Beneath the Ivory Tower

The Archaeology of Academia

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The Eagle and the Poor House

Archaeological Investigations on the University of North Carolina Campus

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The University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill is the oldest public-supported institution of higher learning in the United States. Since 1991 archaeologists at the Research Laboratories of Archaeology have conducted numerous archaeological investigations on its campus. These investigations have included archaeological surveys, site testing, monitoring of ongoing construction projects, and full-scale excavations. Most, but not all, of these studies have been undertaken at the university's request to help it fulfill its statutory obligations under North Carolina's Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA), and collectively they provide a unique resource for viewing the university community during its first one hundred years. The buried architectural remains and associated artifact assemblages from several campus sites, particularly those located adjacent to downtown Chapel Hill and within the core area of the original campus, recall a quaint era of college and town life now beyond personal memory and provide tangible evidence of the university's most humble beginnings. This evidence has become increasingly important to the university community, providing connections to the past and a sense of place that cannot be wholly conveyed by the restoration of campus buildings alone. In this way, archaeology on the UNC campus has served to expand our understanding and appreciation of Chapel Hill's historical character.

In this chapter we describe the results of excavations undertaken during the 1990s at two archaeological sites on the UNC campus. The Graham Memorial site, where a tavern and hotel stood from the mid-1790s until 1921, offers a perspective on one of Chapel Hill's first businesses that catered to university visitors and also provided room and board for students. The nearby Pettigrew site was the location of two successive buildings that also served student housing needs: the Poor House (an affectionately named private dormitory) and later the Phi Delta Theta fraternity house.

Early Campus History

On October 12, 1793, a group of prominent North Carolinians gathered on a wooded hilltop—New Hope Chapel Hill—in Orange County for a ceremony that would mark the beginning of public education for the state and the new nation. The gathering was led by William Richardson Davie of Halifax, grand master of North Carolina's brotherhood of Freemasons and author of the bill (passed by the legislature in December 1789) that established the University of North Carolina. Others in attendance included the Rev. Dr. Samuel McCorkle, who delivered the sermon; university trustees; members of the building committee; numerous Masonic brethren; and several prominent local citizens. The purpose of the ceremony was to lay the cornerstone for East Building (now Old East), the first university structure to be erected. While construction had actually commenced the previous July, October 12 would thereafter mark the official beginning of the university (Connor 1953, 1: 236–40).

Immediately following the laying of the cornerstone, twenty-nine two-acre and four-acre lots adjacent to the new campus were auctioned to raise money for construction (Figure 8.1). These lots, most of which were located along newly platted Franklin and Columbia streets, became the town of Chapel Hill. The town lots and the original campus were part of a sizable tract of land, totaling more than 1,200 acres, which a dozen local citizens had offered to donate to the state if it would establish the university there. Although the legislature also had created an endowment fund out of debts owed to the state prior to 1783, this fund initially lacked the ability to support the university, which had to rely heavily on loans and the generous gifts of other private citizens (Connor 1953, 1: 39–54, 244–46).

Despite financial constraints, construction of East Building, the President's House, and the Steward's House (that is, the dining hall) was sufficiently complete for the university to open its doors to students on January 15, 1795. Within a few years a fourth building, now known as Person Hall, was built as the Chapel. At the same time, East Building proved to be too small, and an addition was constructed (Henderson 1949). In 1831 an astronomical observatory was erected a short distance east of the campus center. This structure reflected President Joseph Caldwell's strong interest in astronomy and was the first of its kind at an institution of higher learning

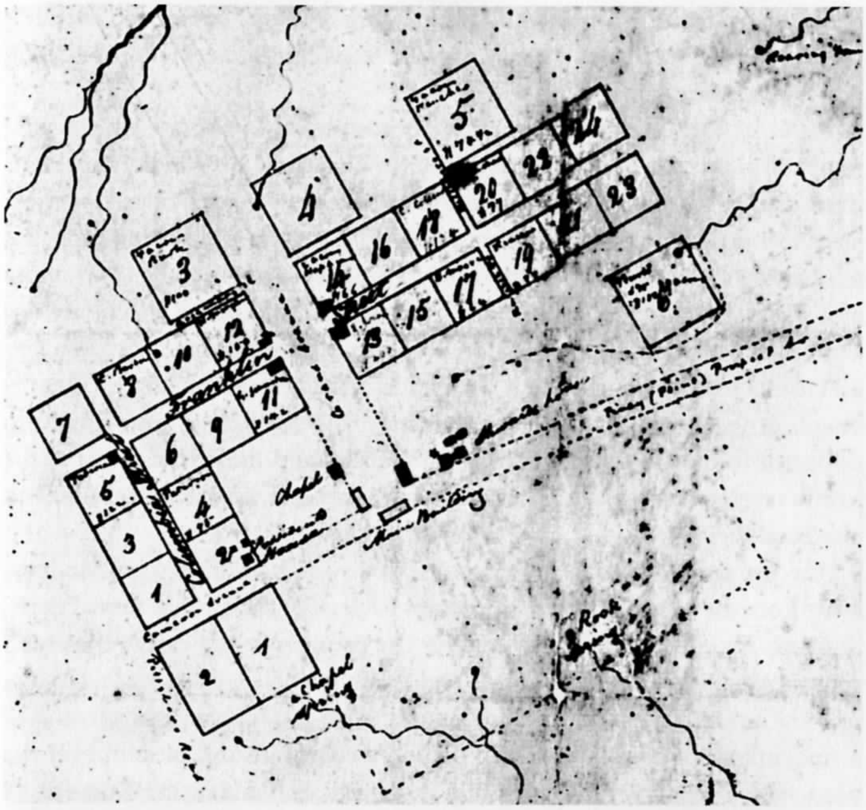

Figure 8.1. Portion of a plat of Chapel Hill and the University of North Carolina, drawn sometime after 1797. Four campus buildings are shown (from west to east): President's House, Chapel, East Building (not labeled), and Steward's House. The locations of two other planned buildings (Main Building and West Building) are also shown. The Graham Memorial and Pettigrew sites are located on town lots 11 and 13. The building depicted on Lot 13 is the Tavern House. From a plat titled "Plan of the Village at the University with the Adjoining Lands Belonging to the Institution." (Courtesy of the University Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

in America (Powell 1979: 47). Unfortunately, it was poorly constructed and had to be abandoned just four years later. By 1840 three new buildings had been constructed and a third story had been added to East Building. Two of the new brick buildings—South Building and West Building—created a horseshoe around the university's well; the third building—Gerrard Hall—replaced Person Hall as the university chapel. During the 1850s the final episode of antebellum campus construction took place with the erection of two large dormitories flanking East Building and West Building (called New East and New West) and the construction of Smith Hall as the university's library

(Henderson 1949). With the exception of the President's House, Steward's House, and observatory, all substantial university buildings that predate 1860 are still standing (Figure 8.2).

