Title

Scrubbing the Whitewash from New England History: Citizenship, Race and Gender in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Nantucket

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Scrubbing the Whitewash from New England History: Citizenship, Race and Gender in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Nantucket

By

Teresa Dujnic Bulger

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

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of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in Charge:

Professor Laurie A. Wilkie, Chair
Professor Rosemary A. Joyce
Professor Waldo E. Martin

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Abstract

Scrubbing the Whitewash from New England History: Citizenship, Race and Gender in
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This dissertation examines how racial ideologies have historically been entangled with discourses on citizenship and gender difference in the United States. In looking at the case study of the 18th- and 19th-century African American community on Nantucket, I ask how these ideologies of difference and inequality were experienced, reinterpreted, and defied by women and men in the past. Whereas New England has maintained a liberal and moralistic regional narrative since the early-19th century, this dissertation builds on scholarship which has increasingly complicated this narrative, documenting the historically entrenched racial divides in the region.

Historic African American community philosophies and social ideals are investigated through newspapers, pamphlets, and other records of the time. To address the household and individual scale, an archaeological investigation was undertaken at the homestead of a prominent 19th-century black family on the island of Nantucket, Massachusetts. The Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham House was home to a prominent late-18th- and 19th-century African American-Native American family on the island. The materiality of the Boston home — the artifacts, architecture, and landscape features — are the basis for making interpretations of the lives of the individuals that once lived there.

African diaspora theory, black feminist thought, and theories of performativity form the basis for the interpretive framework of this dissertation. The process of community formation and mobilization is considered with regard both for the uniting potential of cultural background and the uniting potential of political and social goals. The diversity of the African diaspora is seen as both an asset and a challenge to the uniting of the community on Nantucket. Collective and individual identities were experienced in a variety of ways. Race, gender, age, social status, and other vectors of social cohesion all contributed to the experience of intersectional identities. The concept of performativity, which proposes that identities are temporarily stabilized during

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actions, is also part of the foundation on which identity is theorized in this dissertation. Everyday performance provided opportunities for experiences of embodied subjectivities, where subject positions are defined and reiterated through words, bodily movement, and material choices.

The historical analysis which contextualizes this research project focuses on the establishment and perpetuation of African American community ideals in the northeastern United States during the 19th century. Notions of citizenship and gender ideals were racialized and defined according to white standards. Women and men of African descent, as well as of other cultural backgrounds, were seen by dominant white culture as outside the bounds of citizenship by virtue of not being white and outside the bounds of womanhood/manhood by not being white women/men. Black communities, or communities of color, in the Northeast countered these hostile ideologies with a complex set of strategies for redefining, rejecting, or transforming dominant ideals of womanhood and manhood. Black gender ideologies represented the synthesis of several sets of cultural traditions, economic circumstances, and political goals. While these changed in important ways over the course of the 19th century, black gender ideals were consistently based on a normative notion of respectability while at the same time critiquing the race and gender ideologies of the society that defined respectability. In addition to this, people of color were increasingly defining a sense of collective identity based on these shared ideas of respectability and uplift and the ways that women and men achieved this in the home as well as in more public spaces.

This dissertation first examines how the Boston-Micah family of the late-18th and early-19th centuries contributed to the founding of the community of color on Nantucket island. African American, Native American, Cape Verdean, European, and people from other lines of descent were a part of this community and in the early-19th century they united around the identifier of "people of color." Seneca Boston and Thankful Micah were among the first of these people to strike out and settle on the southern edge of town. Through an analysis of their material worlds— including ceramics, their house itself, and their plot of land— it is suggested that they were actively negotiating dominant discourses on racial exclusion, citizenship, and gender which excluded people of color from the rights and privileges of full personhood.

The 19th-century occupants of the house contributed to the growth, florescence, and survival of the African American community through the boom of the whaling industry on the island, an economic depression, and the resurgence of the economy with the coming of the tourism industry in the late-19th century. Mary Boston Douglass, Eliza Berry, Lewis Berry, Phebe Groves Talbot Hogarth, Elizabeth Stevens, and Absalom Boston experienced the race and gender ideals of the black community in the northeast, and wider American society, in a variety of ways. An analysis of ceramics, personal adornment objects, and small finds is used to examine their experiences. This dissertation asserts that these individuals were aware of the ways that the embodiment of gender ideals contributed to community uplift, but nonetheless made choices about how they would interpret, disregard, or reshape these ideals to fit the realities of their everyday lives.

This dissertation stands at once as a critique of a regional narrative, a micro-history of a family, and an analysis of race and gender ideologies which were forged in the past but continue to be relevant in the present day. Racial inequality in northeastern United States has a long history that has been in many ways obscured by popular imagination. Reexamining these regional histories continues to be an important project in the deconstruction of naturalized racial stereotypes and tracing the ways these stereotypes were interwoven with struggles for civil rights, gender, and racial equality.

Dedication

For my parents, my husband,
and my girls.

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Acknowledgements

It takes a village to write a dissertation. There are many people who are due thanks and I hope that anyone who I miss here can forgive the oversight.

