



1979

37-Archaeological Test Excavations Undertaken to Determine the Extent and Cultural Significance of the Pullman Health Clinic Site (20 AE 618), Village of Pullman, Allegan County, Michigan

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DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

REPORT OF INVESTIGATIONS NO. 37

1979

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TEST EXCAVATIONS UNDERTAKEN TO DETERMINE THE EXTENT AND
CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PULLMAN HEALTH CLINIC SITE (20 AE 618),
VILLAGE OF PULLMAN, ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN

William M. Cremin

INTRODUCTION:

Pursuant to a letter from the office of Dr. Martha M. Bigelow, State Historic Preservation Officer, to Mr. Robert Q. Hendershot, Administrator, Pullman Health Clinic, Inc., Pullman, Michigan, and at the request of Mr. Hendershot, the Department of Anthropology at Western Michigan University undertook limited testing of the Pullman Health Clinic site (20 AE 618) on 23 Jun 79. There follows a report of our activities and findings with respect to this archaeological site.

PROJECT PERSONNEL:

Principal Investigator - Dr. William M. Cremin, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, WMU
Field Supervisor - Ms. Katie Parachini, M.A. Candidate in Anthropology, WMU
Field Assistants - Mr. Ken Barr, M.A. Candidate in Anthropology, WMU

- Mr. Paul McAlistter, M.A. Candidate in Anthropology, WMU
- Ms. Deborah Rhead, M.A. Candidate in Anthropology, WMU
- Ms. Karel Engstrom, Senior, minorning in Anthropology, WMU
- Mr. James Wojtala, Senior Major in Anthropology, WMU

All project personnel have received formal training in

archaeological field methods, served as supervisory personnel in various aspects of WMU's field research program and have also acquired experience in our contract archaeology program.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH:

On 19 May 79, the Principal Investigator and two assistants conducted an archaeological survey of the Pullman Health Clinic property to determine whether or not plans to construct a health care facility would have an adverse impact on cultural resources. WMU's archaeological site files revealed that no archaeological sites, either prehistoric or historic, had ever been recorded for this property. Furthermore, the general area of Pullman, Michigan had not, to our knowledge, ever been subjected to systematic investigation of any sort.

Field procedures utilized during our on-site evaluation of the property consisted of systematic transect survey with sub-surface shovel testing at designated intervals. The woodlot at the back of the parcel was traversed at 15 m intervals, with tests being placed every 15 m along each line of survey. None of our shovel tests revealed the slightest trace of cultural material predating the modern debris which littered the surface and filled several large depressions in the woodlot.

The front portion of the parcel had formerly been under cultivation. Here, we examined the surface very carefully as well as shovel tested along transects. Near the northern limits of the corn field, which at the time of our survey lay in stubble, we observed several potsherds resting on the surface of the ground. These were the only items occurring on the surface, albeit the field had recently been washed by rain and visibility was good.

if not excellent.

Following completion of our coverage of the entire parcel, we returned to the findspot and clustered some additional shovel tests in this area of the field. Although we failed to locate any cultural features or, for that matter, other kinds of debris, we did recover an additional 58 sherds. In aggregate, the 60 potsherds recovered appeared to represent two or possibly three vessels of Late Woodland (Alleghan Tradition) affiliation. The results of our survey were subsequently reported to the Michigan History Division and Mr. Hendershott of the Pullman Health Clinic (Cremitt 1979).

OBJECTIVES OF THE CURRENT PROJECT:

Recently, the Principal Investigator and a crew of six student archaeologists returned to this site to undertake limited test excavations. Plans called for an intensive one-day effort, utilizing both shovel testing and test excavation in the vicinity of the original pottery find in an attempt to ascertain the extent and cultural significance of the site.

The map accompanying this report indicates the manner in which the site was tested, with shovel tests (s) being placed at 5 m intervals along the base lines of our grid and test squares (t), 1 m on a side, being clustered about site datum.

The datum point, which is located where the original discovery occurred, is 47 m south and 28 m east of the intersection of 109th and 55th streets. Elevation above sea level is approximately 199.4 m (664 ft).

All soil removed from shovel tests and excavation units was carefully sifted, with 6.2 mm mesh screens being used in

conjunction with the excavation of test squares. Standard methods of record keeping were employed throughout.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PARCEL EVALUATED:

The Pullman Health Clinic site is located in the NW 1/4, NW 1/4, SE 1/4 of Section 9, Lee Township, Allegan County, Michigan. The site is proximal to several standing bodies of water (Lower and Upper Scott Lakes) and a third order stream (Scotts Creek) which drains them and is tributary to Middle Fork Black River. The creek flows by the site at a distance of 200 m to the north.

The soils are coarsely textured sand to sandy loam, reflecting the presence in this area of former glacial lake beds.