As in its earliest years, the university continued to operate within tight financial constraints throughout the 1800s. This situation was perhaps most dramatically manifested in its continual space needs, particularly as it related to student life. As the student population grew (from seven in the first graduating class of 1798 to eighty-nine in the graduating class of 1859), more and more students had to seek off-campus room and board. Accommodations included boardinghouses, hotels, rooms in private homes, small shacks erected by townspeople in their backyards, and even camping in the nearby woods or in unfinished buildings (Battle 1907: 179, 1912: 40). In addition to dining at the Steward's House, early students could find good meals at the town's taverns (such as the Tavern House at the Graham Memorial site) and also took their meals in the homes of local townsfolk.

The university faculty and trustees, however, wanted to keep students away from the taverns and private homes because of the alcohol served there. Students on college campuses all over the country in the early nineteenth century were extremely boisterous and even violent. Fighting was a favorite pastime among friends as well as enemies. It was not considered harmful to a student's reputation to sneak up behind a classmate and hit him over the head with a club (Battle 1907: 271). Student riots, vandalism of university property, and pranks played upon faculty were fairly constant, and alcohol fed this unrest. In the beginning the university tried to force students to dine in the Steward's House, where the only beverages available were water, coffee, tea, and milk (Battle 1907: 51). Yet complaints about the food there, as revealed in students' letters describing starvation rations and maggoty meat, finally forced the university to allow students to dine off campus in 1819. Steward's House ceased operation altogether in 1844 (Battle 1907: 89). By 1855 student drinking was banned on or off campus, and the sale of alcohol was forbidden within two miles of Chapel Hill.

Similarly, the university had difficulty controlling firearms. In addition to a few duels, guns were frequently drawn on fellow students in the heat of a brawl, were fired in the buildings as part of general revelry, and were even pulled on professors. Loud explosions of gunpowder were a favorite prank throughout the early years of the university. In the 1840s a ball of gunpowder was actually ignited under a professor's chair, which catapulted him, relatively unharmed, into the center of the classroom (Battle 1907: 577–78). Some students, who could not afford to eat at Steward's House or the taverns,

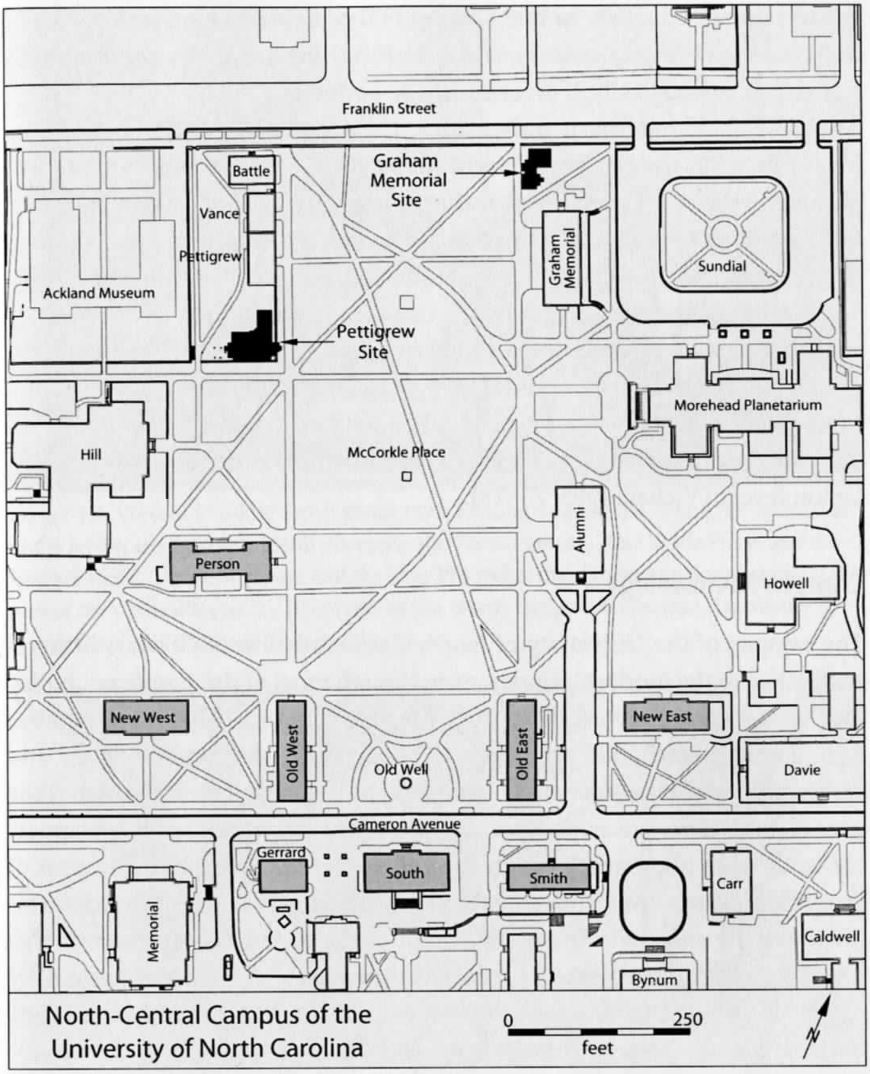

Figure 8.2. Map of the north-central campus of the University of North Carolina, showing the areas excavated at the Graham Memorial and Pettigrew sites. University buildings erected before the Civil War are shown in gray.

had to hunt down their own dinner each day in order to feed themselves, so the university did not forbid the possession of firearms or gunpowder until 1856.

Despite a steady growth in student population prior to the Civil War, the size of the faculty and the corresponding size of the town (made up largely of faculty and persons whose livelihood was directly dependent upon the university) remained small. In fact, Chapel Hill remained a small college town well into the twentieth century, and even today the university community is sometimes nostalgically, if erroneously, regarded as a village.