I want to first thank the Museum of African American History for the opportunity to work on this important and exciting project. The Museum has been both a vital sponsor and source of encouragement during the Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham House Archaeology Project. Leadership and staff at the Museum, including Beverly Morgan-Welch, L'Merchie Frazier, and Renée and Bill Oliver were especially important to the success of this project. Renée and Bill Oliver were always welcoming of me during my visits to Nantucket, making me forget for a minute or two that I was just a coof. More than simply hosts, Bill and Renée were inspiring in their dedication to making the Museum a center for culture in the Nantucket community. I wish Renée could read the end product, and I look forward to seeing her again and telling her about it then.

Thanks is also due to the many individuals who have advised and mentored me in my throughout college and graduate school. My early encounters with historical archaeology in Mary Beaudry's classroom and in Ellen Berkland's city archaeology lab got me started on studying historical archaeology in New England. Ellen and Mary were supportive of my work at the Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham House and I hope that this dissertation lives up in some small way to the work they undertook at the Nantucket African Meeting House. At UMass Boston, David Landon, John Steinberg, and Christa Beranek have all been important to the planning and execution of this project. David Landon, particularly, has been vital as both a colleague and a friend through the many years it has taken to complete the dissertation.

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Many students were involved in this research and deserve thanks for their work on and interest in this project. First, thanks is due to Mike Way who took on the faunal remains from the site as part of his master's research. Volunteers and URAP apprentices were many, but the work of Rebecca McGee, Allison Barden, and Lizz Campos warrant special thanks. The team who worked on the excavation of the Boston-Higginbotham House in 2008 — Kate Erickson, Marisa Patalano, Kate Johnson, Mike Way and Ashley Peles—went above and beyond my expectations.

While on Nantucket, my visits were made more pleasant and my research was made more productive by the staff at the Nantucket Historical Association and the local historian community. Elizabeth Oldham and Marie (Ralph) Henke helped me to navigate the NHA's collections and Frances Karttunen and Barbara White were always generous with their research.

Funding for this research has come from a variety of sources, including fellowships from UC Berkeley's Center for Race and Gender, the Graduate Division Summer Grants program, the Anthropology Department's Block Fund, and the Lowie-Olsen Fund. I also received support in the form of a predoctoral fellowship from the Fiske Center for Archaeological Research at UMass Boston which helped me to begin archival research for this project. Additionally, the James Bradford Ames Fellowship provided both financial support and a network of scholars with

Chapter 1: New England, The Families, and the Research Questions

In the late-18th and early-19th centuries, diverse populations came together to create black communities in the Northeastern United States, building on a shared desire to exercise citizenship and to demonstrate personhood. These communities were up against the dominant white population which was increasingly relegating black individuals to second-class citizenship and outside the bounds of full personhood. The late-18th century saw the beginnings of black communities, as small neighborhoods of a few people sprung up in places like Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and smaller urban enclaves, like the New Guinea neighborhood on Nantucket Island. Creating a sense of community identity relied upon the actions of collectives of people as well as the actions of individuals, in both domestic and institutional settings. By the 1820s, black communities were organized around a collective sense of purpose practiced both in the home and more public settings.

This dissertation addresses the process of creating community among black populations in the North and asks how individuals drive this process through repeated efforts at exercising citizenship and personhood. To do this, I trace the historical development of the New Guinea community on Nantucket as well as the microhistory of one family, the Bostons and their descendants, who came to be a central component of this community. I think of "community" not as an inevitable social entity, but something created through the concerted efforts of many.

This analysis is divided temporally into two parts, first tracing the origins of the black community on Nantucket to the actions of a few pioneers in the late-18th century, then exploring the more concentrated and organized community of the 19th century that built and promoted a sense of collective identity. It was during the late-18th century that racial ideologies were still ambiguous. Free black populations in the North were only beginning to grow and the tenuous sense of collective identity experienced in this context was rooted in common family ties, a sense of shared ancestry, a shared anti-slavery sentiment. A politicized collective racial identity was in its infancy.

The second part of my analysis focuses on the 19th century, when black communities were increasingly organized, active, and vocal about collective community identities and these identities articulated with community goals of racial uplift. It was also at this time that notions of racial and gender difference and inequality were crystallizing in dominant white discourse. The social and civic oppression that was once tied to enslavement was now tied to blackness. Similarly, gender roles were becoming polarized, confining women to a position of second-class citizenship. Black communities were constructing their own gender ideologies for their own community goals. Respectable womanhood and manhood became defining values that underwrote black middle-class gender ideals and a means of demonstrating one's equality and right to citizenship. The practices which underwrote respectability were those associated with racial uplift—Christian morality, education, business success, modest personal presentation and civic participation where possible. Black community gender ideals did not simply mirror white middle-class ideals but were geared towards the needs and goals of black families and communities. A dual commitment to one's domestic life and community life characterized the ideal black woman and man, though the genders embodied these in different ways.

