



**ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF  
JACOB & HANNAH HART HOMESTEAD SITE  
SETAUKET, SUFFOLK COUNTY, NEW YORK**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This document is a preliminary report of the 2011 archaeological investigation of the Jacob and Hannah Hart home site in Setauket, New York. This project is a component of the “A Long Time Coming” project, a collaborative initiative between Higher Ground Intercultural and Heritage Association and the Center for Public Archaeology at Hofstra University. This report details the findings of the first season of field work at the Hart home site. It includes a summary and interpretation of the major deposits, recommendations for future fieldwork, and an artifact catalog.

The fieldwork was designed and directed by Dr. Christopher N. Matthews. Brad Phillippi was the field supervisor. The field crew consisted of Hofstra university student interns Ariel Flajnik, Tami Longjohn, William Keating, Brandon Ungar, Rachel Iancangelo, Dwayne Lindsey, Brienne Giordanno, and Desiree Palma. Artifact processing and analysis was undertaken at the Center for Public Archaeology laboratory under the supervision of Ross Rava. The lab crew consisted of Hofstra University students Emma Lagan, Tess Jay, and Joe Tonelli.

## **BACKGROUND**

Historical deeds document the occupation of the site throughout different phases between 1826 and 1948. The Harts acquired the site in 1888 and lived there until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Jacob and Hannah Hart were members of the indigenous Native and African American community that has resided in Setauket for more than 200 years. Hannah Hart was mother to 12 children and known to be a laundress and seamstress. Jacob Hart worked multiple jobs including: farm laborer, mason, and rubber factory worker. It is unknown exactly when the site was abandoned, but elders in the community say that the house itself was demolished by 1950.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The goal of the excavation at the Jacob and Hannah Hart site is, first, to determine the presence and integrity of archaeological remains at the site. No testing has ever been done at the site, so we do not know what the deposits will be, nor if and how the site has been impacted by recent disturbances. A historic photo of the Hart homestead (Figure 1), shows a one and half story house with a brick chimney and a one-story rear addition, which oral testimony indicates was the kitchen. As such, our hope is to define the footprint or foundation and associated activity areas. We will also be looking to assess the assemblage of collected materials in light of the rich cultural and historic conditions in which the Hart family lived. Here we are especially interested to document evidence of their Native and African American heritage as well as to understand how they organized their lives at a time when people of color were facing a wide array of social and economic challenges specific to the Jim Crow era.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The site is located at the corner of Lake and Main in Setauket, New York in an overgrown section of land owned by the Three Village Central School District (Figure 2). The school district performed the initial clearing of the area to be excavated. A baseline was laid approximately

north-south with perpendicular east-west lines run every two meters over a twenty meter span. A single site datum point was marked in a fixed location of the site, and four additional datum points were based off that original location. A total of 15 units were laid out and excavated along with 7 shovel test pits.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Although the site was initially cleared by the school district, the condition of the site required additional landscaping and machete work to sufficiently prepare the site for excavation. After the site was cleared for excavation, the dense root mat on the surface was removed and discarded. Units were then excavated with proveniences recorded every 10cm levels within the same soil stratum and for observed changes in the natural soil strata. All soils removed were screened through a 1/4-inch wire screen mesh and artifacts were washed, placed in bags, and delivered to the Center for Public Archaeology's lab for analysis, cataloging (see Appendix A), and packing. Artifacts not collected were noted as present on provenience sheets. Information was recorded on standardized archaeological forms, and soil color and textures were noted using the Munsell system of soil colors and textures (Munsell Color 1975).

This subsurface archaeological investigation was designed to fulfill the guidelines of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP).

## **INVESTIGATION RESULTS**

### ***ALL UNITS and STPs***

#### ***Surface***

Clearing of the site revealed a scattering of modern trash on the surface. The surface had to be removed to break through a dense root mat.

#### **Units 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, and 15**

These units appear to be in what could be the interior of the house. All of these units eventually encountered an interconnected stone feature (Figure 3).

