CHAPTER 5
THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE SITE

People sometimes express surprise at the idea of digging at a place where the historic building is still standing, which is what we did at Tweed's Tavern. If you can see the building, the argument goes, why dig in the ground nearby? There are, of course, several reasons why archaeologists do this.

One is that areas around historic buildings, particularly houses, very often contain artifacts and other material evidence left behind by the former occupants. In the days before systematic trash collection (something that only started in the late 1800s), people had little choice but to throw their trash and garbage away somewhere on their property. Frequently archaeologists find this as a layer or “sheet midden” of artifact-bearing soils. These artifacts can provide all kinds of information about the people who used them.

A second motivation is to locate now-vanished buildings which may survive only as buried foundations below the surface. In the case of Tweed's Tavern we were certain that there must have been other buildings: a detached kitchen, a barn and a stable being the most likely. Privies and wells could also be expected.

Finally, excavations both inside and against the outside walls of standing buildings can throw a great deal of light on their history and development. By closely examining the relationship of the walls of the building to each other and to the layers of soil below, beside and above them we can often make deductions about the date of the earliest construction, and changes that were subsequently made. We can even locate portions of the building that have been torn down and of which no above-ground evidence remains. This kind of work requires close (and usually very interesting) coordination between the “dirt” archaeologists and the “above-ground archaeologists” (more usually called architectural historians) to gain a fuller picture of the house.

The archaeological work at Tweed's went through several stages in 1999 as we tried to focus in on areas where the archaeological evidence was well preserved. Since we had no clear idea of where any of the outbuildings might be, our first investigation was a geophysical survey performed by GeoGraf, a firm that specializes in using a range of electronic tools to “see” beneath the ground. Their work identified several “targets”: locations where buried features were indicated by the data.

Things do not always go according to plan. We used a backhoe to dig 15 trenches to investigate these areas. These are shown on Figure 5.1 together with the locations of the other investigations. What we had hoped would prove to be buried foundations chiefly proved to be modern disturbances and utility lines. Overall, the soils at the site were rather disturbed by modern land uses and did not reveal much in the way of artifacts or structures.
There were exceptions, though. Trenches 3, 11, 12, 14 and 15 located sections of the loose stone wall foundations of a probable building. Trench 7 identified a section of a retaining wall, and Trench 10 found a stone-lined privy pit.

Four hand-dug excavation units, each five feet square, were also dug around the outside wall of the log tavern at its southern end. Like most of the backhoe trenches, these units showed that there was too much modern disturbance around the foundation to give us useful information about the earlier history of the building. We were now becoming a little frustrated as it looked as if there might be only a limited amount of archaeology at the site.

Additional backhoe work was however authorized to explore the outbuilding and areas on the north and west sides of the house. Trench 17 exposed a more substantial piece of the outbuilding (shown on Plate 5.1), but it was not possible to establish its date or function. Trench 19, west of the modern addition on the west side, also failed to locate the evidence for the kitchen we hoped would be there.

With Trench 18 we finally had success. Removal of the asphalt driveway north of the house exposed stone foundations and quantities of 19th-century artifacts. A hand-dug excavation unit (11) in this area confirmed that there was intact archaeological data from the 1800s here.

This area became the main focus of the final phase of excavation. We opened up a total of 250 square feet by hand (see Figure 5.8) and found two sets of features. The first was a series of drains constructed of dry-laid stone. There was one main drain running from south to north. This had been diverted northwestwards at its northern end as can be seen in Plate 5.11. Secondary drain structures lay to the northeast. Artifacts found in association with these drains suggest they were built in the mid 1800s, perhaps at about the time when the building was ceasing to be a tavern. Quite why these elaborate structures were built is unclear, but they suggest that there was a need to take water away from the area of the house at that time.

The drain originally emptied into the second feature that was found. This was a large, roughly circular hole about 25 feet across, probably the upper parts of a natural sink-hole in the underlying limestone. This hole had been sealed off with a deep layer of mottled clay (shown on Plate 5.12) later in the 19th century. This clay was deep, dense and very hard work to excavate by hand. Beneath it, however, was a dark humic layer (designated Context 56) of soil full of artifacts of the late 18th through late 19th century. These artifacts are the subject of most of the analysis in the next chapter.