The materiality of citizenship and personhood are explored here through the historical and archaeological analysis of four generations of the Boston family at the Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham House (ca. 1774) on Nantucket Island, Massachusetts (Figure 1.1). This

extant house is part of the Nantucket campus of the Museum of African American History, based in Boston, and sits next to the Nantucket African Meeting House (ca. 1825), which was once a central institution of the black community on Nantucket. This analysis is directed at once at the tracing of public actions taken toward community building and the implications of community building for domestic life. The stories of the generations of individuals at the house itself challenge many of the taken-for-granted New England narratives which exclude, homogenize, or stereotype African American contributions to the region's culture and history.
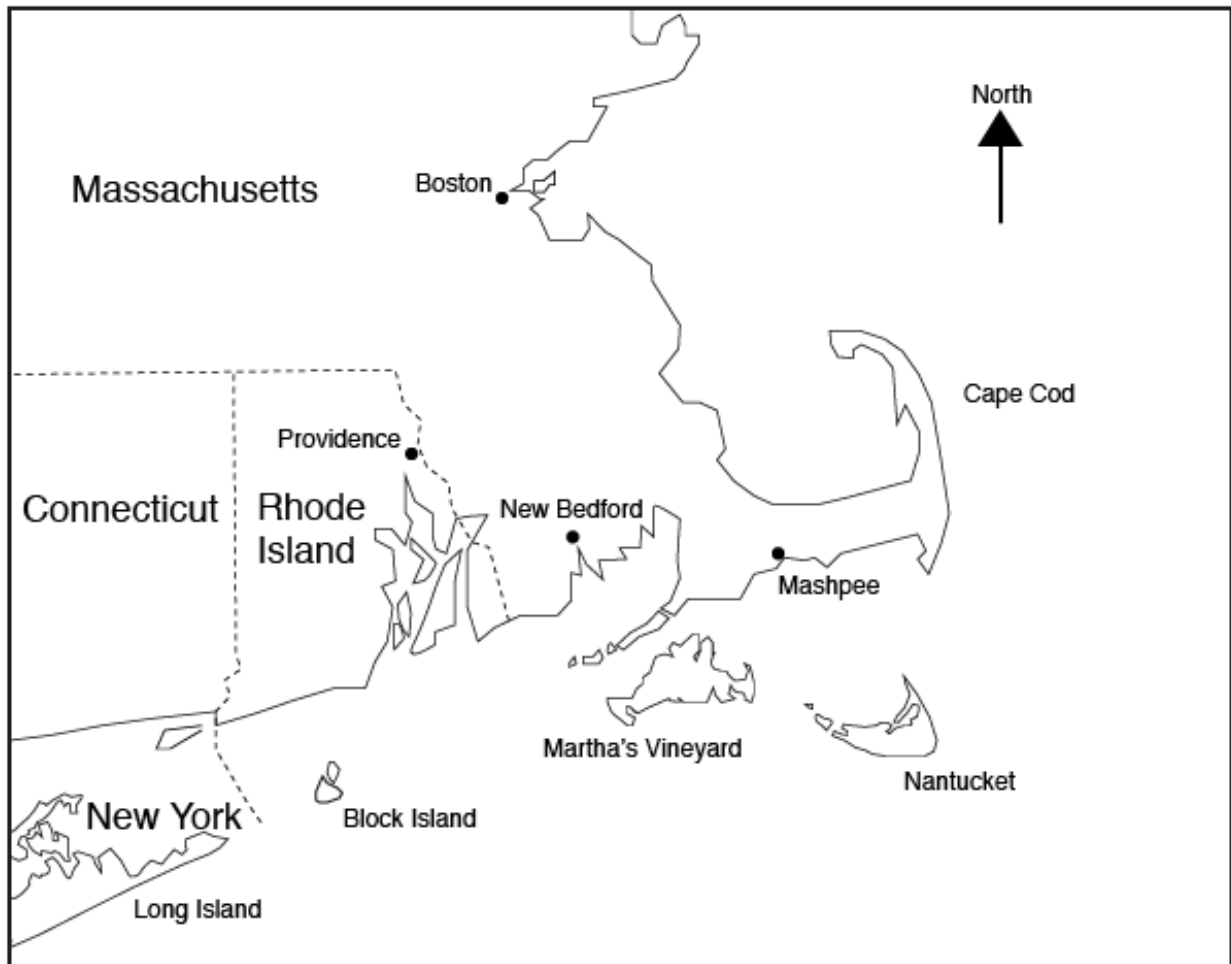
Figure 1.1. Map of Southern New England.

This dissertation takes a theoretical approach to the analysis of community identities that draws on African Diaspora theory, the feminist critique of science, performance theory, and black feminist theory. Creating a sense of collective diasporic identity was a process that drew on cultural traditions and intergenerational ties as well as politicized racial identities. In the 19th-century northeast, African American communities, often calling themselves communities of color, were beginning to mobilize in a variety of ways around the common goal of racial uplift. In many of these communities, including the one on Nantucket, documents suggest that the people being defined as "black" by white residents often self-described as "people of color". The terms "black" and "people of color" will both be used in this dissertation, however, as the

process of identifying as a community was at once a matter of self-definition and imposed racialized difference. [1]

One strategy was to create a united front, which was underwritten by ideals of middle class notions of respectable womanhood and manhood in complementary roles. The men and women in the black community on Nantucket engaged with these gender ideals in their everyday practices, at times embracing them and at other times redefining them for their own needs. A feminist theoretical framework underscores the ways that individual agency is important in the maintaining or changing of social norms. At the same time feminist theory encourages the challenging of dominant narratives of the past and present. Black feminist theory calls attention to the importance of investigating the intersectional identities of past subjects and the need to expose inequality based on gender and race in both the past and present. Finally, all these theoretical frameworks inspire a collaborative research approach that seeks to dismantle the hierarchical nature of knowledge building in archaeology. As such, this research is undertaken with several goals, which serve the descendant community, are responsible to the archaeological data, and seek to critique dominant narratives of historic gender roles and regional history.

