

Archaeology at Old St. Stephens

May 30, 2010 Newsletter

by George Shorter RPA, Archaeologist

Week 2 – Field School

During Week 2 we continued to focus on the wall along the east property line of the Globe//Chamberlain site. We focused on investigating the deep deposits adjacent to the west side of the East Wall uncovered during Week 1. Near the bottom of the units, about 50 cm into Level 2, we encountered a dense concentration of artifacts, primarily creamware and pearlware, edge decorated and hand-painted. Some bottle glass was present, but most of the artifacts were creamware chamber posts and pitchers. We probably have eight or ten vessels of each represented along with a few plates, saucers, and cups.



Work begins on area west of East Wall



Large fragment of pearlware polychrome decorated cup



Pair of small sizzors

As we worked our way down in the units we discovered a layer of blocks, the remnant of a fallen wall of the building. Below this layer were concentrations of artifacts. The base of the units was primarily covered with one or two layers of soft limestone rubble.



View of fallen wall looking south



View of units at base of excavation looking south

The East wall was constructed with massive hard limestone blocks, each weighing at least five or six hundred pounds. After the crew finished profiling and mapping their units we continued a row a units to the west.



Massive stones along the East Wall



Drawing profiles

This week we accomplished our goal of investigating the deep features along the East Wall. Efforts to explain our findings suggested a possible cellar. The rather homogeneous artifact assemblage in the deep zones along the wall suggests breakage in a store shipment rather than a residential situation; maybe discarded in a half-cellar. But, what about the bones from table scraps? Our units on Friday suggest a completely different scenario. We found what appears to be undisturbed subsoil without artifacts along the western half of this next row of units. It appears now that we have a rather wide builders trench, about 1.5 m. Apparently this trench as left open for some time and trash was discarded in it before it filled through erosion. Hey, but we'll see next week as we continue westward.



Some of the crew in a rough game of cards on the pavilion deck

Volunteers Still Needed

We still need additional volunteers during the week. The Ethridges came last week for a day and David White has been working in the lab almost daily. If you have some time to spend come on down. (adults only please) If you don't have time to dig just come down to watch for a while. (everyone welcome) You don't need to call just show up. Hours are Monday through Friday from 8:00 until 5:00. We will be working this Monday.

T-Shirts

Shirts are now available for purchase, \$15 each plus \$3.50 for shipping. The shirts have the St. Stephens logo on the front and the map of Old St. Stephens draw by Mary Welch in 1899 on the back. She lived in the town as a girl in the 1830s. The map was drawn at the centennial celebration in St. Stephens commemorating the first raising of the American flag over the region in 1799. You can come by and pick up a shirt at the lab (no shipping cost) or we will be glad to send you one. Our gray shirts may be purchased by the general public, but we reserve our sage green shirts only for folks that have volunteered. They have the designation "VOLUNTEER" on them. These are quality shirts available in S, M, Lg, and ExLg. Please state size. You may send checks to me (no cash please), but please make them out to the St. Stephens Historical Commission. Tab them for the size and type shirt you want. Proceeds go to help support the archaeology program at Old St. Stephens.

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