Assigned to the Oakville-Spinks-Oshemo Association, these soils are closely associated with Oak-Pine Woodland in western Allegan County. It is also noteworthy that the site is situated on the periphery of this association, bordering an area of Granby-Au Gres soils to the south and west. Soils of this latter association typically support climax Beech-Maple Forest.

Examination of the property during the survey revealed that the back third consisted of heavily disturbed second growth forest. Here, we commonly encountered deep, machine-created depressions filled with modern garbage. The remaining portion was in field, with corn stubble still standing from last year's planting.

TESTING PROGRAM:

We initiated our work by establishing a site grid over the area thought most likely to yield the desired information. The datum was located near the original findspot and subsequently

ted in using transit and stadia rod to the nearby intersection. The area was systematically shovel tested, with individual tests taken down to a depth of 30-60 cm below the modern surface.

Test squares were initially excavated in arbitrary 10 cm levels to a depth of 10 cm below the base of the plow zone. However, once we had confirmed that cultural material would not be found below the depth to which the plow had penetrated, we proceeded to remove the 22 cm thick plow zone as a single level and terminated our excavation at the base of the disturbed zone if no subsurface features were encountered.

In aggregate, 29 shovel tests and 16 test squares were excavated in the manner described above. These tests, together with those which had been placed in this area of the property during the survey a month earlier, provide a good basis for making recommendations regarding the potential significance which should be accorded the Pullman Health Clinic site.

RESULTS OF RESEARCH:

Our testing of the site has resulted in the recovery of some additional information regarding the prehistoric (Late

Woodland) occupation (see attached inventory of cultural material). Although not a single shovel test produced debris of any sort, 11 of 16 excavation units yielded 60 pieces of pottery. In

addition, two sherds were recovered from the surface near datum. Examination of these sherds and comparison with those recovered during survey, indicate that it is not necessary to increase the number of vessels represented. All 122 sherds found at the site appear to be derived from a single or possibly two pots.

Importantly, our work at the site has not produced any lithic

Inasmuch as our efforts have resulted only in the recovery of ceramics without good cultural context and without any other sorts of debris commonly found in association with pottery on a habitation site, possibly indicating that the Pullman Health Clinic site represents nothing more than the occurrence of an isolated pottery vessel, it is felt that current plans to build a medical facility on the property should not be further impeded.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

area of our work.

ned to ascertain whether the site continues beyond the immediate that the property to the north and across 109th street be examination area. If this suggestion has merit, it is perhaps advisable pottery, probably located on the periphery of the main habitation area centered around the manufacture and/or disposal of suggest that we have here come upon an activity area, involving on the site datum (see accompanying map). It is tempting to covered occurred in an area roughly 10 m on a side and centered the site's extent, noting only that the cultural material recovered but without good context. We have not been able to determine several pots of the Late Woodland period (Alleghan Tradition), In the final analysis, we have recovered a pot or perhaps been recovered.

no contextual association for the prehistoric items which have modern origin. No features were observed and, hence, we have disturbed zone, along with several iron objects of clearly the cultural debris recovered to date was extracted from the encountered on most sites in Alleghan County. Also, all of debris or fire-cracked rock; materials which are commonly

However, as a final note it should be stated that the results of our work at this site were not entirely satisfying and in some respects disturbing. Certainly, the recovery of a ceramic vessel(s) without any contextual association is foreign to the author's previous experience. Perhaps it would be advisable for the Michigan History Division and Pullman Health Clinic, Inc. to consider having an archaeologist on site during the time that heavy equipment is present, in the event that excavation of the foundation for this facility results in the unearthing of significant data which our testing of the site, albeit careful and thorough within the limited confines of the area immediately adjacent to the original find-spot, has failed to reveal.

REFERENCES CITED

Cremitt, W.M.

1979

An archaeological survey of the Pullman Health Clinic
property, Village of Pullman, Allegan County, Michigan.
Report of phase one investigations undertaken on 19
May 79 to the Michigan History Division, Lansing, and
Pullman Health Clinic, Inc.

INVENTORY OF CULTURAL MATERIAL RECOVERED DURING SURVEY AND
TEST EXCAVATION AT THE PULLMAN HEALTH CLINIC SITE, VILLAGE
OF PULLMAN, ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN

- 7 - Allegan Ware rim sherds
- 8 - decorated body sherds
- 107 - cord-roughened body sherds
- 1 - modern fencing nail
- 1 - fragment of an iron plow share
- 1 - unidentified iron fragment, presumably from a
farm implement