New England and Nantucket Dominant Narratives

Understanding Seneca Boston's experience, and that of his parents Boston and Maria, requires a look at how enslavement in New England played a part in this region's culture and antebellum identity. Beginning in the late-18th century and into the 19th century, New England cultivated a regional identity as the cultural and political leader of the nation. The many geographers that wrote about this region helped to naturalize this leadership position, and the privilege to lead was "bolstered by history as well as by the region's role in the Revolution" (Conforti 2001: 116). These same writers wrote African Americans and slavery out of the region's history as it was not conducive with the values of liberalism and natural rights that had been at the center of the Revolution (ibid.: 117–118). In the late-18th century New England states were implementing gradual emancipation, and this soon led to a sense of superiority over the morally corrupt South (Melish 1998). When slavery was acknowledged, it was painted as a milder, short-lived institution. In fact, slavery was a crucial part of this region's economy and the region unapologetically supported it during the American Revolution.

The sense of exceptionalism that the North felt in both the pre- and post-Revolutionary time periods is exemplified by the social and political history of Nantucket Island, Massachusetts. This island's inhabitants came to embrace the democratic philosophies of the Revolution so much so that they were considered a model of America by contemporary commentators (St. John de Crèvecoeur 1782 in Crosby 1946). Many families on Nantucket had become very wealthy (though appropriately pious as Quakers were) and the newly emerged

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[1] Note on Nomenclature: As I am writing about the diverse Nantucket community of Africans, African Americans, Cape Verdeans, Native Americans, and mixed race families it is impossible to reduce this complexity to a single over-arching term. I use "black" or "African American" to refer to an inclusive sense of corporate identity among people of the African Diaspora in the 19th- and early-20th centuries and thus include a wide variety of ancestries under this term. I use "white" to refer to the dominant Euro-American population which exercised a certain amount of privilege based on the light color of their skin and their national origins. In many cases, however, I use the more general term of "people of color" as this is frequently used on the part of writers and speakers in the 19th century who might today identify as African American or black. In researching the black community on Nantucket, several documents refer to the corporate identity of this group. In these documents they either describe themselves as a "community of color" (or a similar term) or "an oppressed portion of the citizens of Nantucket" (White 2009: 108). I therefore favor these terms when speaking specifically about the Nantucket community.

revolutionary ideal of the self-made individual were embraced by both the women and men of Nantucket (Norling 2000). In 1770, Crevecoeur in his famous *Letters from an American Farmer*, described Nantucket as an ideal American town where "their freedom, their skill, their probity, and perseverance, have accomplished every thing, and brought them by degrees to the rank they now hold" (Crosby 1946: 42). Morally upstanding, built on the industry of its inhabitants, and striving for financial and political independence (Byers 1987), Nantucket indeed saw itself as a manifestation of American ideals. In that same vein, the island was subject to the realities behind the ideals and often failed to live up to the liberal façade it had constructed.

Despite the presence of slavery on Nantucket from an early date, the island had a strong Quaker tradition by the early-18th century and anti-slavery sentiment brewed among much of the white population. At a 1716 meeting of the Society of Friends, the group stated "it is not agreeably to Truth for friends to purchase slaves & Keep them Term of life (sic)" (Starbuck 1969 [1924]: 620). Later Elihu Coleman, a prominent Quaker, elaborated on his anti-slavery views, arguing in late-1729 that slavery made men idle, which was considered an evil state, and that keeping people as slaves was not a Christian practice (ibid: 620-621).

Furthering the island's reputation for anti-slavery and equal rights ideals are some important events from the mid-19th century. The island hosted Frederick Douglass's first public address during an antislavery meeting in 1841, harbored fugitive slave Arthur Cooper in 1850, and was one of the first places to adopt policies of integrated education in the 1840s. Activists on Nantucket laid the groundwork for many of the social change that New England, and the Northern States more generally, came to hold with pride as part of their regional identity, and one that was in seemingly stark contrast with the social and legal policies of the South with regard to enslavement and racism (Melish 1998). These accomplishments were the result of cooperation between both the Quaker and the black populations on the island, however, and did not signal the extinction of discrimination and racism on the island (Johnson 2002).

Dominant Narratives Belied: Slavery and Racism in New England.

The dominant narrative is widely responsible for our modern image of Nantucket and New England culture and it elides the role of slavery in the economy of the northeast and the presence and contributions of people of color. In reality, the economy of 18th century New England's was inextricably tied to the slave trade (Greene 1942: 68–69). A wide variety of industries, from rum distilling and shipbuilding to provisioning plantations, tied this region, and especially Rhode Island, in with the slave trade. While comparatively few slaves were brought into the Rhode Island itself, New England based merchants were deeply involved in and reliant on the slave trade to obtain sugar and molasses as they were producing rum in large quantities (Coughtry 1981: 7). In a survey of slave movements based on Rhode Island shipping logs, it is estimated that between 1709 and 1807 106,544 slaves were transported by Rhode Island-based ships (Coughtry 1981: 27–28). As Greene (1942:70) has suggested, it was the wealth of the slave trade itself that allowed for white New Englanders to develop cultural and intellectual pursuits.