Unlike many southern universities, the University of North Carolina largely escaped the ravages brought on by the Civil War. The campus was occupied briefly by Union forces during the spring of 1865; however, negotiations between the university's president, David L. Swain, and Gen. William T. Sherman ensured that the occupation did not result in any substantial destruction of the campus buildings or other property. The greatest act of vandalism apparently was the stabling of horses in several university buildings, including the library (Powell 1979: 69). Far greater outrage, both within Chapel Hill and statewide, resulted when Swain's daughter, Eleanor, fell in love with and married Gen. Smith B. Atkins, commander of the occupying Union forces (Vickers 1985: 73–75).

Campus Archaeology

The campus of the University of North Carolina before 1870 bears little resemblance to the modern campus, even though most of the significant buildings of the early nineteenth century are still standing. The university has done a remarkable job in preserving the heart of the old campus center, and surrounding buildings generally complement its architectural character; the overall landscape, however, is far different. This difference is readily apparent in the rare photographs from the late 1800s, which provide glimpses of campus buildings and private structures located on adjacent properties now owned by the university. Images of buildings that are no longer standing also reveal the rich archaeological potential of the campus (Figures 8.3 and 8.4).

In 1991 staff and students of UNC's Research Laboratories of Archaeology initiated a small project to provide a preliminary assessment of the significant and potentially undisturbed archaeological remains of the campus as they related to the early years of the university (Carnes-McNaughton 1991). The reasons for undertaking this project were twofold. First, we wished to establish a systematic program for assessing the potential impact of current and future construction and facilities-improvement projects on campus archaeological resources. Although a significant portion of the campus was within the Chapel Hill Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places, university managers routinely did not consider the impact of their actions upon the grounds surrounding individually listed historic structures such as Old East, Old West, and the Old Well. A preliminary ar-

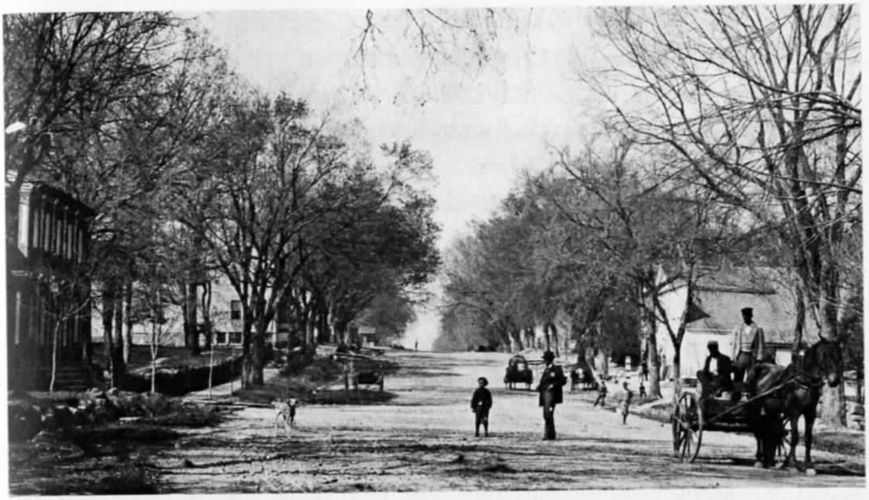

Figure 8.3. View of Franklin Street about 1892, looking west. At left, along the south side of the street, are the Eagle Hotel (formerly the Tavern House), McCorkle Place, and the Central Hotel. The Poor House and the later Phi Delta Theta fraternity house stood at the rear of the Central Hotel lot. (Courtesy of the North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina Library at Chapel Hill)

Figure 8.4. View of the Eagle Hotel and rear annex about 1892, looking east. Shortly after this photograph was taken, the north end of the hotel (at left), which was the original Tavern House and Eagle Hotel building, was demolished and a new, Victorian-style structure was erected. The entire complex burned in 1921. (Courtesy of the North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina Library at Chapel Hill)

chaeological assessment was seen as a first step in helping administrators understand that the university's significant historic properties included more than just the old campus buildings. The message we wanted to communicate was that the heart of the original campus could reasonably be viewed as one large archaeological district, whose soils contained a rich artifactual and architectural record of university life from its beginnings in 1793 through the early years of the twentieth century.

Second, as the University of North Carolina prepared for its Bicentennial Observance in 1993, academic departments were invited to participate by undertaking special projects unique to their own interests and abilities (Tepper 1998). For the staff and students of the Research Laboratories of Archaeology, the logical project was to undertake an archaeological investigation on campus that would shed new light on the university during its earliest years. The preliminary campus archaeological assessment was the first step in determining the feasibility of such an investigation.

Evidence used to conduct this assessment included: (1) early maps and drawings of the campus from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; (2) Sanborn insurance maps from the early twentieth century; (3) photographs from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that showed campus buildings and landscapes; (4) histories of the university written by Kemp P. Battle (1907, 1912), R. D. W. Connor (1953), Archibald Henderson (1949), William S. Powell (1979), and others; and (5) the results of a pedestrian survey of footpaths and other eroded surfaces within the area of the original campus (between Franklin Street and South Building).

The preliminary archaeological assessment identified four sites that could potentially yield important information about early campus life. The first of these was Steward's House, which stood from 1795 until 1847. As the university's first commons (or dining hall), this building was an important part of student life and could provide significant information about campus dietary conditions. Unfortunately, early plats are not sufficiently accurate to determine this building's location, and a preliminary field investigation using systematic soil auger testing failed to locate it. Because Steward's House stood near the current footprint of New East, it was thought that the construction of this building in the 1850s could have obliterated all evidence of it.[1] A second site, located near Old West, was identified during a pedestrian survey of McCorkle Place, a wooded quadrangle between the heart of the campus and Franklin Street. This site was defined by a concentration of mid-nineteenth-century artifacts eroding from the ground surface along a footpath and was initially interpreted as possible evidence of the occupation of the campus by

Union troops in April 1865. Testing of this site prior to sidewalk construction, however, revealed it to be no more than a trash-filled stump hole.

The remaining two sites were the Pettigrew site (adjacent to Pettigrew Hall), where maps and photographs placed the Phi Delta Theta fraternity house during early twentieth century, and the Graham Memorial site, where the Tavern House and later Eagle Hotel stood from 1796 until 1921.

The Graham Memorial Site

For our Bicentennial Observance project, we chose to begin excavation at the Graham Memorial site, since it appeared to provide the best potential for yielding preserved archaeological remains from the university's earliest years. The Pettigrew site provided "insurance" just in case we found nothing of interest at Graham Memorial. Indeed, it seemed quite possible that all evidence of the earlier buildings had been bulldozed away when nearby Graham Memorial Building was constructed in 1931. Despite this prospect, our previous research indicated that the businesses that stood here were integral to the early life of the university and might yield significant archaeological data concerning student life and town development during the late 1700s and throughout the 1800s.