#### ***Stratum A***

Stratum A varied from a thickness of 2.5cm to 22 cm. The color of the soil varied from very dark brown (10 YR 2/2) to black (10 YR 2/1 and 7.5 YR 2.5/1). Artifacts included ceramics, flat glass, curved glass, plastic, bone, coal, bricks, buttons, and rusted nails. Datable artifacts ranged from plastic and modern glass (post-1900), prosser button (post-1840), whiteware (post-1820), and coal (post- 1840).

#### ***Stratum B***

Stratum B varied from a thickness of 5cm to 25cm. The color of the soil varied from dark gray brown (10 YR 3/2), black (10 YR 2/1), very dark gray (10 YR 3/1), dark brown (10 YR 3/3 and 10 YR 2/2), very dark green (10 YR 3/2), and dark olive brown (2.5 YR 3/3). Artifacts included brick, bone, ceramics, roofing slate, flat glass, curved glass, coal,

rusted nails, pipe stems, and stone projectiles. Datable artifacts ranged from coal (post-1840), rubber good year button (post-1850), whiteware (post-1820), basalt fragment (post-1750), and white slip redware (post-1750).

### ***Stratum C***

Stratum C varied from a thickness of 3cm to 29 cm. The color of the soil varied from dark gray (10 YR 4/1), very dark gray (10 YR 3/1), very dark grayish brown (10 YR 3/2), and dark brown (10 YR 3/3). Artifacts included rusted nails, lithics, machine turned redware, brick, flat glass, curved glass, and a pipe stem. Datable artifacts range from delftware (post -1600) and whiteware (post-1820).

### ***Feature-1A***

The feature was found to extend throughout Stratum C of Units 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, and 15. Designated as Feature-1A, it consisted of various sized stones and bricks stacked in linear patterns (Figures 4 and 5). The only artifacts collected were fragments of possible roofing slates.

### ***Feature-2A***

This feature was encountered in EU4 in stratum B and identified as a possible pit. The thickness varied from 5cm to 14cm. The soil was identified as very dark gray (10 YR 3/1). Artifacts include flat glass, curved glass, brick fragments, lithics, ceramics, rusted nails, and coal. Coal was the only datable artifact discovered which dates post 1840 (Figure 6).

## **Units 7 and 11**

These units are tentatively identified as located in front of the house.

### ***Stratum A***

Stratum A varied from a thickness of 10cm to 25 cm. The color of the soil was black (10 YR 2/1). Artifacts included ceramics, flat glass, coal/slag, bricks, and metal fragments. Datable artifacts included coal (post-1840) and whiteware (post-1820).

### ***Stratum B***

Stratum B varied from a thickness of 6cm to 20cm. The color of the soil varied from very dark brown (10 YR 2/2) to very dark grayish brown (10 YR 3/2). Artifacts included coal, machine made screw, other metals, ceramics, curved glass, flat glass, and clay pipebowl fragment. Datable artifacts ranged from coal (post-1840), machine made screw (post 1850), and whiteware (post-1820).

### ***Stratum C***

Stratum C varied from a thickness of 6cm to 18 cm. The color of the soil varied very dark grayish brown (10YR 3/2) to very dark gray (10YR 3/1). Artifacts included bricks, flat glass, and ceramics. Datable artifacts include whiteware (post-1820).

### ***Feature-3A***

The feature was found to extend throughout Stratum B1 of Units 7 and 11. The majority lies in Unit 7 but a continuation into Unit 11. Designated as Feature-3A, it consisted of a relatively flat uniform brick layer (Figure 7).

## **Unit 12**

This unit is located north of the units associated with foundation (Feature-1A). It uncovered an as yet undesignated architectural segment (Features 4A and 5A).

### ***Stratum A***

Stratum A varied from a thickness of 15cm to 21 cm. The color of the soil varied black (10YR 2/1). Artifacts included bricks, coal/slag, flat glass, curved glass, ceramics, and rusted nails. Datable artifacts include coal (post-1840) and whiteware (post-1820).

### ***Stratum B***

Stratum B varied from a thickness of 3.5cm to 10 cm. The color of the soil varied brown (10 YR 4/3). Artifacts included coal, porcelain insulation, ceramics, brick, slag, and rusted nails. Datable artifacts include whiteware (post-1820), coal (post-1840), and machine cut nail (post-1840), and porcelain insulation (post-1850).