On Nantucket, Africans had been brought as slaves as early as 1659 (Karttunen 2002: 69). In 1764, there were at least 50 people of African descent on the island, many of whom were slaves, although the census only labels the category as "Negros" (Nantucket Historical Association, Nantucket Massachusetts [NHA] 1764: Collection 289, Folder 1: 203). In terms of the experiences of enslaved people in New England, Piersen (1988) has argued that for men and women enslaved in rural areas life was very different than for those living in urban areas. Nantucket in the 18th-century was relatively urban, as it was the center of a thriving whaling industry; however, the number of enslaved people on the island was relatively small (Table 1.1).

In the mid-18th century, when Maria and Boston were having their children and were enslaved by William Swain, the figure was likely very small. In many other areas of New England, however, the support of the slave trade and slavery on the part of Quakers continued throughout most of the 18th century (Greene 1942: 274–275).

As would become evident in the early-19th century, white Northerners took a variety of legislative and social measures to firmly establish that people of African descent were different and unequal in the absence of the institution of slavery (Melish 1998). These measures began earlier, however, even as only relatively few free Black Americans were living in the region. For example, in the 1780s, Massachusetts required that all African Americans moving into the state provide "certificates proving their freedom and attesting to their citizenship in another state" (Litwack 1961: 70). Free African Americans had the right to vote in Massachusetts, which was not the case in all Northern States. An observer on Nantucket in 1807 that "in the month of March the qualified voters were twelve hundred and forty-six whites, and twenty-nine blacks" (Freeman 1815b:28). This is a relatively low percent of the black population, a statistic that was likely due to the high property requirements that underwrote the right to vote.

Year	Non-White Population, Excepting Indians
1764	50
1790	110
1800	230
1820	247
1840	576
1850	342
1860	126

Table 1.1. Population of Nantucket's non-white population, excepting Indians. Based on local Nantucket and federal census data.

While the historical record of Nantucket does point to some early anti-slavery milestones, these milestones were reached with great difficulty and strong anti-black sentiment co-existed alongside anti-slavery sentiment. Notions of difference and inequality between black and white were entrenched in the everyday institutions of the island. The meetings of the anti-slavery society in 1842, for example, were the target of mob violence that forced their relocation (Karttunen 2002: 99). Newspapers from the late-18th and early-19th centuries repeatedly demonstrate the widespread hostility toward the black population of the island as well as the endorsement of racial stereotypes (Saillant 2006). In a study of Nantucket newspapers in the early-19th century, John Saillant found that the papers regularly included "ridicule, insults, and oft-stated suggestions that African Americans might well immigrate to Liberia or some other faraway place" (ibid: 50). In a similar vein, an 1829 story written by the Nantucket literary women's group "The Budget Society," portrays a black man in the image of the "sambo" stereotype with caricatured speech and action (Budget Society Collection, Nantucket Historical Association, Nantucket Massachusetts 1829: Manuscript Collection 408: 50). Stories, jokes, advertisements, and reports collectively defined black residents as outside the purview of citizenship and ultimately outside the bounds of human-ness.

In many similar ways, Native American people in New England were treated as different and unequal to whites. The English regularly negotiated with Native people for ownership of land, even when notions of ownership were understood differently within Native communities. Using English court systems to impose fines and define criminal offences also put the English in a position of power that often led to punishments, fines, and servitude for Native Americans (Byers 1987: 96). In the context of the whaling industry on Nantucket, it was routine for Native people to be entangled in contracts, which led to a perpetual state of servitude. Byers (1987: 95) points out that the "use of fines and credit to create judgment debtors was widespread" in the 18th century. Fines would be astronomical or a term of service would be written into court rulings. On Nantucket, advancing credit became one means of securing a group of customers as well as debtors and further developing the debt-peonage system. Vickers (1983: 574) asserts, the debt system's "purpose was not to force the Indian to trade, for he was anxious to do that on his own accord, but to limit the competition over the fruits of his labor and thereby control their price."

James Freeman (1815a), a white Unitarian reverend, made observations of the Wampanoag people living at Mashpee, Cape Cod, which give a sense of the way that the English viewed the character and seemingly inevitable demise of the Native population on the island. These documents show that the narrative of English benevolence and natural dominance in the region is deeply rooted. Freeman failed to consider the impacts of poverty, alienation from traditional life ways, or the negative impacts of the debt-peonage system.

He characterizes the settlement of Mashpee as essentially a welfare-state, which flounders as everyone who lives there has "many peculiar privileges and advantages, in particular that those who dwell in it are sure of a living, from their labour, if they are willing to work, and from the charity of their guardians, if they are not" (Freeman 1815a: 8). The Native people are perceived by Freeman as children quite literally as he states that English missionaries and governments "for a century and a half, have watched over them, like parents over children" or "a shepherd" that is watching over them at great expense (ibid.: 11). In the same breath, Freeman argues that this plantation cannot be dispersed as they have certain rights to the land and "they are our fellow men, and they are poor men" and thus deserving of charity (ibid.:12). His essay ends with an extended lament about the efforts and expense that the English poured into the "plantation" and the lack of success they have found in making the inhabitants "good men and Christians" (ibid.: 12).

The contrast between the dominant ideas about New England history and evidence of deep-seated racism underscore the need to closely examine the experiences of African Americans in the early communities in this region. These men and women face great adversity. Constructing strong community identities based on shared values and conceptions of manhood and womanhood became one strategy for surviving and thriving in this context.

