silver. Two lead scale weights were also recovered, one coming from 2023-8 in intact soils found between the 2022 excavation area and Wheeler's U132.

### **Husbandry**

Husbandry-related artifacts were those associated with domestic animals. On most sites we find a few horseshoes a few horseshoe nails, and maybe, if we are lucky, a spur, a bridle fragment, and maybe a stirrup. At this site, there were dozens of horseshoes, over a hundred horseshoe nails, silver and brass harness and spur accouterments, several spurs, and even more bridle bits. Joseph's probate indicates that he owned two mares when he died, as well as a saddle and pillion, and many more cattle, yet the artifacts show a strong bias towards horses and less evidence of cattle (just two oxen shoes). This may be the result of the fact that riding and using a horse requires many more extras as opposed to using milk cows or a team of oxen. The abundance of horse-related pieces also shows that horses, which were animals used more to show off status in New England colonial times, were very important components of the life at this site.

Husbandry equipment was scattered across the site, but in terms of relative density, the cellar holes had the highest, while the House, North Yard, and South yard all had relatively moderate densities. The East and West yards both had low densities. This density distribution indicates that disposal or loss of husbandry-related artifacts was highest in the cellar holes, where they were presumably discarded when the house was abandoned, and in the House, North, and South yard areas where they were stored and used. This may indicate that stables or barns, or at least work or refuse discard areas, were located to the north and south of the house, right where one would expect them.

One horseshoe fragment and two horseshoe nails were found in 2023.

### **Weapons and Subsistence**

Deetz recovered numerous weapons and subsistence-related artifacts, with most having been recovered from around the house. Six of the pieces were associated with one or more flintlocks. Flintlocks were a type of firearm that used a flint to make sparks that ignited the gunpowder to set off the charge and fire a shot. The earliest forms, snaphaunces, were developed in the 1550s and were used until the 1680s in Plymouth Colony. Flintlocks were developed in the early 17th century and continued in use throughout the 18th. The pieces recovered from the Joseph Howland homesite may have once belonged to John or Joseph Howland. Pieces were recovered from the house and North and South yards.

Flint debris (flakes, cobbles, cores, shatter, and strike-a-light), numbering 163 pieces, was recovered from across the site. These pieces were the result of the manufacture of the 99 gunflints that were recovered. Four types of gunflints were found (bifacial, advantageous, spall, and wedge), concentrated in the East Cellar, Hearth, and House. These gunflints had been used by the occupants of the site, presumably at least in part for hunting the numerous waterfowl represented at the site, but may have also been sold as part of the mercantile activity that the occupants engaged in. Numerous gunflints had also been recovered from the William Clark/ RM Site ( a known Plymouth merchant's house destroyed in 1676), the homesite of a man who may have been supplying gunflints to the colonial militia during King Philip's War. Joseph Howland or Benjamin Lothrop may have been manufacturing gunflints for sale to the colonial government as well. Deetz found a possible flint knapping hammer head measuring only 2" (5 cm) long.

Three gunflints and three flint fragments were recovered in 2023.

### **Joseph Howland's Architecture**

Joseph Howland's house looks like it measured 40' east to west by at least 22' north to south and was a hall and parlor style. The pipe stem dates do not support the idea of two separate buildings. The building may have begun as a smaller single-cell house that was enlarged to a hall and parlor, but overall the east and west cellars have the same material, just one was filled first. The house looks like it was deliberately removed versus burned down as well. Based on Deetz's rudimentary drawing, it does not appear that either the cellar or the hearth line up with each other. It has to be concluded that, while Deetz may have recorded what he saw (or interpreted what he saw) it may not have been what was really there. The walls of the cellars could have shifted and what he recorded was the shift and not the true orientation of the walls, and he also admits that, while he did not see a brick apron on the east side of the hearth, it may have been there but had been removed. I think that what happened is that as he excavated he came up with the idea that there were two buildings, and then never changed his mind about it.

The house discovered by Deetz appears very similar to the Ezra Perry II house in Bourne. This house, mistakenly claimed by its excavator in 1927 to be Plymouth Colony's 1627 Aptuxcet Trading Post (aka the house at Manomet), appears to have begun as a single-cell cottage measuring 27'6" long (north to south) by 25'3" wide (east to west) with a hearth and associated chimney on the east wall and a large cellar beneath its western half. The building appears to have been later expanded laterally to the east with the construction of a 21' long (east to west) by 16'9" wide (north to south). This addition had a hearth on the western wall that was shared with the original house and a smaller cellar beneath the eastern half. The construction of the addition changed the house form from a cottage to a hall and parlor house with the original house serving as the hall and the addition being the parlor.