### ***Feature-4A***

The feature was found to extend throughout Stratum C of Unit 12. Designated as Feature-4A, it consisted of possible foundation stones in the west and southwest corners of the unit (Figure 8).

### ***Feature-5A***

The feature was found to extend throughout Stratum C of Unit 12. Designated as Feature-5A, it consisted of a laid brick and wood that appears consistent with possible floor boards (Figure 8).

## **Units 1 and 6**

These units are located in an area tentatively believed to be to the front and the south side of the house. The wooden post recovered in Unit 1 is either a fence post or perhaps a corner support post of the house.

### ***Stratum A***

Stratum A varied from a thickness of 15cm to 23 cm. The color of the soil varied very dark brown (10 2/2) and black (10YR 2/1). Artifacts included bricks, coal/slag, flat glass, curved glass, ceramics, plastic fragment, and rusted nails. Datable artifacts include coal (post-1840), pearlware (post-1780), whiteware (post-1820), and plastic (post-1950).

### ***Stratum B***

Stratum B varied from a thickness of 6cm to 15 cm. The color of the soil varied very dark grayish brown (10 YR 3/2), dark gray (7.5 YR 4/1), and very dark gray (7.5 YR 3/1). Artifacts included brick, ceramics, slag, and rusted nails. Datable artifacts include whiteware (post-1820), coal (post-1840), and pearlware (post-1780).

### ***Stratum C***

Stratum C varied from a thickness of 2cm to 39 cm. The color of the soil varied very dark grayish brown (10 YR 3/2) and dark grayish brown (10 YR 4/2). Artifacts included brick, ceramics, and coal. Datable artifacts include whiteware (post-1820) and coal (post-1840).

### ***Shovel Test Pits (STP) 1 - 7***

Seven STPs were excavated for the purpose of exploring possible extensions of the features discovered. STPs 1-7 encountered bricks, roofing slate, ceramics, buttons, coal, possible nails, flat glass, curved glass, and a lithic flake. Datable artifacts include coal (post-1840) and whiteware (post-1820).

## **INTERPRETATION**

As stated in the project description, the goal of the excavation at the Jacob and Hannah Hart site was, first, to determine the presence and integrity of archaeological remains at the site. After excavation, it became apparent that there are intact archaeological features that support the existence of the remains of the Hart residence. The other portion of the project was to attempt to confirm and/or support the photo of the Hart site provided. At this point in the archaeological investigation, stones were found seeming to indicate the presence of structural foundations as well as an *in situ* fireplace base. These discoveries are consistent with the photograph of the Hart residence. Occupational strata (strata A and B) were identified. Several artifacts discovered, such as buttons, thimbles, and a sewing whale oil bottle fragment, support that the Harts may have resided there as Hannah Hart was reported by oral histories to have been a laundress (figure 9).

The orientation and general layout of the house was inferred based on the photograph and site plan. Based on the house typical one-and-two room English cottage layout from the 1600-1800s (as detailed by Gerald Foster), it is suspected that the home was originally one room with loft, expanded into a two room with loft, hall and parlor style house. Based on current research and discoveries, the house is believed to have been oriented on a NE/SW line, with the front of the house facing SE towards the current route of Main Street at the intersection of Lake Street. This orientation corresponds with the position of the house in the photograph.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***Recommendations***

Based on the results found during this season of excavation, four proposed areas of excavation are hereby recommended for next season (Figure 10).

- The first area of interest is composed of four 1x1 meter units, creating a 2x2 meter square encompassing N2/3, E-2/-3. This area is located one meter south from unit 2. The purpose of this unit is to find foundation stones potentially indicating what is suspected to be the front face of the house, based on the photograph provided.

The second area of interest is composed of three one meter units in an “L” shape directly to the west of units 14 and 15. These units encompass N6E-4/-5, N7-5. These units are located directly to the west of the suspected *in situ* fireplace base. The purpose of these units is to determine if any structural walls crossed this unit, or if the fireplace base continues.