The final pieces of work focused again on the building itself. Some more units were opened against the southwest side of the building, but these merely confirmed the disturbance identified in the previous work in this area. An excavation unit (9) against the northern outside wall of the log building found a mysterious piece of masonry that probably supported some kind of interior division of the lean-to structure that existed in this area until the 1950s. This masonry is shown on Plate 5.10. A similar excavation on the east exterior wall encountered modern porch foundation walls. During last-minute observations before the tavern was moved in 2000, a well was uncovered and recorded under the porch on the east side of the house and can be seen in Plate 5.14.
A. METHODS AND DESCRIPTION

The archaeological investigations in and around the tavern site proved to be somewhat frustrating and, with some important exceptions, not particularly informative. The expectation, based on the documentary studies and general assumptions based on the limited Phase I survey, was that the foundations of 19th-century buildings associated with the tavern, as well as artifact assemblages from sheet middens and features such as trash or privy pits, would be found and documented. The rather perplexing pre-1808 alignment of Limestone Road and the apparent course of Valley Road north of the tavern between 1808 and 1820 (see above, Chapter 3) were also issues for the archaeological excavation. Despite the use of geophysical survey and the extensive earth-moving capabilities of a backhoe, little was learned about the physical surroundings of the tavern except for interesting features on its northern side described below. The work proceeded in several stages as the key areas of archaeological interest at the site were gradually defined.

B. THE PHASE II INVESTIGATIONS

The Phase II investigations at the Tweed's Tavern Archaeological Site had been mainly geared towards locating and characterizing the nature of the outbuildings mentioned in the early 19th-century documents. It was hoped to establish the character of the buildings and the overall layout of the tavern property. The initial part of the Phase II work consisted of a non-intrusive geophysical survey using ground penetrating radar, electromagnetic monitoring, radio frequency and magnetic geophysical instruments (see Appendix E). As a result of this survey five targets were identified, a possible foundation, two recommended excavation areas, an area with disturbed subsoils and an area in which an anomalous subsoil layer was detected.

Based on the results of the geophysical survey, a combination of 15 backhoe trenches (TRs 1-15) and four excavation units (EUs 1-4) were initially opened (Figure 5.1). Backhoe trenches were excavated across the property in an effort to ground-truth the five identified geophysical targets and to locate other, undetected, outbuildings associated with the tavern.

The results were, on the whole, disappointing. Trenches 1 and 2, located in the northwest portion of the property, encountered an active septic field consisting of gravel and pvc pipes, in use by the adjacent property to the south west. Trenches 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 13 failed to locate any coherent or potentially significant structural remains or stratigraphy.

Trenches 3, 11, 12, 14 and 15, located portions of a quartzite foundation [14] from an outbuilding lying west and north of the tavern/house (Plate 5.1). Trench 7 located a small, dry-laid stone (quartzite) wall [17], interpreted as a shallow garden or landscaping wall (Plate 5.2) and Trench 10 uncovered the top of a stone-lined shaft [18] (see below).

Following completion of these initial backhoe trenches, four excavation units (EUs 1-4) were placed adjacent to the exposed exterior portions of the original core of the log tavern/house on the south, west and east sides. Heavily disturbed soils in these units confirmed the hypothesis that most of this area was disturbed by 20th-century alterations (repairs to the foundation, air conditioning, electrical and plumbing), landscaping and additions to the building (Figure 5.2; Plates 5.3-5.5).

Excavation Unit 1, located adjacent to the southeast corner of the tavern/house on the east wall, encountered a layer of mottled clay loam with chunks of mortar [6] from directly below the modern topsoil down to sterile clay subsoil (Plate 5.3). Context 6 represents a 20th-century deposit associated with the application of stucco to the exterior face of the log structure.
Excavation Units 2 and 3, located adjacent to the southern end of the west side of the tavern/house were disturbed by underground utilities associated with two air conditioning units and landscaping [Contexts 12, 13, 21, 22, 30 and 31] (Plate 5.4). Landscaping across the property primarily consisted of the addition of between two and four inches of topsoil [1] and a wide variety of ornamental plants.