In keeping with the university's tripartite mission of teaching, research, and public service, the excavation of the Graham Memorial site was conducted as an archaeological field school during the 1993–94 academic year to train undergraduate students in field and laboratory methods in historical archaeology. It also provided a highly visible example for the public and campus community of how archaeologists conduct their research and interpret what they find. Several thousand people visited the excavations during three open houses, and hundreds of visiting schoolchildren were afforded an opportunity to observe and in some instances participate in the excavation.

Historical Overview

Following the laying of the cornerstone for Old East on October 12, 1793, the UNC Board of Trustees held an auction to sell two-acre and four-acre town lots for the adjacent village that became Chapel Hill. One of the two-acre lots, Lot 13 at the southeast corner of Franklin Street and McCorkle Place, was bought by Jesse Neville, who then sold it to "Buck" Taylor, the university's first steward. Upon resigning his university position in 1797, Taylor opened a tavern there, which he and his son operated until the 1820s. Known simply as the Tavern House, it was one of Chapel Hill's first businesses. The Tavern House was a two-story wooden building; like most taverns in the late eighteenth century, it served not only as a drinking establishment but also as an inn and a place for public gatherings (Figures 8.1 and 8.2).

In 1823 the property was sold, became a hotel, and began to take in boarders, including UNC students. It also became a popular place for ceremonial gatherings such as the university's commencement ball. These balls were the culmination of the important and highly regarded commencement activities each year. Students dressed in formal attire for these events, and seniors were allowed to return home a month before commencement to procure the proper clothing, which might cost as much as six months' room and board at the Steward's House.

By the mid-1830s the hotel, now called the Eagle Hotel, began a period of relative prosperity and notoriety. The best known of the hotel's proprietors was Nancy Hilliard, who ran the Eagle from about 1838 until 1857. During Hilliard's tenure the hotel was greatly enlarged; by 1850 the number of students living there had risen to 103, representing over 40% of all students attending the university (Samford and Davis n.d.).

With the onset of the Civil War and its aftermath, the hotel fell upon hard times and never fully regained the prominence and prosperity it had achieved during the antebellum years. In 1892 extensive renovations were made to turn the property into a profitable resort hotel. The old tavern building was torn down and replaced with a large, Victorian-style structure with an expansive porch. An annex that had been built at the rear of the building and additions to the east were left intact (Figure 8.4). This business venture failed, and in 1908 the University Inn and Annex (as the hotel was now known) was acquired by the university to be used as a dormitory. During the following decade the facility was poorly maintained; in 1921 it caught fire and was completely destroyed (Samford and Davis n.d.).

Excavation

When archaeological excavations began in September 1993, we already had some idea of where we might uncover undisturbed traces of the tavern and hotel complex, based on a careful examination of historical maps and photographs as well as limited archaeological testing. After establishing a grid of 5 × 5 foot units across the suspected site area, we focused our initial excavations on an area behind the original tavern where earlier auger testing had revealed deeply stratified layers of soil containing artifacts and other debris from the building. Although we were clearly beyond the probable site of the original tavern's foundations, we hoped that the area we had selected would contain both artifact deposits in the tavern's backyard and architectural traces of a large addition that was constructed on the south side of the hotel sometime during the 1830s and 1840s.

The first 5 × 5 foot unit that the students excavated revealed the top of the shallow foundation trench from the rear addition, less than a foot beneath the ground surface. Just 10 feet west of this excavation unit, toward McCorkle Place, a second unit contained much deeper archaeological deposits, which extended almost three feet below the surface. Five soil zones were recorded, and these were excavated separately. In the uppermost zone, students found artifacts of modern campus life, including aluminum pull tabs, a beer bottle cap, and fragments of phonograph records. As we dug deeper, we found fragments of broken whiteware dishes and discarded glassware, wood charcoal, and other building debris that most likely were deposited when fire destroyed the structure in 1921. At the bottom of the excavation unit, the students found items that dated to the earliest years of the university and can be attributed to the Tavern House and the early Eagle Hotel. These included an English gunflint, a clay marble, a lead button, fragments of English white clay pipes, and numerous pearlware sherds.

After these two encouraging discoveries, the students spent the remainder of the fall excavating within a 25 × 30 foot area to expose more of the foundation trench and the much deeper deposits of late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century refuse that accumulated along the west side of the hotel. By semester's end, we had retrieved over 12,000 artifacts, had located part of the hotel's foundation, and had exposed ample evidence of the 1921 fire; however, we still did not know if any architectural traces of the early tavern remained (Figure 8.5).

Our goals for the spring semester were to complete the excavation begun in the fall and to locate the Tavern House. We extended our excavation toward Franklin Street and almost immediately found evidence of the late eighteenth-century structure. The first trace of the tavern to be uncovered was the brick base of the west chimney, buried less than half a foot below the ground surface. As we removed the topsoil just east of the chimney, we encountered several large stones at the top of a massive, dry-laid stone foundation that enclosed an 18 × 18 foot cellar (Figure 8.6). Oriented along Franklin Street, the cellar extended only about two feet below the present ground surface, and it is likely that it was a half (or English) basement with small above-grade windows letting in light. The two-foot width of the stone foun-

