

Chapter 7: Summary and Conclusions

Introduction

Historical archaeology goes back to the beginning of archaeology as a discipline. The earliest archaeological excavations, such as those at Pompeii begun in 1748, were of Classical sites whose location and history were known from documents. The mid-nineteenth century excavations of large Near Eastern sites by Layard and Botta, Schliemann's excavations at Troy and Mycenae in the latter half of that century, the initial archaeological interest in the mounds of Israel and the Levant at the turn of the twentieth century, all proceeded from the study of extant texts. Since many of these were fragmentary and others (like the Iliad and the Bible) not primarily historic texts, [historical] archaeology's initial non-antiquarian purpose was to either prove or disprove the veracity and accuracy of these documents. This goal was all the more important since there was rarely any other independent means of verifying the information that the documents supplied. While this seemed incontestable for the non-historical literary and fragmentary historical texts of the ancient world, it was less so for the more complete records of the recent past. It was not until well into the twentieth century that the confluence of the New History and the New Archaeology brought "document-aided archaeology" into its own. With the recognition that even modern documents can be mistaken, suborned, or exaggerated, that what may seem obvious or unremarkable to the writer may be omitted, that large portions of the population (women, children, the poor, the ill) may not be documented at all, historical archaeology took as one of its primary concerns the addition of this "undocumented history" (from the artifacts) to the historic record¹.

City Hall Park is an example of an extremely well-documented site (cf. Appendices F and G), and thus illuminates some basic questions of historical archaeology. As opposed to

¹ Other concerns exist as well: the documentation and analysis of the nature of colonial/aboriginal interaction; the birth and development of the modern world; the use of archaeological data to test various theories of social interaction, to name just a few. The question at issue here is how relevant is the excavation in City Hall Park to these concerns, and they to it.

sites which lack the heavily documented and independently cross-documented historical record of verifiable texts, it can be argued that this excavation did not add significantly to our knowledge. While this may appear justified at first glance, we feel in the long run that it is not so.

Louis Binford was perhaps the strongest and most vocal proponent of the position that “archaeology is anthropology or it is nothing” (Binford 1962, 1977). In the case of City Hall Park, we would have to disagree. The archaeological project at City Hall Park, like many other urban CRM projects, has given us not anthropology, but fine-grained history. It has forced us to take a close look at the development and use of a single plot of land in lower Manhattan. It has provided new data on burials, numerous beautiful and interesting artifacts, insights into eighteenth-century foodways, and large closed trash assemblages. The nature of the deposits and the constraints of both the data themselves and the construction and project (as opposed to the research) design, discussed above, limited what could be said with certainty. This was offset to some extent by the bountiful documentary record, which clearly was primary in providing information about the structures and land use of the project area, as well as the population and individuals who inhabited and used it.

The documentary record, however, often must be read “against the grain”. The *Minutes* of the Common Council, the Churchwardens’ *Minutes*, the newspaper articles, even the published diaries, reflect the ordinances, legal opinions, and worldview of those who were charged with or who took it upon themselves to make decisions for the community. Other, less documented, early New Yorkers also show up in the published and unpublished records. Suits by individuals against neighbors, tenants, and landlords are as often seen as judicial and legislative fines for untoward behavior. The ordinances and regulations of the Common Council are can often be read as statements which proclaim the existence of contrastive behavior. They may represent the clash of a governmental ideal with everyday realities. For example, the repeated official prohibitions against unlawful dumping may in fact be seen as documentary evidence of such common proscribed behavior. Ordinances constraining the sale of liquor and fines levied for their

infractions may be signs of the prevalence of this trade and its difficulty of regulation in the early city. City Hall Park, the creation of the Corporation, the repository of the unwanted, the preferred site for public displays of celebration or disaffection bears silent witness to the interplay of contesting powers throughout the three centuries of its existence.

City Hall Park and Urban Archaeology

Behind the artifact analysis of the City Hall Park assemblage (or assemblages), lies a further series of questions that must be faced. Basically they devolve on one theme: how well can we, twenty-first-century Americans, understand the actions and the motives of those living here two or two and a half centuries ago? Caught between the solipsistic denial of any ability to clearly impute motives and understand behavior and the ethnocentric assumption of complete identity with our cultural ancestors, archaeology grasps at received wisdom. Statements about past behavior and its interpretation are sometimes basically untested assumptions raised to the status of laws. While some or all of these statements may be true or probable, to assume their correctness on the basis of what is broadly ethnocentric inferential reasoning is fallacious and can be circular, misleading, and inappropriate.