Excavation Unit 4, located adjacent to the fireplace chimney was disturbed by late 20th-century rebuilding of the chimney [8 and 9] which extended down into the sterile clay B-horizon [7], thus mixing overlying contexts relating to the construction and occupation of the house (Figure 5.2; Plate 5.5).

Based on the results of this work four additional trenches and seven excavation units were excavated to further expose the outbuilding foundations, examine the shaft feature in more detail, and to further investigate areas adjacent to the outside and inside of the house.

Trench 16 exposed the remaining portions of the stone-lined shaft encountered in Trench 10. The shaft was poorly constructed using roughly cut pieces of quartzite without mortar. The overall depth of the shaft was 3.8 feet (Figure 5.3). The shallow depth and method of construction suggest it functioned as a privy. Artifacts recovered from the lower fill [75] of the shaft consist of refined earthenware suggesting use between circa 1815 to 1890. The shaft was filled with a large piece of concrete on the late 20th century.

Trench 17 was opened in an attempt to better define the stone foundation encountered previously in Trenches 12, 14 and 15 and portions of Trenches 3 and 13. This trench finally revealed a small outbuilding with a shallow stone foundation [45-47] measuring 25 feet by 22 feet containing no coherent stratigraphy and very few artifacts (Plate 5.6). Dateable artifacts recovered from around this foundation consist of refined white-bodied earthenwares (ironstone china and whiteware), popular from circa 1840 to 1860 and embossed vessel glass manufactured between 1850 and 1910, but these cannot be securely linked to the structure, and its date and function remain unclear.

Trench 18, which proved to be the most productive and informative area investigated, was adjacent to the north side of the tavern/house, encompassing a large portion of the asphalt driveway and parking area. Removal of the asphalt revealed a large artifact-bearing deposit and what appeared to be a stone foundation (see below). The deposit was dominated by large sherds of domestic redware, English and American ironstone china, whiteware with lesser amounts of British tin glazed earthenware, creamware and pearlware. An area within Trench 18 was examined in more detail with a hand-dug unit (EU II). This revealed a substantial stone feature [97] and a prolific artifact assemblage and pointed to this area as having the greatest integrity and information potential.

Trench 19 was placed against the west side of the tavern/house in the area of a concrete patio built beside the 1980s addition (Figure 5.4). Removal of the concrete revealed a series of isolated post holes [57 - 66 and 76 - 81], plantings [69 and 70] and modern utility trenches [32, 33, 67 and 68].