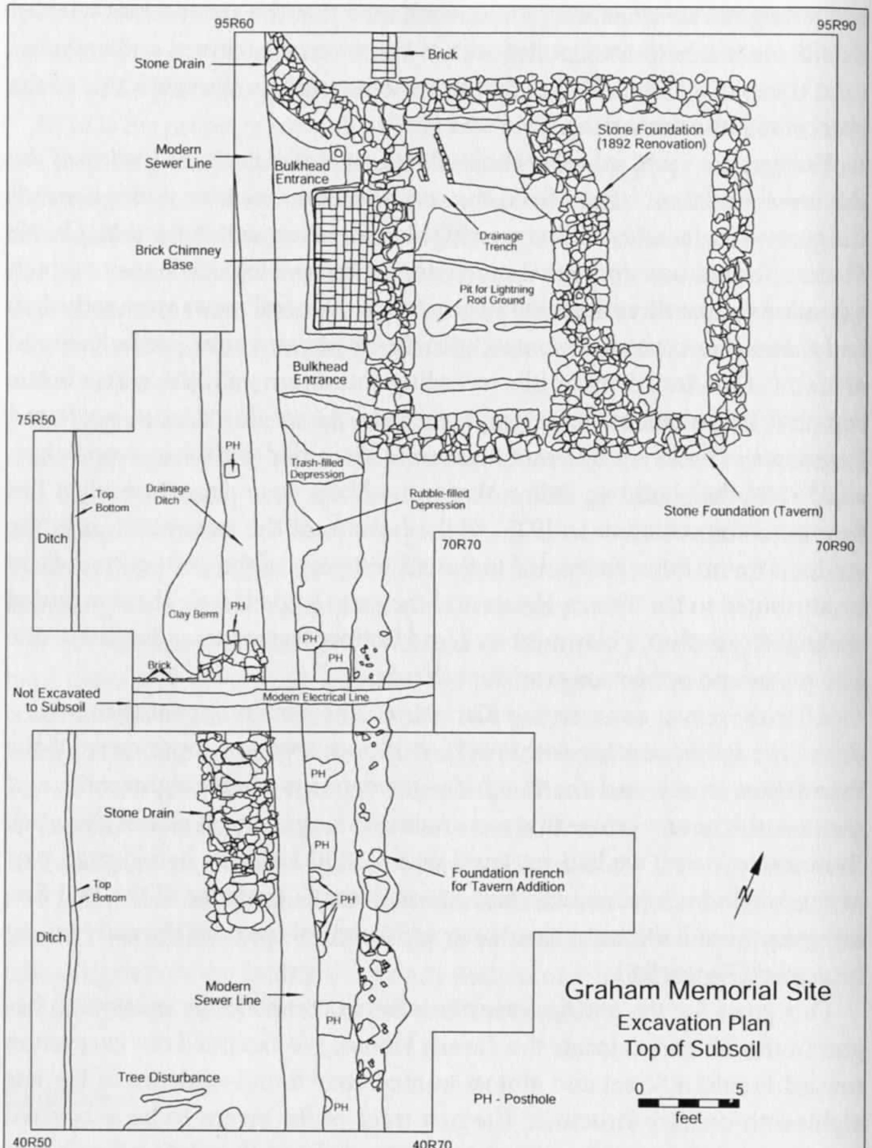

Figure 8.5. Excavation plan of the Graham Memorial site, showing architectural remains and other features associated with the Tavern House and Eagle Hotel.

Figure 8.6. View of the excavated tavern cellar and foundation at the Graham Memorial site (looking southwest). The west wall foundation for the 1892 Victorian structure, which replaced the original tavern building, crosses the center of the cellar (from left to right). Note that this foundation rests upon fill above the cellar floor.

dation suggested that it supported a two-story structure, a conclusion that is consistent with late nineteenth-century photographs showing the original tavern building (Figure 8.4). This original structure probably measured 36 feet by 18 feet. The below-ground stone walls appeared to have been laid directly abutting the sides of the hole dug for seating the cellar, since there was no builder's trench apparent along the exterior edge of the foundation.

The soil at the top of the cellar, filled in when the building was torn down in the 1890s, contained numerous artifacts and debris from the demolished tavern. Beneath this debris were three cellar floors, separated by sand that had been intentionally deposited to help alleviate moisture problems. Several broken plates and bowls, as well as a few coins, buttons, and other small broken or lost artifacts, lay on these floors (Figure 8.7).

One confusing aspect of the cellar was a large rock foundation that cut across its interior. At first, it appeared as if the tavern had two small cellars rather than a single large one. Once we had excavated the cellar to its original clay floor, however, we realized that this interior (Figure 8.6) foundation was built later to bridge the old cellar and to support the west wall of the 1892

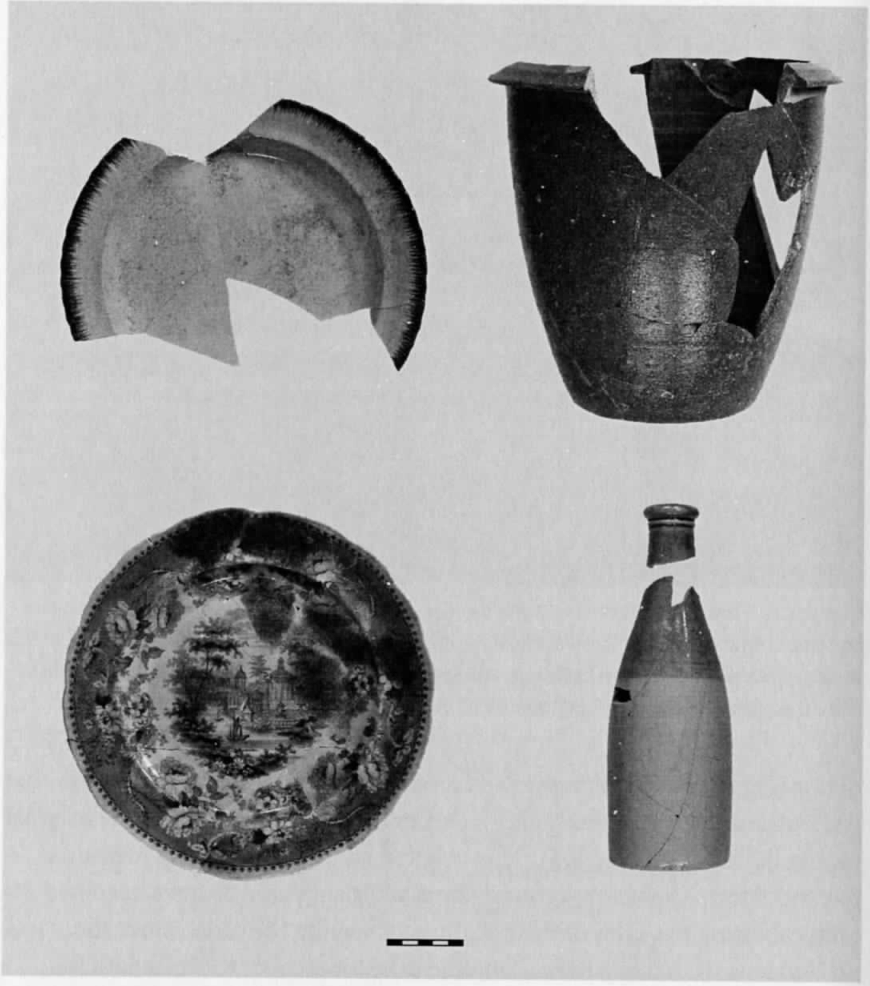

Figure 8.7. Artifacts from the Graham Memorial site: (*top left*) an early nineteenth-century blue shell-edged plate from a deeply buried trash deposit along the west edge of the excavation; (*top right*) a stoneware pot, made by local potter Nicholas Fox (1797–1858), recovered from the drainage ditch along the west side of the structure; (*bottom left*) a mid-nineteenth-century transfer-printed whiteware plate from the cellar floor; and (*bottom right*) a late nineteenth-century stoneware ale bottle from fill deposited in 1892 atop the cellar floor.