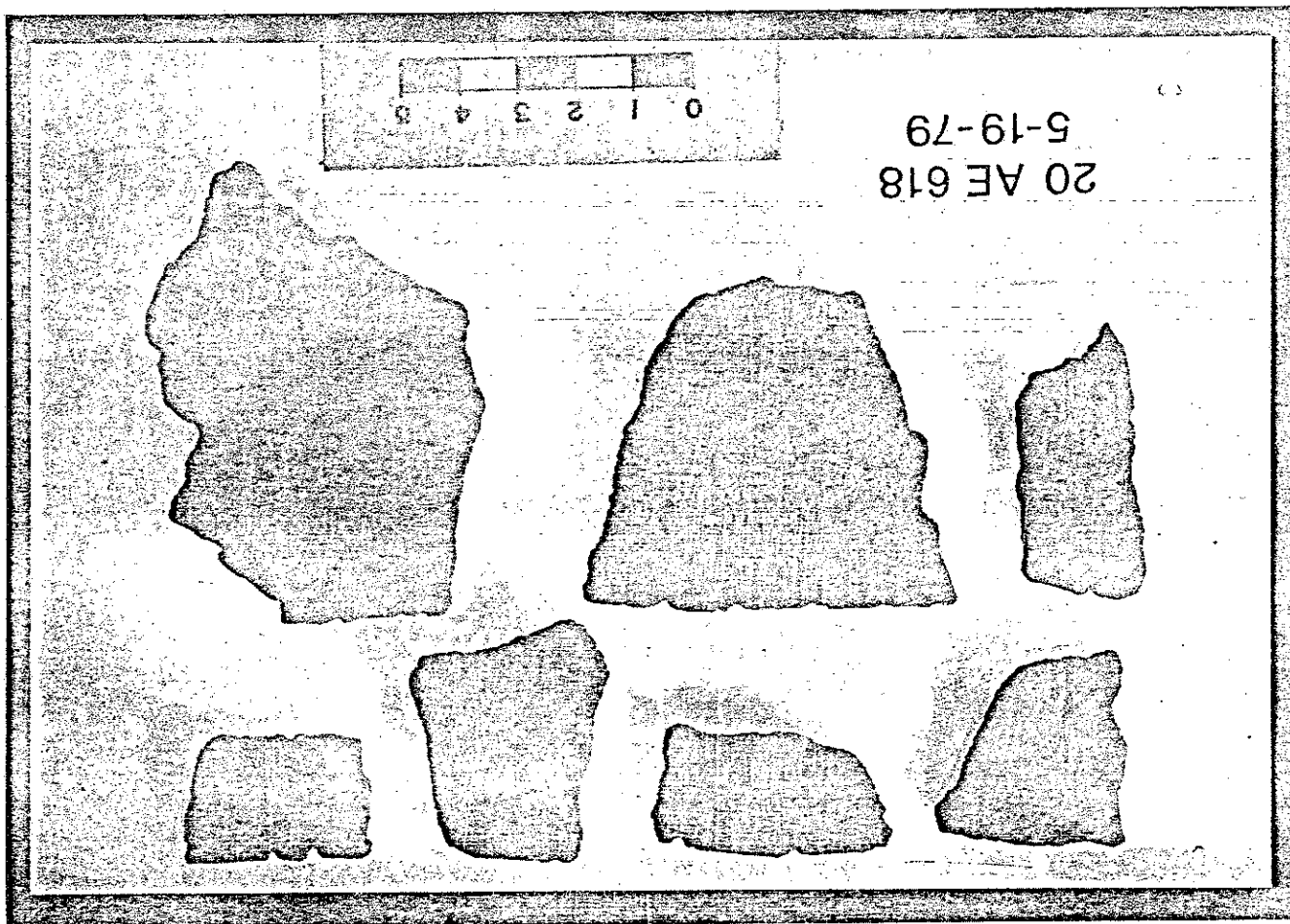
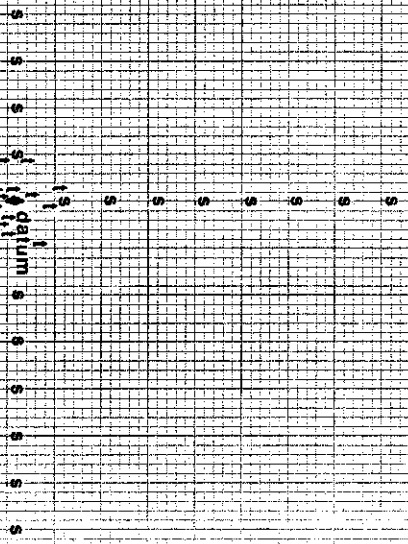


Plate 1: Rim sherds from the Pullman Health Clinic Site (20 AE 618).

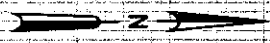
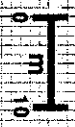
55 Street

109 Street



property line

Pullman Health Clinic Site
20 AE 618



▲ datum is 47m S and 28m E
 of brass plate in the nearby
 intersection
 s - shovel test
 x - 1x1m test square

6/23/79
WMC