- The third area of interest is composed of two one meter units creating a 1x2 meter area directly to the west of units 11 and 7, encompassing N5/6E1. Units 11 and 7 contained a brick walkway. The proposed units aim to determine whether or not the path continues towards the house.
- The fourth area of interest surrounds unit 12. Two units, each a 1x1 meter square to the east and west of unit 12 (N12E-1/2), as well as three units totaling 1x3 meters long directly to the north (N13E-1/1/2) are proposed. The presence of potential floorboards, laid brick and a porcelain insulator along with stones indicating a potential structural foundation make this unit stand apart from the others. The proposed units aim to discover a more defined structure in order to determine the function of the remains.

## REFERENCES

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### Munsell Color

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Figure 1 - Historical photo of J & H Hart house date unknown

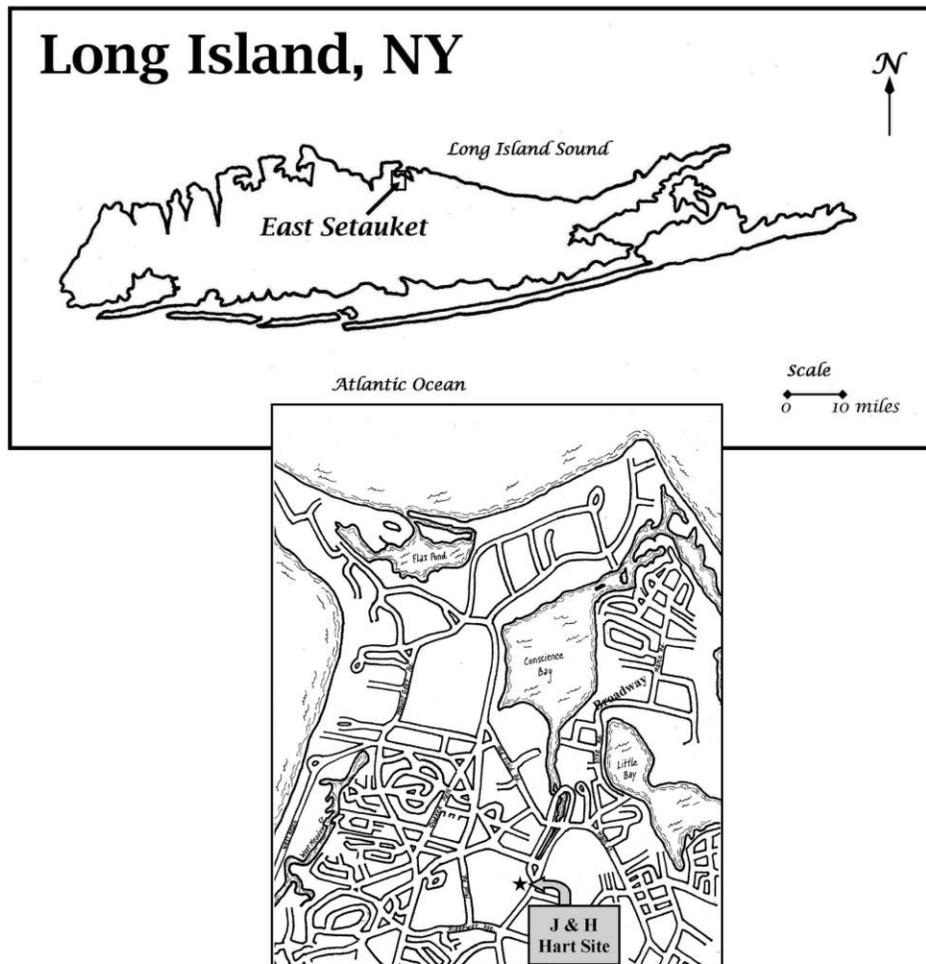


Figure 2 - Location of East Setauket and Jacob & Hannah Hart Site on map



Figure 3 - Feature 1A and Feature 2A



Figure 4 - Feature 1A (close up 1)



Figure 5 - Feature 1A (close up 2)



Figure 6 - Feature 2A



Figure 7 - Feature 3A



Figure 8 - Feature 4A and Feature 5A



Figure 9 - Sample of artifacts recovered



# **APPENDIX A**

## **Artifact Catalog**