Excavation Units 5, 6 and 7, located at the southwest corner of the tavern/house adjacent to EUs 2 and 3, were opened to gain a better understanding of the stratigraphy observed in Excavation Units 2 and 3 (Figure 5.5; Plate 5.7). As suspected, the area proved to be deeply disturbed down to sterile subsoil [7] by modern underground utilities associated with two air conditioning units and landscaping [12, 13, 21-28, 30 and 31], although it did produce a quantity of 19th-century artifacts that were used in the analysis in Chapter 6.
Figure 5.2. Guthrie-Giacomelli House (Tweed's Tavern) CRS-#N-1101, and Tweed's Tavern Archaeological Site [7NC-A-18]: Excavation Unit 4 South Profile, Showing Concrete Pad Under 20th-Century Chimney Foundation [8].
Figure 5.3. Gutherie-Giacomelli House (Tweed's Tavern) CRS-N-N-1101, and Tweed's Tavern Archaeological Site [7NC-A-18]: Trench 16 East Profile, Showing Stone Privy Shaft [18].
Figure 5.4. Guthere-Giacomelli House (Tweed's Tavern) CRS-8/N-1101, and Tweed's Tavern Archaeological Site [7NC-A-18]: Trench 19 Plan, Showing Subsurface Disturbances from Utilities and Landscaping and Location of EU 10.
Figure 5.5. Guthrie-Giacomelli House (Tweed's Tavern) CRS-#N-1101, and Tweed's Tavern Archaeological Site [7NC-A-18]: Excavation Units 5, 6 and 7 West and North Profiles
Plate 5.4. Guthrie-Giacomelli House (Tweed's Tavern) CRS-#N-1101, and Tweed's Tavern Archaeological Site [7NC-A-18]: View of Excavation Units 2 and 3 facing east. Note electrical wire running through the center of the unit which along with landscaping heavily disturbed the subsurface [contexts 12, 13, 21, 22, 30 and 31]. (Photographer: Sue Ferenbach, February 26, 1999) [HRI Neg. # 98039/8:4].
Plate 5.7. Gutherie-Giacomelli House (Tweed's Tavern) CRS-#N-1101, and Tweed's Tavern Archaeological Site [7NC-A-18]: Plan view of Excavation Units 5, 6 and 7 facing east. Note these units were deeply disturbed down to sterile subsoil [7] by modern underground utilities associated with two air conditioning units and landscaping [12, 13, 21-28, 30 and 31] (Photographer: Sue Eidson, April 8, 1999)[HRI Neg.# 98039/12:11].
Excavation Unit 8 was placed against the east exterior wall of the log tavern/house under the floor of an existing porch addition. (Figure 5.6; Plate 5.8). Under the floor of the addition, a pair of stone foundation walls [11 and 12] were exposed resting on sterile clay loam subsoil [4] and partially buried by sandy clay loam with rubble [3] and sandy clay. The foundations appear to be related to an early 20th-century porch addition. The foundations were further buried by the construction of a late 20th-century replacement to the porch, which utilized the old foundations [11 and 12] and capped them with cinderblocks [16 and 17]. Soil associated with this activity [1] consisted of sandy loam with flakes of mica schist and chunks of rubble.

Excavation Unit 9 was placed against the exterior north wall of the log building, under the floor of the 1950s rear addition that was on the site of an earlier lean-to (Figure 5.7; Plates 5.9 and 5.10). Under the floor, resting on the sterile subsoil [4], was a stone footing or pier [24] projecting north from the north face of the much-altered north foundation wall of the original tavern structure. The relationship between this pier and the original wall could not be established, but a notch cut into the log wall above this point suggests that the two are connected and later than the original log building (see above, Chapter 4). The footing was buried by two layers of soil mixed with construction debris [1 and 5]. The lower construction layer consisted of sandy clay loam with rubble and the upper layer consisted of sandy loam with more modern construction debris like wire nails, chunks of concrete.

Following the removal of the recent concrete patio on the south side of the tavern/house a two-foot by three-foot excavation unit (EU 10) was positioned over a dark linear stain [33] running northeast/southwest. Excavation of the unit identified the stain [33] as a modern pipe trench [32] for a sewer line (Figure 5.4).

C. DATA RECOVERY EXCAVATIONS

Based on the results of this multi-stage Phase II work, it was apparent that the only area where coherent and informative tavern-related archaeological deposits lay was in the area of the driveway north of the tavern. Data recovery excavations were therefore undertaken in September 1999 in the area of the identified stone foundation and archaeological deposits located in Trench 18. A total of 250 square feet of soil was excavated in Excavation Units 11-20 to recover a sample of the material culture associated with the tavern/house occupation (Figures 5.8 - 5.11; Plates 5.11 - 5.13).

After the stone foundations were further exposed and analyzed, they were determined to be part of a complex stone drainage system [43, 73, 97, 99 and 104] probably built circa 1850 (Figure 5.9; Plate 5.11). The drain, constructed in three shallow trenches [90, 91 and 103] excavated into the B-horizon [7] probably originated from the rear of the room attached to the north side of the tavern. The drain was most likely constructed to carry rain or wastewater away from the tavern/house. It may have also served to divert water from a nearby spring, which would naturally have drained toward the tavern. The drain ran perpendicular to the building and emptied into a natural sinkhole [86] close to the head of an un-named stream immediately north of the tavern (Figure 5.11; Plates 5.12 and 5.13). Trench 20 was placed north of Trench 18 in an effort to locate the western edge of the sinkhole. No traces of the western edge were observed, but by projecting the perimeter, the circular sinkhole was estimated to be about 25 feet across. Through auger tests it was determined that the sinkhole extended to a depth of approximately nine feet below the 20th-century asphalt driveway. Sandwiched between the lower [89] and upper clays [87] filling this massive feature was a dark organically rich soil [56] containing a multitude of artifacts dating from circa 1780 to circa 1890.
This ancient sink hole was also frequented by Native Americans during the Woodland I and Woodland II periods, as is evidenced by the presence of projectile points and lithic debitage recovered from within and around it. Diagnostics consist of a quartz stemmed projectile point similar to Bare Island type, a rhyolite broadspear and a jasper Woodland II triangle. Of special interest are ten pieces of muscovite sheet mica, which were originally one piece (See Chapter 6).