Victorian structure. Even the curvature of the circular turret at the building's northwest corner can be seen in the later foundation.

Quite unexpectedly, we learned a great deal from our excavations about how the hotel's owners dealt with problems of moisture and drainage. Being dug into stiff piedmont clay, the building's cellar acted as a catch-basin, partially filling with water when it rained. On two separate occasions, the cellar floor was raised by depositing a half-foot-thick layer of clean river sand. Although this tactic probably worked temporarily, it did not solve the problem, since the water had nowhere to go. Following the apparent failure of the second layer of sand to keep the floor dry, a much more radical step was taken. A shallow drainage ditch was cut diagonally across the sand floor to the northwest corner, where it fed a newly constructed stone-lined drain. This drain connected to a ditch about six feet west of the tavern, which directed water to the edge of Franklin Street. A similar stone drain along this ditch also was found just southwest of the tavern, beneath an entryway to the rear addition (Figure 8.5).

The Pettigrew Site

Almost three years after the bicentennial excavation, we learned that plans were underway to construct a new building for the university's Institute for the Arts and Humanities on the nearby Pettigrew site, where our earlier surveys and archival studies had identified potentially significant buried archaeological remains. Given the success of our initial project at Graham Memorial, a research proposal was submitted and funded by UNC's Office of Facilities Planning and Design for an eight-week excavation during the summer of 1997 to evaluate the site.

Historical Overview

The Pettigrew site was originally part of Lot 11, another two-acre lot sold at auction by the university's trustees in 1793 (Figure 8.1). The lot also fronted on Franklin Street and was originally purchased by George Johnston. By the time the university reacquired the property in 1929, it had changed ownership some two dozen times. When it was first surveyed, we believed that most of the archaeological remains at the Pettigrew site probably were associated with the Phi Delta Theta fraternity house, which stood there from about 1908 until the early 1930s. This area was the backyard of a residence built on Franklin Street during the late 1790s and was also the back lot of the Roberson/Central Hotel (which stood at the site of Battle-Vance-Pettigrew Building in the late 1800s and early 1900s), so we also expected earlier archaeological remains (Figures 8.2 and 8.3). Because of this long history of activity, we had hoped to excavate the Pettigrew site during the Bicentennial, once work was completed at the nearby Graham Memorial site. This did not occur, however, due to the extent and complexity of the archaeological remains found there. What we did not know at the time was that a substantial, privately owned dormitory known as the Poor House also stood at the south edge of Lot 11 from the 1830s or 1840s until about 1880.

A reference to this dormitory, with dimensions and a method of construction that could be confirmed archaeologically, was found in an 1883 deed, which described the property: "The land whereon formerly stood a row of Brick offices called the 'Poor House' One hundred & twenty feet long & Eighteen feet wide on the Extreme Southern end of the lot" (Jones et al. 1998: 9). The university had been plagued by shortages of student housing for most of the nineteenth century, and student letters and diaries of the 1830s and 1840s indicate that housing was at a premium. To help alleviate the problem, many entrepreneurial Chapel Hillians rented rooms or constructed separate buildings in their yards to serve as student quarters.

With the onset of the Civil War, such temporary residences were no longer needed, and many fell into ruin and were removed during the subsequent Reconstruction period. Kemp Battle (1912: 40), president of the university during the late 1800s, wrote: "Another effect of the hard times through which the village passed was the removal of many cottages which had been built by the landowners for the accommodation of students of prosperous days, who were unable to procure lodging in the University Buildings. These cottages were torn down, or sold, some re-erected a mile or so away on the neighboring farms. Thus disappeared from the map 'Pandemonium,' 'Possum Quarter,' the 'Poor House,' 'Bat Hall,' the 'Crystal Palace,' and other places dear to the ante-bellum students."

Excavation

Fieldwork at the Pettigrew site was undertaken in four phases. First, the entire site area was tested with soil augers to determine the depth and structure of the underlying deposits. Next, three 5 × 5 foot test units were hand excavated by natural strata. Ten distinct stratigraphic units were eventually identified that contained artifacts from the modern era back to the late 1700s. Disturbed and recent strata over a 2,800 sq ft area were then stripped with a backhoe so that most of the archaeological effort could be directed toward sampling and documenting the more deeply buried, intact deposits. Following mechanical stripping, excavation proceeded by hand within 10 × 10 foot and 5 × 5 foot units and by natural strata. Approximately 1,600 sq ft of the area that had been stripped of topsoil was excavated by hand to subsoil, and another 900 sq ft was partially excavated. Additional units were fully excavated by hand to expose portions of the Poor House foundation that extended beyond the area of mechanical stripping (Figure 8.8).

When the Pettigrew excavation began, we expected most of the architectural remains to be associated with the fraternity house. However, we quickly discovered that the archaeological remains at the site were much more extensive. The archaeological fieldwork and archival research documented the existence of two buildings at the site: (1) the Phi Delta Theta fraternity house, which stood during the early twentieth century, and (2) a row of eight brick rooms known as the Poor House that was built and rented to students during the mid-nineteenth century. Although the Poor House is mentioned in histories of the university and Chapel Hill, its location was previously unknown.

Architectural debris associated with the Poor House was the most extensive and included window glass, cut nails, and brick rubble. Fewer artifacts could be attributed to the fraternity building, perhaps because these items were removed when the university demolished the structure in the 1930s or were removed by mechanical stripping prior to hand excavation. Items clearly associated with this structure include plumbing pipes and fixtures, electrical insulators, lightbulbs, tile, window glass, wire nails, a doorknob, and a door lock. Artifacts associated with the occupation of the Poor House and the Phi Delta Theta fraternity include whiteware, porcelain, and stoneware sherds, glassware, bottle fragments, lamp glass, personal items, and animal bones. Smaller quantities of creamware and pearlware sherds, some of which were found beneath the Poor House, likely are associated with the original occupants of Lot 11 (Figure 8.9). The town plat illustrated in Figure 8.1 shows that a structure stood at the northeast corner of this lot by about 1797. Interestingly, numerous shallow plow scars also were observed, which cut into the subsoil clay beneath the Poor House. These reflect the property's use as a garden before the Poor House was constructed in the 1830s or 1840s.

