

Chapter 4: Laboratory and Analysis Methods

All artifacts were moved to Brooklyn College's laboratory facilities in August 2001. Upon arrival the condition of the artifacts was assessed and a program to stabilize, clean and create an interim inventory of the collection was immediately implemented. An initial assessment of the collection determined that the majority of artifacts had not been washed and after more than two years of storage the artifacts required stabilization. The condition of the artifacts, still in the original field bags were washed or brushed, as appropriate, counted and re-bagged in archival safe bags. Once this was complete analysis could then proceed. The stabilization took over one year with over ten undergraduate and graduate students working ten to fifteen hours per week in the lab. During this process all faunal materials were separated for removal to the Zooarchaeology Laboratory, directed by Dr. Sophia Perdikaris, also located at Brooklyn College.

As materials were being washed and stabilized, a function-based classification system was developed. It was decided to use a function-based system to best address the research questions that the project planned to explore. As outlined in the history section of this report, during the eighteenth century, CHP was occupied by three functionally distinct types of buildings: barracks, almshouse (poorhouse) and prison. While all are institutional (as opposed to domestic or commercial) establishments, they served different groups and theoretically would have housed distinct populations. Initially a key aspect of the analysis was to determine, if possible, the use and lifeways of the Common by the distinct populations who inhabited the eighteenth century property. A functional classification of the artifacts would facilitate this process, enabling the potential recognition of site use and behavior patterns of the varying populations thus enhancing site interpretation. Technical and stylistic information about the artifacts were also included in the taxa to enable the search for subtle variability.

The project sought to create a system that would prove flexible while standardizing the terminology. The *Canadian Parks Service Classification System for Historical Collections* (1992) created by the staff at Parks Canada was used as a model. The largest portion of the historic Common was occupied by barracks structures. While eighteenth century northeastern barracks sites have been published from upstate New York and New Jersey (see Hunter's work on the Trenton Barracks and Starbuck's work at Fort Edward (1999), there was no local example of an artifact typology that could be used as a model for a site with a variety of institutions like CHP. The Parks Canada system is a comprehensive artifact classification system that is readily available in print for reference. The system highlights materials from a wide range of site types, from domestic sites, institutions and barracks sites. Once a framework was established, local types and PES' initial classification were integrated into the system. The final artifact classification system is thus a hierarchal function based system organized under three main levels: category, classes and subclasses, name of object and technical information

The top level of classification is categorical and descriptive and includes:

- Catalog and Inventory number: this identifies the artifact provenience within the site. The numbers were arbitrarily assigned, one per artifact, based on the bag number in which the artifact was found. All provenience data was retained.
- Category: This is the major broad functional identification of the artifact. Examples are personal artifact, food related artifact, tools and equipment, etc. This disregards artifact material and manufacture.
- Class is a finer functional division of artifacts within their category based on their use and place of use. For example, within the category of personal artifacts, this separates jewelry from artifacts connected with hygiene (such as toothbrushes).

This is further explained below. Classes may then be further divided into a sub-class to better identify the function of an object.

- Object (Name Of) is the word or title that the artifact is commonly known or identified as. For example, button, soup bowl, fork, pocket watch or toothbrush.
- General descriptive categories include: Material – what the artifact is constructed of; Form – general form of the artifact such as a pipe stem or bowl or the body, base or rim of a ceramic sherd; Decorative Technique; and Decorative Motif. Another category labeled “Manufacture” contains general manufacture information such as measurements and/or manufacturing technique. The final descriptive category is “Date”.

The second level of the classification system (the artifact class) focuses on defining the broad functional categories:

- Personal artifacts are artifacts created to serve individual personal needs. Within this category is: Adornment – an artifact created to be worn on the human body or clothing for ornamentation rather than for protection of body covering; Personal Gear – personal items used or carried by an individual such as a pipe or wallet; Toilet Article (Grooming/Hygiene) – an artifact created for personal care, hygiene or grooming; Medicinal – medical or health care related artifacts of a personal nature including medicine bottles, syringes or medicine cups and; Clothing – artifacts used for covering the human body. Clothing is further subdivided into a series of sub-classes including fastener (buttons), footwear and accessory (belt or cufflink).
- Food related artifacts are artifacts used for consumption and serving and food preparation and storage.

- Recreational artifacts are artifacts used for recreational activities such as games or public entertainment.
- Furnishings are artifacts that facilitate human activity meeting physical needs or providing comfort or convenience to activities. The category includes Furniture; Household Accessory (an artifact used in and around a building or house to enhance their environment such as wastebaskets, vases or picture frames) and Lighting Device.
- Tools and Equipment is a category to address industrial, or industry related, artifacts.
- Transportation refers to any artifact related to transportation.
- Communication artifacts are artifacts created to express thoughts and ideas and can be symbolic or literal items. This category includes: Ceremonial artifacts – artifacts that symbolize or express traditions of a community or group of people; Documentary artifacts – an item used to communicate information; Exchange Medium – an artifact used as a medium for exchange such as money; and Writing – artifacts used for personal communication.
- Architectural refers to artifacts associated with structures including window glass.
- The final categories are Floral, Faunal and Unclassifiable.

Although not clearly defined in PES' notes or reports, (see Chapter 2 for further details), features are apparently discrete contexts which were identifiable by content or matrix within excavation units. Materials from the features, as defined by the excavators, were processed first, since their intact contexts and associations make them more valuable for

interpretation. Non-feature areas were most commonly sampled during monitoring or contained disturbed contexts whereas all trash deposit features had an intact primary context. While non-feature materials were catalogued, for the most part they are only secondarily used for analysis and interpretation, since their contexts were questionable.

As the features and units were catalogued, all information was entered into a Microsoft Excel database. Due to the size of the database, it is not presented in this report in printed form, but rather is attached on the accompanying DVD. Digital photographs of representative or unique artifacts were taken for all features. A selection of these images are printed with the report, a complete inventory of images is located on the accompanying DVD. Ceramic and glass reconstructions were undertaken and also photographed. Although the overall collection contained approximately two hundred fifty-thousand (250,000) artifacts, a little less than one half of them, one hundred thirty-three thousand (133,017), were non-faunal and/or human remains. As previously stated, these material remains were analyzed separately. For information on the human remains, see the report from the Smithsonian Institution on the analysis of the human remains (London 2004, on file at the Landmarks Preservation Commission). The faunal remains are discussed in the next section of the report. Of the artifacts, forty-eight thousand (48,000) or thirty-six percent (36%) are from the feature deposits. The remainder were without good context, coming either from the topsoil or from shovel tests or monitoring where no features were observed. The features from the site were catalogued over a two and a half year period after the initial washing and stabilization process was completed.