A look at some examples of such assumptions from contemporary urban archaeology with reference to City Hall Park may illuminate some of the difficulties inherent in this practice. (References are deliberately not given; this is not an *ad hominem* argument. Sources for the examples can be found in a quick perusal of some of the “grey literature” of urban contract reports). Thus, *trash deposits near structures are associated with those structures*. City Hall Park provides cases of trash features located in the vicinity of the Barracks (Features 87/88/99, 163) and the New Gaol (Features 82/91/92). It might be argued that spatial contiguity means that these features, and the material filling them, were associated with and came from the nearest structure. In the analysis of the data from these features (above, Chapter 5) we find little support for this assumption. The most one can say is that trash features 87/88/89 contained more bottles than the other

similar features nearer the Gaol (and Almshouse), while the latter features had more ceramic pipes. One can draw the conclusion that soldiers drink while prisoners and almshouse occupants smoke, but this is both circular (based on the untested assumption that the feature groups contain only material from their nearest neighbors) and trivial. An equally possible explanation could posit a specific dump for bottles from all over (and even outside of) the Common, unassociated with the occupants of the nearest structure, and another spot on the Common which particularly commended itself for sitting and smoking (under trees, or on [archaeologically and historically undocumented] benches), producing a thick sheet deposit of ceramic pipe fragments (see above, pg. xx, for a discussion of the possible sheet deposit nature of Features 82/91/92). The connection with the structures might at best be serendipitous. Before dismissing this explanation out of hand, if so inclined, we might look at the wider behavioral and archaeological implications. Privies and cisterns are the most common features found and tested on urban sites, including New York City (Cantwell and Wall 2003). The usual assumptions are that (1) these shaft features are associated with the property, and (2) their material with the occupants of the property, on which they are located. While the first assumption may be tested through a study of the documents (deeds, plans, descriptions) pertaining to the property, the second assumption remains hypothetical and almost always untestable. Filling a privy or a cistern can be a communal task, utilizing fill from the neighbors or from unrelated contexts. Aside from artifacts which may have collected during the use-life of the feature, fill artifacts can be only loosely associated with the occupants of the property, and then only through this untested assumption (transformed into an unquestioned archaeological generality).

Another common assumption: *Graves are a standard depth below the surface* (“*six feet under*”). At City Hall Park, the depth of the burials in the first Almshouse Burial Ground was quite variable. Some burials were encountered as little as six inches beneath the surface or directly under the pavement or cement sidewalk. Other burial features were at least below the 24 or 36 inch impact zone, showing up as rectangular patches of contrasting matrix. This was not due to post-depositional events; the deep and shallow graves are found in close proximity to each other. It is thus not the case that some graves

had more overburden removed than others due to later leveling of the ground. Some graves are apparently just deeper than others. We have no real documentation to indicate when the current notion of a standard six-foot depth for graves developed, but the archaeology at City Hall Park at least indicates that it did not pertain in the eighteenth century.

Human remains define burial features. Human bones are found in small quantities in many of the site's features (for example, Features 13, 72, 73 and others; see above, Chapter VII). Although denoted as such by the excavators, these are not necessarily burial features. Disturbance of shallow graves at another location on the site, and the presence of bones in the sub-soil, perhaps as a byproduct of reuse of older graves or channelling, certainly could have moved disarticulated bones or fragments into midden contexts or into pits or other declivities (Feature 76 seems to have been a builders' trench), thus at times conflating them with actual destroyed graves. Once again, we can be misled by our own cultural bias, tricked into thinking that certain attitudes have not changed over the past few centuries. Graves, and the remains within them, may not have been thought as inviolable in the eighteenth century as they are today (Sutphin and Bankoff n.d, with literature). Graves were emptied and reused, with concomitant occasion for the loss of small (and sometimes, no doubt, larger) bones, which may have found their way into refuse contexts. Not every "burial feature" need be a grave or the remains of a disturbed burial.