Substantial intact architectural elements for the Phi Delta Theta house and the Poor House also were found and were sufficiently complete to determine the size and placement of these structures. The fraternity house was a frame structure two and a half stories high that stood on brick piers and had a small shed attached to the west side. Its location and appearance are well documented in early nineteenth-century photographs and insurance maps (Powell 1979: 134–35). It measured approximately 32 by 36 feet, had a wraparound porch, and was heated by two interior fireplaces.

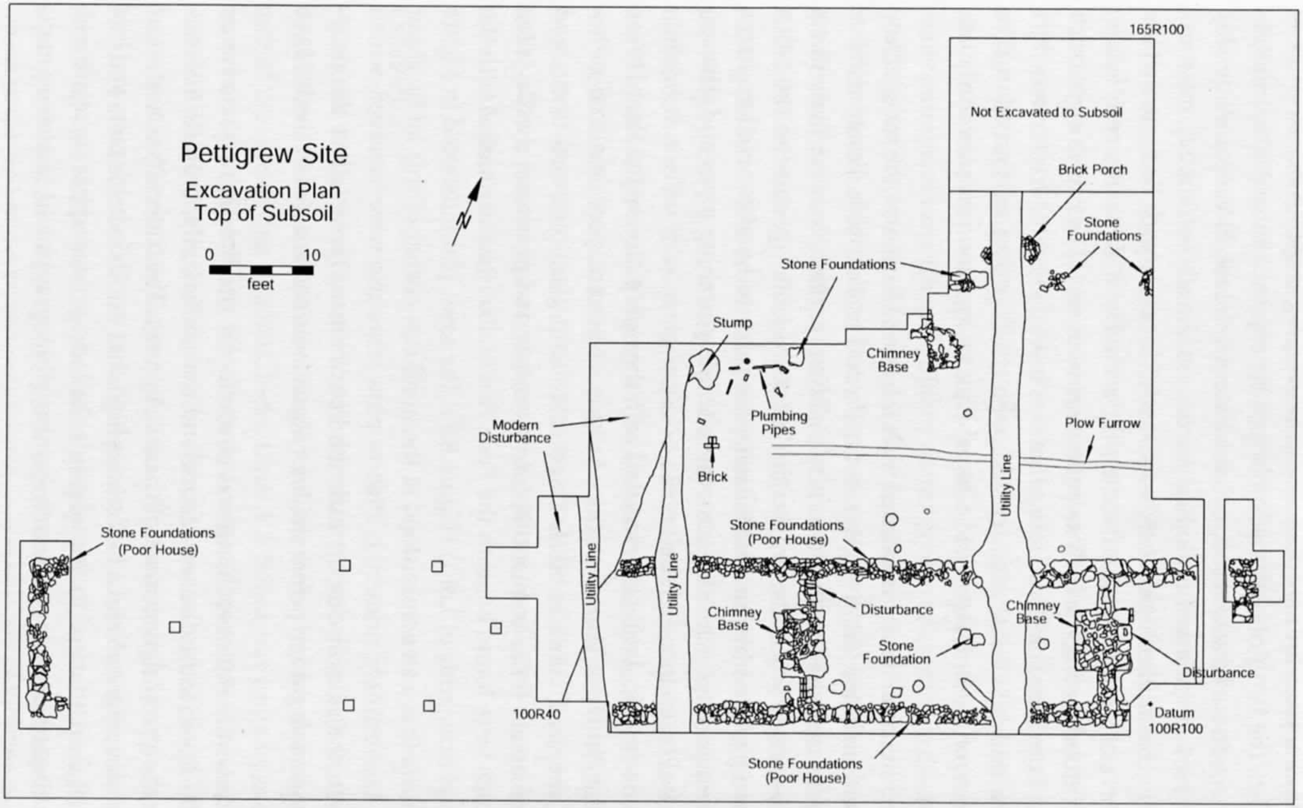

Figure 8.8. Excavation plan of the Pettigrew site, showing the wall and chimney foundations associated with the Poor House and the chimney base, foundation piers, and other remains associated with the Phi Delta Theta fraternity house.