Community Building on Nantucket

The community of Newtown, which would later be called New Guinea by some, grew in the late-18th and early-19th century on the southern edge of Nantucket's downtown (Figure 1.2). By 1858, this was a well-settled area with many residences, businesses, and religious organizations associated with the community of color on the island. In the early-19th century, the neighborhood began around the corner of Pleasant, York, and Atlantic Streets (Figure 1.3). This intersection now called "Five Corners," was a central hub of activity in the community in the late-18th and 19th centuries. At this corner the African Baptist Church, known as the African Meeting House, was constructed in 1825 on York Street. Also near this intersection was the African Methodist Episcopal Church, built in 1835. On an 1821 map we also see a Dance Hall

close by (NRD 1821: Miscellaneous Records 1659–1823: 274). Shop owners such as William Boston and Absalom Boston lived right on York Street. About a half mile to the west sat the burying ground which, according to an 1807 deed, was "The Burying Ground the Belongs to the Black people or People of Colour" (Karttunen 2002: 68).

Seneca Boston, Thankful Micah, and their family were one of the first families to settle in this neighborhood and thus were in some ways pioneers. They saw the potential of this undeveloped area and bought a small, .15 acre (24 square rods) plot there. The property they bought extended from the current property boundaries west all the way to Pleasant Street. The western most parcel, however, was sold several times before being sold to the Trustees of the School Fund of the Coloured People in 1825 with the stipulation that a school be kept there in perpetuity (Nantucket Registry of Deeds, Nantucket Massachusetts [NRD] 1825: Deed Book [DB] 28: 207–208).
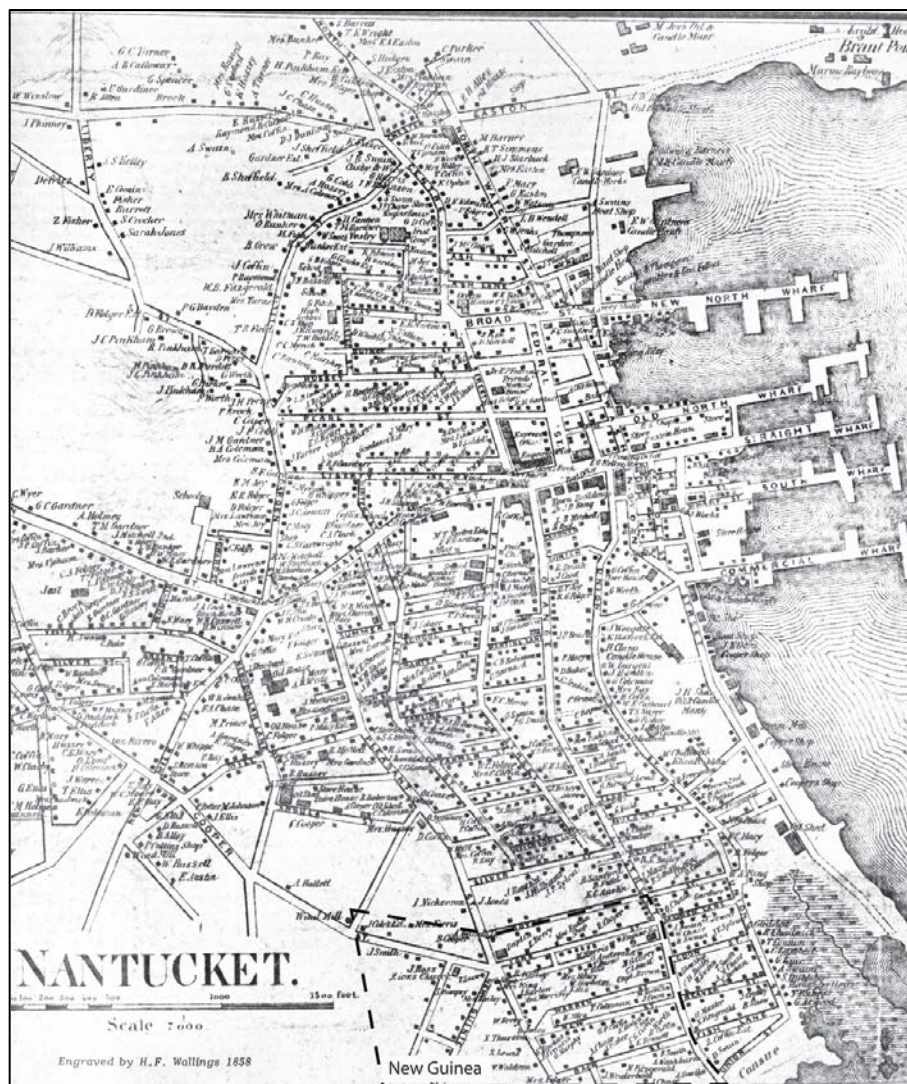
Figure 1.2. 1858 H.F. Wallings Map of Nantucket. Approximate location of Newtown/New Guinea neighborhood marked with a dashed line. *Courtesy of the Nantucket Historical Association.*
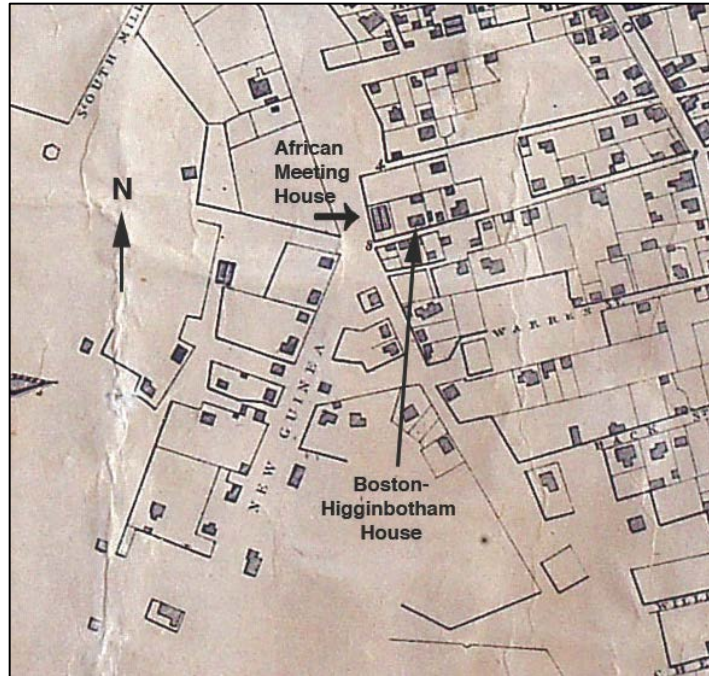
Figure 1.3. Portion of the 1834 William Coffin Jr. map of Nantucket. *Courtesy of the Nantucket Historical Association.*