Looking at the palimpsest that is City Hall Park, the archaeologist is faced with three main questions. The assemblages from the closed contexts of trash and burial deposits uniformly speak to a certain time and place. Regardless of individual sizes and functional differences, they date essentially to a fifty year period comprising the last half of the eighteenth century, with perhaps a bow to the neighboring decades at either end. The dates are fixed by the well-dated ceramic typology and (to a lesser extent) by pipe-stem dating. First, what explains the almost complete lack of early eighteenth-century artifacts, the bolus of mid- to late-eighteenth century artifacts, and the fragmentary nature of the nineteenth-century deposits? Second, what behavior or behaviors deposited the

assemblages in City Hall Park at that specific time? And last, but by no means least, what do they mean? Given the strictures adumbrated above, what conclusions can one draw from these assemblages about the history, the life of the park and its inhabitants? What has the excavation and analysis added to our understanding of the past of City Hall Park and the city as a whole?

The Question of Time

The documented history of land use in City Hall Park has been covered in Chapter III (with literature) and the details will not be repeated here. In broad outline, however, one can relate the answer to the first question to the known facts of the city's development. Precontact Native American use of the land which was later the Common and City Hall Park is completely undocumented both historically and archaeologically. Even were there to have been sporadic use of this area in precontact times, the pervasive post-depositional disturbance caused by construction, demolition, rebuilding and regrading, so evident in most of the excavated units, would have obliterated traces of these earlier New Yorkers. In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, until about 1730, the Common was north of and completely outside the city. Population density in the area was low; utilization of the land was sporadic and not uniform. The city, essentially a seaport village clustered around the fort at the south end of Manhattan island, was tiny and distant, far off in the minds of its inhabitants, if not in actual distance. Such structures as there were in the vicinity of the Common were either at some remove (possibly Leisler's farm, for example) or unlikely to occasion much durable artifactual or architectural debris (the windmills). The land both to the east and the west of the Common was largely vacant. Some of the earth and turf of the Common may have been removed at times for use elsewhere (cf. MCC II:258-9 [1703]), but there is no record of other activities. Under these conditions, it is not remarkable that the archaeological record of the park from its earliest period of European use might be underrepresented or absent.

By contrast, from the fourth decade of the eighteenth century to the first decade of the nineteenth, not only did the Common experience a burst of construction and development, but the city around it grew far beyond the dreams of even a half-century before. The Common itself was the site of (possibly noisesome and overcrowded) densely occupied institutions as the residential areas to its east and west developed. The actual inhabitants of the former pasture land to the south of the Collect grew from a handful in 1730 to probably several thousand housed in the Almshouse, the Bridewell, the New Gaol, and the Barracks in the 1780's and 1790's as the city's population nearly tripled in that same period. Archaeologically, the result was the rapid accretion and deposition of refuse from both the populations living on the Common and their nearest neighbors. For half a century the grounds of the heavily utilized institutional dormitories, their privies, natural depressions and borrow-pits became the repository of kitchen refuse, broken pottery, discarded utensils, and other trash. Through two wars, occupation, and partial destruction of the city, the Common became convenient not only as a place for demonstrations and public gatherings, for confrontation and execution, but apparently also as an unofficial communal dumping ground, possibly one of the "other Convenient places" for dumping by cartmen (aside from the river) (MCC II:196 [June 2, 1702]; IV:102 [November 17, 1731]). Thus, the presence of wasters and kiln furniture from the nearby potteries, the cattle skulls probably from the tanneries on the slopes to the north, the mixture of local and imported earthenware and other types of pottery which date from this approximately fifty year period swamps the City Hall Park assemblage in terms of typological variety, raw numbers of artifacts, and relative abundance (percentage of artifacts represented regardless of feature size), whether the types are functionally connected with storage or food service (see data in Chapter VI).

The nature of the area changed again in the beginning of the nineteenth century. Beginning with the evacuation of the British troops and the demolition of the Barracks and the First Almshouse, the construction of City Hall, the gradual transfer of the needy and ill from the Second Almshouse to Bellevue by 1812 and its reuse as the New York Institution, and concluding with the remodeling of the New Gaol into the Hall of Records in 1830 and the demolition of the Bridewell in 1838, the former Common lost its