At some point after the construction of the initial drain it was decided to seal off the sink hole with a thick deposit of mottled white clay [87]. The drain was still needed and new sections of drain [43 and 104] were built, diverting water further to the west and east respectively. A series of post holes [101/102, 107/108, 109/110 and 11/112] uncovered adjacent to the drains suggests they were either bridged or fenced off from wagon traffic (Figure 5.10). The main portion of the stone drain was more recently disrupted by a modern pipe trench [82] for two pvc pipes [95 and 96].

Additional work was undertaken after the building was moved on June 25, 2000. We were not prepared for the high degree of ground disturbance that was incurred during preparations for the removal of the building and from the removal itself. This had effectively destroyed the stratigraphic integrity of the stone wall footing and its associated deposits. This situation was compounded by the placement of large amounts of backdirt from the adjacent gas pipe trench on the site of the possible kitchen area. These two circumstances restricted our ability to recover much information. We also understood that the demolition contractor would be on site on June 28, 2000 with a backhoe and operator to provide assistance in soil removal. A backhoe was delivered but without an operator, and the bulk of the work was done by hand.

Within these constraints we nevertheless observed and recorded a stone footing surviving beneath the alignment of the southwest and northwest walls of the 1950s addition. Loose stone and brick in the area showed signs of charring, suggesting the presence of a chimney in the vicinity. Artifacts recovered were consistent with a date in the first half of the 19th century and included slip-trailed utilitarian redware, glass table ware, and refined wares including porcelain.

The earlier work we had performed in the crawl space beneath the 1950s addition had suggested that pre-20th-century stratigraphy was already somewhat disturbed in this area by the construction of the 1950s addition. We conclude, however, that this area probably was the “cookery” associated with the tavern. The early 19th-century documentary evidence implies that the “cookery” was a free-standing building, but our archaeological investigation on the property found no convincing trace of such a structure. The data from the most recent work, unsatisfactory though it is, therefore points to the cookery being an early, single storey, lean-to structural addition to the log tavern on
Figure 5.6. Guthrie-Giacomelli House (Tweed's Tavern) CRS-#N-1101, and Tweed's Tavern Archaeological Site [7NC-A-18]: Excavation Unit 8: North, East and South Profiles.
Figure 5.7. Guthrie-Giacomelli House (Tweed's Tavern) CRS-#N-1101, and Tweed's Tavern Archaeological Site [7NC-A-18]: Excavation Unit 9 West, North and East Profiles.
Figure 5.8: Guthrie-Giacomelli House (Tweed's Tavern) CRS-#N-II 01. and Tweed's Tavern Archaeological Site [7NC-A-18]: Excavation Units 11-20 Within Trench 18. Showing Details of the Stone Box Drains