In the decades after Seneca Boston bought his property, and especially in the 1790s and onward, many more people settled in the area and a community began to grow. Families grew as the prominent black families on the island intermarried and created new homesteads. Businesses grew as members of the community pursued being mariners, shop-owners, barbers, innkeepers, cordwainers, blacksmiths, domestic servants, musicians, and other occupations (Karttunen 2002: 88–89). Some of the businesses the black community was able to support were the shops of William Boston in the 1830s and Absalom Boston and his wife Mary in the 1830s and 1840s. The neighborhood grew in size as well. Historian Francis Karttunen made the observation that:

> Prior to 1850 over a hundred and fifty transactions involving land in New Guinea are recorded in the Nantucket books of deeds. Unlike the Wampanoag deeds, which nearly always mark the passing of land into the hands of the English settlers, the New Guinea deeds involve African-Nantucketer men and women buying land from white Nantucketers, circulating it among themselves, and only occasionally selling it to white buyers. (Karttunen 2002: 89)

The focus on buying land and keeping it within the community speaks to an early sense of collective identity and an association of property with independence.

Institutions grew as community members recognized the great need for a school for black children, a place of worship, and a meeting place in the neighborhood. One early meeting place was a dance hall run by John Pompey in "Newtown or New Guinea", which may be the "Negro Hall" labeled on the 1821 Map of the Town Pasture. By the end of 1823, however, the land and

the dance hall had been mortgaged several times (Karttunen 2002: 92). In 1821 the *Nantucket Inquirer* reported that a "society for worship with its own leadership" had been created by the "colored people" of Nantucket (Karttunen 2002: 94). The article also notes that the society had a room, and though we do not know where this was, meetings may have been held in the Hall seen on the 1821 map. In addition to having a communal space, however, it is likely that the men and women in this neighborhood simply gathered at each other's houses, or even outside, to socialize and organize.

Shortly after the religious society was organized, and perhaps because of the loss of Pompey's space, leaders in the neighborhood made a collective effort to establish a more permanent structure. To gain support they wrote to the Society for Propagation of the Gospel Amongst the Indians and Others, a missionary organization that funded schools to teach reading and math to Native Americans and people in need in 1822 (Phillips Library, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts [PLPEM] 1822. Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Collection [SPG], Box 1, Folder 8: 3). There had apparently been 60 children in the "Sabbath School" in the summer of 1822, which Baylies, the SPG representative for southern New England, found promising. Over the following years the Trustees of the African Society and the SPG ran a school, bought property at the corner of York and Pleasant Street, and constructed a building to house the school and serve as a church. By 1825 the first church service was held there, and the first school lessons were taught there soon after (White 2009).

In the decades following the establishment of the African Meeting House, as the school and church came to be known, the black community pursued their rights to have public education on an equal scale with the white population. For students that aged out of the elementary education offered at the AMH, this meant attending white secondary schools. Absalom Boston, who was born at the Boston-Higginbotham House and went on to be a whaling captain, innkeeper and shop owner, was at the center of this fight with his daughter Phebe Ann Boston.

In the second half of the 19th century Nantucket experienced a depression because of the movement of the whale oil industry to places like New Bedford, which had deeper harbors, and the general dwindling of whale oil as the primary illuminant, as palm oil and later kerosene became prominent (Byers 1987). Many historians point to the great fire of 1846 as the unofficial "end" of the whaling industry on Nantucket; however, ships continued to come and go in the harbor well into the 1850s (Byers 1987). The bottoming-out of whaling on Nantucket led many to seek work in destinations as far flung as San Francisco, a city that was all but born out of the gold rush that started in 1849. So many whaling ships made San Francisco their end destination that the city became home to thousands of abandoned Pacific whaling ships. During this time period, the black population on Nantucket dropped dramatically.