character as a locus for the poor and unwanted and assumed the role of a center of ostensibly more refined civic services. Coinciding with this period of demolition deposits in the park is a decrease in the frequency and size of trash contexts containing distinctive nineteenth-century ceramics and bones. This suggests that large-scale dumping was no longer occurring at this time. This may be correlated with a change in garbage disposal practices in the city as a whole, for which we have no evidence, or with a change in the behavior and the attitudes toward what was suitable or “proper” with respect to the use of this plot of land. Although difficult to document, it seems a reasonable hypothesis that the very growth of the city, the urbanization of the surrounding area, and the transformation of the Common from a place where human flotsam and wrongdoers were deposited into, if not an urban showcase, at least a locus of symbolic importance to the polity and its citizens, would include definitive improvement, beautification, and conservation of the grounds. Thus, the Fields, as the Common became known, were cleaned up and landscaped, fenced and (to use a modern word and concept) gentrified. Illustrations from the early nineteenth century stress the park’s bucolic and cultured atmosphere (Stanhope drawing). The architecture of newly built structures (such as City Hall or the Rotunda) or renovated older buildings (such as the Hall of Records or the New York Institution) reflected and emphasized the upper-class gentility of the civic center. It seems a good possibility that the first question, based on the observation of the preponderance of mid- to late eighteenth century material in the City Hall Park assemblage, may be answered by examination of the evolution of the role of the park in the conceptual map of the citizens, and that the archaeological evidence lends added support to this.

The Question of Behavior

We have already discussed the probable trash deposition behavior at City Hall Park in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries². Most of the data in evidence to this point has been artifactual, and has been ambiguous. There does not seem to be any great

² This behavior is the subject of a forthcoming dissertation by Alyssa Loorya, in which the question of the composition of the trash deposits and its interpretation is fully treated. Readers are referred to this work (Department of Anthropology, CUNY Graduate Center, 2008) for statistics and further details.

discernible differences in the ceramics found in the trash features, nor in the sheet deposits of City Hall Park as a whole, leading to the conclusion that the features and the refuse are not necessarily connected with the occupants of any particular structure in the Common, but probably represent an assemblage deposited not only by inhabitants of the various Common institutions, but by the growing population of the surrounding city as well.

There is, however, other evidence of behavior from the refuse found in the features and non-feature contexts of the City Hall Park excavations. This is the evidence of the faunal material, which is found in some abundance³. As is the case with the artifact evidence, the bones were not all collected under the same protocol, which makes certain comparisons and conclusions tentative. From the *Day Books* and excavators' notes, it is evident that some of the bones were collected from contexts which were roughly sampled, others selected as exemplars from monitored contexts, still others from features from which all bones were saved. Also, like the rest of the refuse found in the excavations, it is probable that at least some of the bones come from households and industries adjacent to the Common, and do not necessarily impart much information about the occupants of the institutions located there. Nonetheless, the faunal material provides valuable insights into behavior in and around the Common in the late eighteenth century. Differences in distribution of specific animal parts, whether those of cattle, pigs, or sheep, give some indication of different eating habits and menus, perhaps indicating a preference of cheaper cuts for the poorer segments of the populace. This might be true regardless of the point of origin of the bones (whether from the Common itself or from the neighboring homes). Or it might reflect the changing availability of meat during the years around the Revolutionary War. The number of shells found during the excavation remind us of the fact that shellfish were poor people's food in eighteenth-century New York. The lack of evidence for animal destruction of the bone may indicate some differential care in the rapid disposal of potentially offensive garbage.

³ The faunal material was analyzed by CUNY graduate students Seth Bennington, Jennifer Borishansky, George Hambrecht, Kate Krivodorskaya, and Julie Anidjar Pei, with undergraduate assistance, under the direction of Dr. Sophia Perdikaris. Their reports appear elsewhere in this volume; the data and conclusions are briefly summarized here.

The Problem of Meaning

At this point, we come full circle. The city has spent a good deal of money in the excavation and analysis of the material from City Hall Park. While but a fraction of the total costs of the park renovation, the funding was not inconsiderable. It is not only our civic duty, as recipients of public funds, but our moral duty as archaeologists, to reflect on the worth of the project: what it tells us of the past of the park and of the city as a whole; what it tells us about urban archaeology.