Joseph Howland's house may have had a similar evolution with the eastern half of the house, which may have measured 25' long (east to west) by at least 22' wide (north to south) with a 5' hearth on the western wall, being the original cottage. The addition of the western room (15' east to west), which would have been the parlor, transformed the structure into a hall and parlor house. This transformation may be evident in the wall that Deetz claimed to have found beneath the hearth, which could represent the original house's west wall versus an earlier hearth. It is possible that Joseph expanded his house in the 1680s when the maximum number of people in the original small house may have reached critical mass at over 9 people. His son James may have remained in the house when he married in 1694, sharing it with his aging parents. After Joseph's death in 1703, his wife Elizabeth appears to have eventually moved to Barnstable to live with their daughter Abigail (Seabury). Benjamin Lothrop, the next owner of the property after Joseph's son James, may have begun by living in Joseph's house, eventually using parts of the original Joseph Howland home to build a new house on the east side of the lane. This could account for the window leads bearing that date of 1681 at the Dew Pond house site.

Construction of Joseph's house in what appears to be a less desirable location than the original John Howland house, also suggests that it was constructed while the original family homestead was still occupied and in use, making it likely that Joseph built his house soon after he was married, and not after his father's death a decade later. The presence of pipe stems with stem bore measurements of 8 and 9/64" (dating to around mid 17th-century) supports this interpretation. The possibility exists that Joseph's house or at least the house location, was the spot where John Jenney built his original

house, thus accounting for the earlier pipe stems. Unfortunately, the only evidence to support this theory is the 8 and 9/64" pipe stems. The location itself is not consistent with where the early colonists situated their houses- they preferred high, dry knolls versus lower, possibly wetter areas. They had their choice of prime locations on which to build, and it appears that they favored the knolls overlooking the water with fresh water nearby. If, in the future, further excavations are conducted at the actual location of the house (the cellar holes and the hearth) and either a post-in-ground (earth fast) house is found beneath or close by to Joseph's House, with artifacts dating it exclusively to the first half of the 17th century, then the theory that this was John Jenney's original homesite would need to be reconsidered. I think it is much more probable that Joseph built his house near his parents on the next best land available.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The excavations carried out first by Deetz and later by Wheeler have resulted in providing us with an excellent example of occupation at a mid-17th to mid-18th century rural homesite. Joseph and his wife Elizabeth built the house ca. 1665 when they married with the couple possibly receiving the land as a wedding present from Joseph's parents. There may have been a verbal or implied understanding that Joseph would continue to assist his parents on the farm and would be responsible for them in their old age. The house may have begun as a small structure, as many newlywed or pioneer homes were in the 17th century, but the family expanded ca. 1680 when they had outgrown the small initial structure. Joseph's son James apparently continued to live at the site after Joseph's death. James, who does not appear to have been extremely active in Plymouth government affairs, sold the property to Benjamin Lothrop in 1735. Lothrop, a well-known merchant, appears to have kept some of his stock and may have processed animal skins that were later sold to tanners. The house appears to have suffered some degree of fire and was abandoned while Lothrop lived in it. Lothrop may have then built the "Dew Pond" house on the east side of the lane after the fire.

The 2023 excavations appear to have definitively identified portions of the architecture first encountered by Deetz but subsequently lost. The 10 foot long section of the southern/ front foundation of the house was identified this year. Excavations within and around the hearth foundation found it jumbled and partially destroyed by earlier excavations, but the eastern edge of it may have been identified (**Figure 14**). A variety of artifacts were recovered, complimenting the material previously identified and showing that there is still a large amount of material still present in Deetz backfill, due to poor screening in the 1950s and 60s.