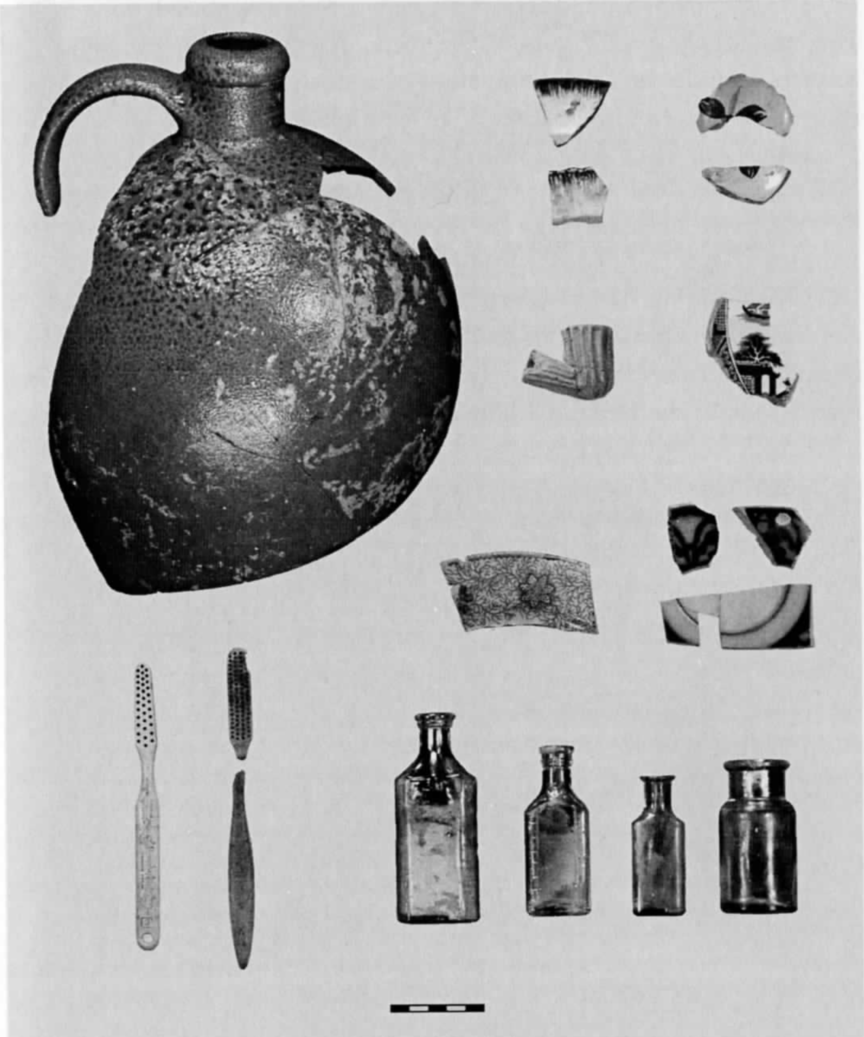

Figure 8.9. Artifacts from the Pettigrew site: (*top left*) salt-glazed stoneware jug, (*top middle*) blue shell-edged, (*top right*) polychrome hand-painted, (*row two*) locally made earthenware pipe, and chinoiserie transfer-printed pearlware sherds, which likely predate the Poor House; and (*row three*) transfer-printed whiteware sherds attributable to the Poor House occupation; and (*bottom row*) bone toothbrushes and pharmaceutical bottles associated with the Phi Delta Theta fraternity house.

The archaeological remains of the fraternity house closely match this description. Five stone foundations for brick piers were uncovered, and three other rectangular disturbances in the top of the stone foundations for the Poor House also appear to be where piers once stood. Other architectural features include the brick foundation of a small porch on the north side of the building, the foundation of an interior fireplace and chimney, and plumbing fixtures associated with the rear shed addition (Figure 8.8).

The architectural remains of the Poor House are much more substantial than those associated with the fraternity, consisting of continuous stone foundations for the exterior walls, interior walls, and chimneys (Figure 8.10). These foundations indicate a building that was 120 feet long and 16 feet wide. Although its width and eastern end were determined fairly early during the excavation, the western end was not located until the 1883 deed that described the building's dimensions was discovered. The length was then quickly confirmed through excavation. The building had four interior chimneys, and the foundations for two of these were fully exposed. The floor plan likely consisted of a row of eight rooms approximately 15 feet by 16 feet in size, with each room heated by a single fireplace.

Structures similar to the Poor House were built on other southern college campuses during the 1830s. Elm Row and Oak Row (two of the oldest buildings at Davidson College, built in 1836–37) were single-story brick structures that originally served as dormitories; each housed sixteen students. This building style apparently was inspired by Thomas Jefferson's academic village at the University of Virginia.

Conclusion

Archaeological studies such as the ones just described uniquely allow us to map past cultural landscapes by revealing once-common places now lost to modern memory. Moreover, these studies permit insights about campus and town life through the analysis of associated material culture and also provide an alternative perspective on broader social and economic conditions.

For example, the artifact assemblages from the Graham Memorial site excavation indicate both the importance of the tavern and hotel to town and gown and the day-to-day behaviors and habits of student boarders. The overall composition of the assemblages is typical of what we might expect at a nineteenth-century hotel or boardinghouse. Table glass consists primarily of thick, sturdy tumblers, and ceramic tablewares often were undecorated or minimally decorated. These items could have withstood heavy everyday

Figure 8.10. View of the excavated foundation for the Poor House at the Pettigrew site (looking west). The entire foundation extends from just beyond the bottom of the photograph to the stone wall at the very top of the photograph.

use and were inexpensive to replace. The many human teeth found at the Graham Memorial site indicate that in addition to providing daily nourishment these establishments also served other needs of the student body and community, such as dentistry. Items such as glass test tubes and pipettes, ceramic marbles, tobacco pipes, and fragments of writing slates and pencils are perhaps more indicative of student life.

Artifacts found at both sites address some of the more serious issues regarding student behavior that faced early university officials. The prevalence of wine and ale bottle fragments throughout the excavated deposits at both the Graham Memorial and Pettigrew sites lends weight to the administration's concern that off-campus public establishments such as the Tavern House and Eagle Hotel—however necessary they might have been for providing daily sustenance—were a corrupting influence on its students. These remains also suggest that (as revealed in many student diaries) the university was not always effective in controlling this behavior, even during periods when the sale of liquor on or near campus was explicitly banned.

University restrictions on weapons also appear to have been largely ignored. Students often brought their guns with them to college, whether intended for personal safety, for sport, or as a necessity to obtain food. Histories of the university indicate that in the early nineteenth century the firing of guns by students as part of public celebrations was commonplace (Battle 1907: 270). The occurrence of firearm-related artifacts (from a pistol flint and small birdshot in early deposits at Graham Memorial to bullet casings and shotgun shells in more recent contexts at both sites) suggests that guns were fairly commonplace on campus until the mid-twentieth century.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is fortunate that many of its earliest buildings are still standing, for they provide a unique character to the campus that evokes both a sense of tradition and an appreciation of the university's formative years. The present campus bears only a superficial resemblance to the campus of the late eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries, however, and Chapel Hill is even less a reflection of its former self. While a partial understanding of the university and town in this bygone era may be gained from diaries, contemporary histories, and a handful of turn-of-the-century photographs, institutions such as the Tavern House/Eagle Hotel and the Poor House can never be fully understood by those sources alone.

The physical remains of these and other unique sites (in terms of archaeological features, foundations, and associated artifact assemblages) provide important clues about the past and need to be preserved where possible and properly studied. As new facilities are planned and built to meet the educational demands of future generations, our continuing challenge on UNC's historic campus will be to ensure that its rich archaeological heritage is not lost.

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Excavations at the Graham Memorial site were undertaken by twenty-one students who participated in two consecutive archaeological field schools during the 1993–94 academic year, under the direction of Jane Eastman and Steve Davis. Funding for these investigations was provided by the UNC Bicentennial Observance Committee. Excavations at the Pettigrew site were prompted by the planned construction of a new building on the site and were funded by UNC's Office of Facilities Planning and Design. The field crew for this work consisted of five students who had just completed the 1997 UNC field school at the Jenrette site, who were directed by Thomas O. Maher and Steve Davis. Both projects also benefited from the participation of numerous volunteers.

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Notes

1. In early 2007 excavations for a new steam line behind New East revealed a mid-nineteenth-century humus layer that was buried beneath almost two feet of fill. This layer contained numerous pearlware sherds, wine bottle and glass tumbler fragments, pieces of molded clay pipes, window glass, and a brass doorknob. These artifacts appear to represent refuse discarded behind Steward's House as well as debris from the destruction of this structure in the late 1840s.