The history of land use in what is currently City Hall Park has been extensively treated above (Chapter 3) and in other publications (e.g., Hunter Associates 1993; see Burrows and Wallace 1999 with literature). For the most part, the number, types, functions and (approximate) locations of the structures built on the Common over the past three hundred years can be determined through a thorough study of the historical documentation, especially the Common Council Minutes and the various maps and illustrations which have survived from the 18th and 19th centuries (cf. Hunter Associates 1993). Archaeological excavation, especially excavation such as that of Parsons ES which is impact-directed and rarely exceeds the depth to be affected by construction, can add to the information gleaned from the written sources in two ways: (a) it can expose remnants of activities, structures and features which are not mentioned in the documents, and (b) it can confirm the location, preservation and activities of structures and features already known from these sources. Examples of both of these outcomes can be found in the City Hall Park excavations. Thus, in the first case, the excavation has provided evidence of massive and continued trash dumping on the Common, especially in the latter part of the 18th century, a practice barely mentioned in the records (cf. MCC II:175 [1767], where dumping behind the Almshouse is forbidden). Although the Minutes of the Common Council do set a penalty for digging holes in or removing mould or turf from the Common as early as 1703 (MCC II:258-9), reiterating this prohibition in 1731 (MCC IV:107), the extent of the practice is surprising, and “midden” appears as a notation for many of the strata in the test units (even those not denoted as features (several

illustrated). Even more striking, there is also evidence of secondary burials in the northeastern side of the park (the Triangle Area), whose existence is not mentioned in any historical or contemporary source. In the second case, test excavations in the course of construction have uncovered remains of the Bridewell, the Almshouse burial grounds, the Rotunda and the New Gaol, structures and features known from historical records. Only archaeology can provide evidence of the additional information gained from an interpretation of the stratigraphy of the deposits.

Stratigraphy is the description and analysis or interpretation of the stratification (deposition of the strata or layers) within one or more excavation operations on an archaeological site. In conjunction with seriation, the study of stylistic change and replacement of artifact types through time, it is a primary means of establishing a relative chronology of the events which created and modified the site. However, stratigraphy has more to offer than just a chronology, important though that may be. Analysis of the sequence, composition, and contents of the strata can inform our history of land use and attitudes held by the populace at various times. The stratigraphy of City Hall Park allows us diachronic glimpses of the social and civic uses of the Common which complement and fill in the area's rich documentary history.

From the PES *Preliminary Report* (2000b:6) comes the following general summary of the stratigraphy:

Soils within City Hall Park can be grouped into several categories. The uppermost stratum across the property was a dark, loamy topsoil containing 20th-century debris. Below the topsoil in most places were one or more layers of local fill. Local fill originates on or near the site, and usually consists of redeposited soils and artifacts. Demolition fill, which occurs when structures are razed and the surrounding soils are commingled with building materials and artifacts, is included in the "local fill" category. In some parts of the site, intact cultural surfaces existed beneath the fill episodes. These surfaces would have been exposed during site occupation, and used as a receptacle for artifacts strewn across the ground. Beneath the intact surfaces was a red sand subsoil.

Cultural features on the property were found cut into all of the soil strata described above, but those with the most archaeological significance were those cut into intact surfaces or into subsoil, as these would have been

contemporary with the intact surfaces. Features on the site consisted of trash pits (of various sizes and shapes), architectural elements, utility and landscaping trenches or pits, and primary and secondary interments.

The most obvious and striking aspect of the stratigraphy of City Hall Park is the evidence it provides for the extensive continued use and modification of the area encompassed by the park. Every operation, every test pit produced at least some artifactual material below the modern topsoil layer. No part of the park investigated showed a profile which could be interpreted as a totally naturally-developed soil column. Even in those cases where the subsoil (the naturally-occurring virgin soil matrix of red coarse sandy loam, sometimes containing some pebbles) was reached immediately under the active humus, such as in most of the test units investigating the location for placement of pneumatic bollards along Chambers Street, the field notes indicate uncertainty as to whether this is virgin soil or actually redeposited fill. In most of the excavated units throughout the site, the stratigraphy indicates a subsurface structure which is a palimpsest of humanly-produced activity, often extending down to the bottom of the excavated impact depth. The extensive episodes of cutting, filling, leveling, construction, demolition and dumping which created the present landscape are omnipresent in the stratigraphy and provide mute support for the changing use and importance of the historic Common area.