43.7, 49.9, and 104
Figure 5.9. Guthrie-Giacomelli House (Tweed's Tavern) CRS-#N-1101, and Tweed's Tavern Archaeological Site [7NC-A-18]: Trench 18, Excavation Unit 19 North Profile, Showing a Cross-Section Through the Stone Box Drain [73 and 97].
Figure 5.10. Gutherie-Giacomelli House (Tweed's Tavern) CRS-#N-1101, and Tweed's Tavern Archaeological Site [7NC-A-18]: Trench 18, Excavation Unit 16, Showing East/West Profiles of a Posthole [101/102] and Cross-Section Through a Side Drain [103/104].
Figure 5.11. Gutherie-Giacomelli House (Tweed's Tavern) CRS-N-1101, and Tweed's Tavern Archaeological Site [7NC-A-18]. Trench 18 West Profile, Excavation Units 11, 14, 18-20, Showing Relationship of Drain [43 and 99] to the Sinkhole [86].
Plate 5.9. Gutherie-Giacomelli House (Tweed's Tavern) CRS-#N-1101, and Tweed's Tavern Archaeological Site [7NC-A-18]: View of Excavation Unit 9 facing south with Jason Uebelacker carefully excavating Context 5, a sandy clay loam with rubble (Photographer: Greg Tindall April 12, 1999), [HRI Neg.# 98039/14:4].
Plate 5.10. Gutherie-Giacomelli House (Tweed's Tavern) CRS-#N-1101, and Tweed's Tavern Archaeological Site [7NC-A-18]: View of Excavation Unit 9 facing south. Note stone foundation projecting from the center of the largely rebuilt foundation of the original north wall of the log tavern. The projecting masonry, which appears to be a pier of some kind, may be evidence for a subdivision within the lean-to present at this location before the mid-20th century (Photographer: Jason Uebelacker, April 12, 1999)[HRI Neg.# 98039/14:10].
Plate 5.11. Guthrie-Giacomelli House (Tweed's Tavern) CRS-#N-1101, and Tweed's Tavern Archaeological Site [7NC-A-18]: View of Excavation Units 12-14 and 19 within Trench 18, facing north. Note Sue Eidson excavating soil from around the stone box drains [97 and 43] in Excavation Unit 11 while Jason Uebelacker excavates the clay fill material [87] from the sink-hole feature in Excavation Unit 17. The diagonal trench in the foreground is a modern utility trench [82] (Photographer: Greg Tindall, September 14, 1999)[HRI Neg.# 99037/38:14].
Plate 5.12. Gutherie-Giacomelli House (Tweed's Tavern) CRS-#N-1101, and Tweed's Tavern Archaeological Site [7NC-A-18]: View of cut through the sink hole in Trench 18, Excavation Units 13 and 17 facing west from the second floor of the house. Note mottled dense clay fill [87] used to seal the sink hole (Photographer: Greg Tindall, September 14, 1999)[HRI Neg.# 99037/38:23].
Plate 5.14. Gutherie-Giacomelli House (Tweed's Tavern) CRS-#N-1101, and Tweed's Tavern Archaeological Site [7NC-A-18]: View of stone-lined well under the floor of the east porch looking down from the second story of tavern/house. This photograph was taken in May 2000, during monitoring of the final stages of preparation for moving the tavern. Note the stone lintel on the east side, possibly representing a step or entrance to a small superstructure around the top of the well (Photographer: Sue Ferenbach, May 9, 2000)[HRI Neg.# 0006/2:14].
its northwestern side. The Giacomelli family apparently re-used the stone foundations of this structure when they built the two storey addition in the 1950s.

D. CONCLUSIONS

The stratigraphy of the Tweed’s Tavern property was dominated by 20th-century disturbances that had severely or totally removed the 19th-century evidence in most places. The somewhat incoherent remains of an outbuilding were found about 200 feet north of the tavern, and this could possibly be part of the frame barn and stables mentioned in the 1816 assessment, but certainty is not possible. No traces were found of the limekiln, shed or tool house mentioned in 1823.

One privy shaft was located between the two structures. Continuous use of the site, and particularly a series of additions and improvements from the 1950s onwards had disrupted the earlier stratigraphy around the house, although many 19th-century artifacts remained in these later soils. Work inside the house identified a well that had been reported to exist under the porch, and also produced reasonably secure evidence for a 19th-century addition on the north side of the log building. This is most probably the kitchen, but could also be the addition mentioned in the 1823 inventory.

The most coherent archaeology was found on the north side of the tavern, beyond the limits of the 1950s addition. The pit feature, probably a natural sink hole, produced a fine 19th-century artifact assemblage with a cut-off date in the very late 1800s. The stone culverts or drains cannot be fully understood as only a portion of their course survived, but they point to very determined efforts to remove water from the area of the tavern itself.