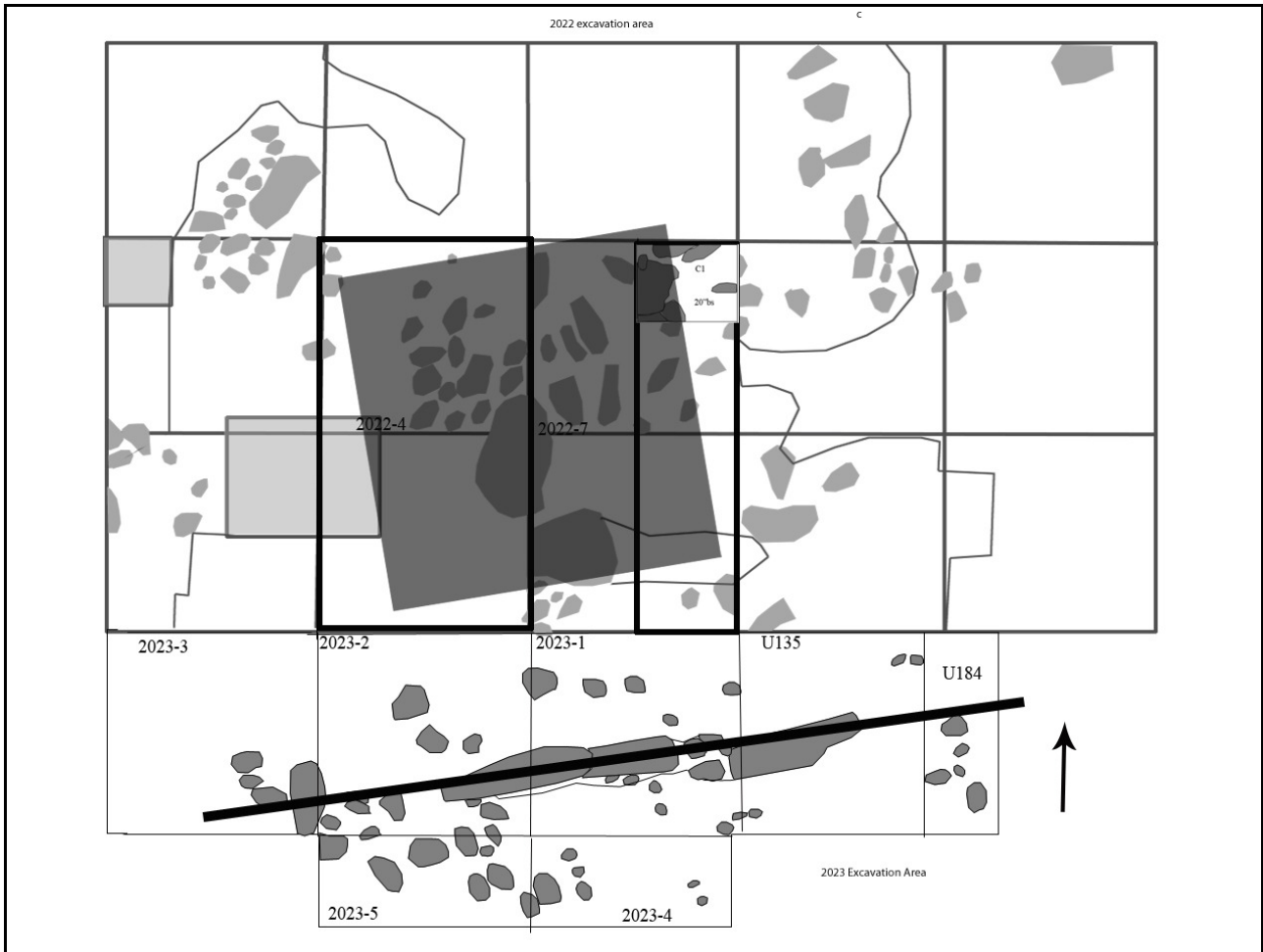


Figure 14. Architectural elements of the Joseph Howland house. Gray rectangle represents hypothetical extent of hearth base. Black line at bottom represents line of the south/ front wall.

But what does the Pilgrim John Howland Society hope to gain from the excavations and where should the work go from here? It is recommended that the Society take at least a year of from any formal or informal excavations or probings at the site and think hard about this question. The work at the John Howland homesite has resulted in a visible, well interpreted architectural remnant of Plymouth Colony’s early days. The visitor, through well-laid out signage and posts, is able to envisage the only house site of a Mayflower passenger that is accessible to visitors today. Is this what the ultimate goal is for the Joseph Howland homesite? The Joseph Howland site is an excellant example of what happened to the colony after that first generation that his father represented, matured and took control of the Colony. Signage and a well constructed vision could give the visitor a really unique understanding of the history of Plymouth Colony through the John and Joseph Howland homesite experiences.

If a decision is made to fully uncover the foundation, hearth and cellarhole remains at the Joseph Howland homesite, a careful, well-thought out, well-funded professional excavations should be planned. The couple of years of work that I have directed at the site has shown that there are sill many artifacts left behind by Deetz’s excavations. We had initially hoped that we could simply strip away sterile backfill and expose the subsoil where the hearth and cellarholes would be visible. Unfortunately, it is not that simple. There are many, many artifacts still present in the backfill and it would be unethical to just strip away this backdirt with no regard for the artifacts present. We also

found that Deetz's excavations was not as clear cut as the one map he made appeared to show. Numerous areas of unexcavated soils still exist that would provide us with information of stratigraphy and site formation processes that Deetz did not record and that are important for understanding the site in terms of what came first and how the occupation developed. Randomly digging where a rock is encountered without understanding its context is not the way to understand the site or locate any architectural elements. It is Rocky Nook, there are rocks everywhere. You probe anywhere you will hit a rock. It is imperative to understand if this rock is naturally deposited vs part of a construction. This can only be done through careful, slow excavations not badgering.

I would be more than happy to help develop a professional archaeology excavation and/ or interpretive program for the site in close conjunction with a committee from the Pilgrim John Howland Society. We could outline goals, milestones and research questions that could be answered. At a minimum, I recommend that efforts be made to continue the battle to drive the vegetation from off the site, allowing it to be more accessible for visitors. This should occur without any further formal or informal excavations or probings until a professional archaeologist and the Society can devise a multi year plan going forward. An interpretive kiosk or board should also be erected at the site showing what was found archaeologically, similar to the one at the John Howland homesite.

APPENDIX A  
ARTIFACT CATALOG