The single most extensive archaeologically excavated contiguous area in City Hall Park was the "Triangle Area". This is on the eastern side of the northern section of the park, a triangular area with its widest side to the east, approaching to within 15 feet of the park boundary opposite the modern subway entrance, approximately 80 by 20 feet. Since this was known to be the part of the site comprising the first Almshouse burial ground (cf. Hunter Associates 1993), and since it was possible that graves and human remains might be found within the 12"-24" impact depth, LPC prescribed hand excavation for the entire area (PES Scope of Work). Indeed, grave shafts, *in situ* and secondary burials were visible from the moment that the asphalt was removed from the emergency vehicle access road and within a few inches below the bermed topsoil on either side (see map). There may have been a cemetery attached to the Almshouse from its inception. However the

first official record of the burial ground is found in 1757, when the Common Council voted to cause “a small piece of Ground to the Eastward of and adjoining to the fence of the said Work House, of the Length of two Boards, to be Inclosed and fenced in, for a Buriall place for the poor belonging to the said work House” (MCC 6:85-86). This cemetery was used until 1785, when a larger piece of ground in the vicinity of where Tweed Courthouse now stands was designated as the new cemetery for the dead of the Almshouse and the Bridewell (MCC 1:158). Burials likely to be associated with this graveyard were found during archaeological work completed as part of the restoration of the Tweed Courthouse in 2001 (Hartgen 2002).

Aside from the primary and secondary burials, which have been treated elsewhere (Chapter V), excavation of this area essentially recapitulated the information obtained from other locations on the Common. Below the topsoil or modern paving which covered the surface, the Stratum B levels over most of the units contained cobbles and artifacts from the 18th and 19th centuries, apparently the remains of paving episodes either for the Barracks Street (cf. Bancker Plan and derived Hunter Associates Plan [figs. Xx]) or for a paved walk after the Common had assumed its modern aspect as parkland. There was also a greater occurrence of what appeared to be sterile subsoil within the 12” impact depth in the test units in the west of the Triangle Area. This might indicate both less intense use during the 18th century than the units in proximity to the structures on the east (New Gaol, Almshouse) and west (Bridewell, Lower Barracks) of the Common, and leveling of the ground surface during the 19th century with concomitant loss of the topmost layer or layers. The occurrence of *in situ* human remains within the first few inches of subsoil (cf. Feature xx) seems to argue for the latter explanation as well as the former.

The historic maps (Ratzer, Bancker, Maerschallck, Lyne [illustrations given]) indicate that this northeastern part of the Common was not built on until 1757, when the Upper Barracks were constructed (MCC 6:108, 111-112), the same year that the Almshouse cemetery was enclosed by a fence (MCC 6:85-86). Indeed, the northward growth of New York from 1735 to 1755 meant that not only was the Common no longer isolated

from the city (compare the 1735 Mrs. Buchnerd's Plan [Map xx] with the 1755 Maerschallck Plan [Map xx]), but it was the largest plot of vacant land south of the Palisade (built in 1745). It was thus a logical place to build barracks, which needed open land for drill and parading. This military use continued long after the Barracks were gone (cf. MCC 3:545 [1804] and 4:170 [1806], both of which deal with the use of the park for military parades). As noted above, its open character and corporate ownership also made it a magnet for refuse dumping from the community developing in its vicinity, as evidenced by the Common Council's attempts at prohibition (for example, MCC 2:175 [1795]). It is thus no coincidence that the majority of the datable ceramics from the excavations in City Hall Park come from the middle to late 18th century.

The post holes found in several test units (e.g., 490N/425E; 490N/430E; 500N/440E) bear witness to another change in the perceptions of proper use of the Common in the developing city of the post-Revolutionary period. The *Minutes* of the Common Council record several instances of fence construction near the Almshouse (MCC 4:482 [1740]; 5:171, 176 [1746]), around the cemetery (MCC 6:85-86 [1757]), the pasture for Almshouse cows (MCC 1:754 [1792], and for the "Fields" (MCC 1:144 [1785]). By the 1790's, the Common Council began to be concerned with the beautification of the Common itself, rather than just the administration and the maintenance of the structures. This is evidenced by several acts of the Common Council directing the "improvement" of the ground before the Almshouse (1:711 [1792]), the enclosure of the pasture mentioned above (prior to this, the cows may have wandered freely over the Common), the planting of trees in this area (2:46 [1792]), and the employment of a person to keep the boys and cattle away from them (2:68 [1794]). By 1796, there was care taken that the gates leading into the enclosed area were kept in repair to avoid depredations (MCC 2:220), indicative of a growth of civic pride foreshadowing the Common's use as a park.

Reading these changes into the archaeological record of City Hall Park is possible, but certainly speculative without the support of the documents. The results of the excavations at City Hall Park in general tend to be confirmatory in nature, amplifying what can be inferred from the written record. The stratigraphy of the Triangle Area,

limited as it is to a 12” impact depth and having as its goal the ascertaining of the extent of the Almshouse cemetery and associated secondary remains, offers only a hint of past activities. Nonetheless, one can observe that the graves do not seem to cut into trash features, although there was certainly no dearth of refuse deposition around the cemetery area, some of which mixed with the covering soil and probably with the fill of the grave shafts. One can also appreciate here, as in other parts of the park, how reworking the natural landscape produced the *human* landscape of the Common, and (by extension) the rest of New York.

Suggestions for future work:

This report presents the data from CHP and a general analysis of specific artifact remains. It became clear as everyone involved with the project worked through the materials and sorted through the field notes that a detailed analysis would, at best, prove difficult. PES’ feature determinations were the only primary intact contexts available, and so were given primary consideration in analysis. The lack of basic archaeological methodological reporting by PES made direct interpretation almost impossible with regard to possibly associating the material remains to a specific group of people or institution.

The current mitigation report is by no means the final word on the analysis of the archaeological material from CHP. Although differing in approach and objectives, the project appreciates the possibilities inherent in the PES scope (2000b), which outlines research questions that might be answered using the data from the CHP excavations. These range from questions regarding foodways to sanitation, from treatment of the poor to prison reform, from burials to trade. Most of these questions are valid and interesting. Many of them provide suggestions and direction for further work. However, as previously stated the greatest stumbling block to PES’ interpretations and to further investigations is the inability to firmly associate the excavated features with the historically documented structures on the Common. While the excavators were aware of this problem (PES 2000b:13), their suggestions for its solution did not prove to be able to give a definitive answer.

The statistical analysis of the trash features (Loorya, pers. comm.) indicates that, in terms of the artifacts, features did not resemble their nearest neighbors much more closely than those farther away. In most respects, the typological and quantitative variation among artifacts related to location was not significant. Further statistical analysis may uncover very subtle connections, but at present we are left unconvinced. There are no cross-mends between features, except possibly those which, like Features 87-88-99 are in reality the same feature. Certainly the kiln furniture and wasters from the Crolius and Remmey ceramics works are found in several of the features throughout the site, but not concentrated in Feature 84, the closest feature to the pottery's location. These types of artifacts are also rarer than they are in, for example, the African Burial Ground collection. They are also found in assemblages deposited far from the site of the eighteenth-century potteries, such as at Beekman Street (Loorya 2007).

While the kiln furniture, the documentary evidence of laws against dumping on the Common, and perhaps the faunal material from some of the features are evidence for off-site dumping, there is no way of assessing the extent that off-site material has contributed to the composition of the assemblage. Thus, developing a method of filtering out this off-site dumping "noise" remains an area for future work. Without this ability to filter the "noise" and to attribute the feature assemblages securely to distinct institutional populations within the eighteenth century Common, many of the research questions posed by the PES scope become impractical or unsolvable through analysis of the archaeological material. In order to illuminate the relationships among the resident populations of the barracks, the almshouse, the Bridewell and the Gaol, artifacts must come from contexts securely attributable to these institutions. Assemblages which might illustrate differences in treatment of prisoners from the pre-reform period of the early eighteenth century as opposed to the later eighteenth century period of prison reform (PES 2000b:15) must be securely dated to those periods. Answering these types of questions has proved elusive. The ceramic typology, though important for seriation, is not precise enough to give dates to within decades, which would be necessary for such investigations. Throughout, we have taken the position that it is better to err on the side of caution where basic associational assumptions are so debatable.

Further work on the architectural features must also include the development of a more secure method of determining which of the historically documented structures the material in each feature belongs. Although much work has been completed on the landscape and history of land use in CHP, more remains to be done in terms of the composition of the structures as it relates to their possible destruction debris profile. Documentation through Common Council minutes or other historic sources concerning payments for material and laborers allow reconstruction of the building program for each of the structures. For example, the almshouse and the barracks were predominantly wooden or brick structures, while the Gaol and the Bridewell were built of stone. From the material found in at least some of the architectural features, it seems that the placement of some of the structures as shown on historic maps (e.g. the Bridewell) are confirmed. For others, the evidence is still equivocal. The nature of mitigation archaeology, especially when pressed by the schedule of construction, tends to result in the highlighting of features (which represent the archaeological potential) to the detriment of test pits without definable features. This makes it difficult to plot the density of non-feature construction and demolition debris in the test units to see if demolition of the structures left a discernible pattern of sheet deposit over parts of the site.

Although the physical anthropological details of the human skeletal material from the cemetery (or cemeteries) on the Common are well documented (London 2004), more work remains to be done on the cultural aspects of the burials. The intact burial deposits (which were left in situ) are marked by few artifacts: shroud pins, coffin hardware, a few buttons and a gold earring. Indications are that the corpse was usually shrouded, but not otherwise dressed. Preliminary comparison with other contemporary burials such as the New Orleans Charity Hospital (Owsley 1997) and the African Burial Ground adjoining the Common to the north, indicate that this was common at this period. Further work should be done on comparison between these graves and those in eighteenth-century cemeteries containing wealthier persons, to investigate how invariant the laying out and burial of the corpse was.

Also of interest for additional investigation is the practice of stacking burials and the depth of the graves. Features 136, 139 and 141 contain several burials. Feature 126 had “at least six individuals buried one on top of another in the same shaft” (London 2004:10). Feature 133 contained two superimposed burials, a male and a female, with bodies oriented in opposite directions. In many cases, the burials, stacked or single, were found within inches of the modern surface. While those left in situ give no evidence of how deep the grave pit went, other disturbed graves indicate that the depth of the shaft was less than the canonical six feet. Grading and modification of the surface may have removed some of the fill above the bodies, but the question of when the idea of “six feet under” came into currency needs further investigation.

The secondary burials in CHP pose other questions for future research. These concentrations of bones, especially Features 53 and 67, contain fragments of many individuals (at least eighteen in the case of Feature 53, at least twelve in Feature 67) are enigmatic as to date and purpose of disinterment and re-interment. Other materials found in the associated fill, such as ceramics, glass, buttons, musket balls, and coins, all fit well within the second half of the eighteenth century. Originally interpreted as nineteenth-century reburials of graves disturbed by the construction of Tweed Courthouse (1861-67), the motivation and the lack of mid-nineteenth-century artifacts in the fill is puzzling if this is the case. The presence of “probe holes” (London 2004:10) on some of the bones may point to a more deliberate practice of disinterment for reuse of graves, as was known in the eighteenth century at nearby Trinity churchyard (Pascalis 1823:150).

Above and beyond the further analysis and investigation into aspects of the institutions and assemblages from CHP, which can provide material for scholarly articles, graduate theses and dissertations for years to come, is the necessity to open the material and results to a wider public. Although the material has been the subject of posters at student competitions and professional meetings, it has not yet been the subject of a major display or wide discussion in a public forum. This must be remedied as soon as possible after the completion of this report. The preference would be an exhibit at a public space in Manhattan, perhaps the Museum of the City of New York and another at the Park’s

headquarters, The Arsenal, with a permanent exhibit at some venue in lower Manhattan near City Hall. A public lecture or lecture series on various aspects of the research, for example, foodways, almshouses and poor relief, the history and land use of the Common, should be arranged at some Manhattan venue. The CUNY Graduate Center or the Historic Districts Council are but two possibilities. A GIS map of the Common is in the final stages of production. It is planned to put this on a web site, so as to be publicly accessible. Included will be not only pictures of artifacts and their locations, but text layers and inventory information which can be queried to answer questions of location and distribution of features and artifacts.

Finally, steps need to be taken to permanently curate the material remains. Although the artifacts currently remain at Brooklyn College, and are still being used for student research, a permanent location for storage must be identified.

The project has, overall, been a challenge for CUNY. First from the logistical standpoint of handling a massive and diverse collection, to creating the necessary interests in the various undergraduate and graduate students to dedicate long hours and overall time to the project. In a way, this has served as an experiment in how to integrate cultural resource management and academia. Although separate fields, it is possible to link them together through projects such as this.