By 1880, the African American population had dropped to 71 persons (United States Federal Census 1880). Even with such a small group, however, a few community institutions survived and a sense of shared community and mutual obligations endured. The African Baptist Church, or African Meeting House, became the Pleasant Street Baptist Church. Although its membership dwindled, it did not shut its doors until 1910. The original black community on the island had all but left, now being replaced by people associated with the burgeoning tourism industry in the late 19th and early-20th centuries. One letter submitted to the editor of the *Inquirer and Mirror* in 1895, on the anniversary of the founding of Nantucket-Town, read: "While many names, dating not as far back as the original purchasers of our Island, are sung and commented upon by our bards, may I in plain prose…call to the front our worthy colored colony? The names of Pompey, Boston, Ross and Groves, Godfrey, Barlow and Bears, have been associated with

Nantucket from more than one entire century, they having unwittingly taken important parts in our civilization" (A.M.M. 1895).

This large and important black community was already beginning to be forgotten by some. The retelling of some of the stories of the families in this community will hopefully illuminate how vital the contributions of these families were to New England history while also showing the reality of the challenges they faced and the competing ideologies of race and gender that they were negotiating.

Case Study: Boston Family and Their Descendants

Seneca Boston had been born a slave in 1744 to parents Boston and Maria, who were enslaved by a William Swain. While William Swain was not a Quaker, the sentiment of anti-slavery on Nantucket was growing stronger, if sporadically, over the course of the 18th century. In 1751 William Swain certified that Boston was a free man who was free to conduct business as he pleased (NRD 1751: DB 5: 255). Boston's wife and family remained enslaved. In 1760 William Swain wrote a deed of manumission for the entire family, however, all but Boston, Maria, and their youngest child Boston were to be held in bondage until their 28th birthdays (NRD 1760: DB 6: 264). Those held included Seneca Boston, who in 1772 finally officially gained his freedom.

In 1774, when Seneca Boston bought a plot of land to build a house on, he was breaking new ground as one of the earliest free people of color on the island and one of the first to settle in what would become the Newtown area. He had recently gained his freedom. In 1770 he had already married Thankful Micah, who had their first son, Freeborn, also in 1770. In the 1774 deed he is listed as a weaver, a rare occupation among African Americans on Nantucket. He was also establishing a homestead in a largely unsettled area of town. While the land south and east of the windmills would by 1799 be known as a "Negro Town or Village," in 1774 very few people lived in this area and the black population was likely less than 100 (NRD 1799: DB 24: 133–142). In 1790 there had been only 76 people of color living in the Newtown area, and a total of 110 on the island (Karttunen 2005: 74).

Seneca and Thankful's house, now known as the Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham House (Figure 1.4), was built sometime between 1774 and 1802. In 1802 Seneca sold the property to his son Freeborn for $324 dollars. At that time the household was composed of 6 people, and the land had not only the house, but a "shop, fences, and out Houses" (NRD 1802: DB 17: 18). It is likely the house was built a good deal earlier than this as Seneca and Thankful's household had six people in it in 1800 (Karttunen 2002:87; NHA 1800: Coll. 122, Box 1, Folder 2.25 and 2.50).

Thankful Micah was a Wampanoag woman, likely from Martha's Vineyard or Cape Cod. Although the Wampanoag population on Nantucket when she married Seneca was relatively low — less than 150 people— she may have had family on the island. The draw of family may have also contributed to the choice of land plot as Seneca and Thankful's home stood between the English and Wampanoag settlements on the island.

Seneca Boston and Thankful Micah raised six children at their York Street house. Freeborn (b.1770), Reuben (b. 1771), Thomas (b. 1775), Hannah (b. 1778), Absalom (b. 1785), and Joseph (b. 1789) would live at the house for at least their early childhoods. At least one child, Absalom, would work in a white household as a young boy. Seneca's brothers and sisters, children, and their descendants would become important individuals in Nantucket's black community — working as mariners, laborers, leatherworkers and traders, owning shops and

boarding houses, building homes, petitioning for equal public education, and building institutions like churches (Kaldenbach-Montemayor 2006).

Figure 1.4. 1890s Image of the African Meeting House with Boston-Higginbotham House in the background. *Courtesy of the Nantucket Historical Association.*

The house became a central part of the family and was passed down for several generations (Figure 1.5). The importance of continuity of ownership and the interdependence of family is evident in deed records and wills associated with the Boston family from the early-19th century. In Seneca Boston's will, he put a great deal of effort into detailing how he wanted his wife Thankful taken care of and how his estate should be split among his five sons (Nantucket Probate Court, Nantucket Massachusetts [NPC] 1809: Probate Book [PB] 5: 214–215, 274). His first son, Freeborn, was to live in the house and take care of his mother for the rest of her life, but he died prematurely, later in 1809. An 1812 deed that sectioned off some of the land and house for Freeborn's widow, Mary Boston Douglass (remarried), but stipulated that the house would stay within the family and only "her Children that the said Mary had by Freeborn Boston" would inherit the property (NPC 1812: PB 22: 83).

Mary likely took care of Thankful after Freeborn's death, and in 1810 she was the head of an eight-person household according to a local census (Karttunen 2002: 87; NHA 1810: Collection 96, folder 25). Only a few years later, in early March of 1812, the property is split up among Seneca's heirs and Thankful, presumably, had died. Mary Boston, Michael Douglass, and Mary's Children lived in the house for the next few decades, as the Newtown community grew up around them. Her daughter Charlotte married Charles L. Groves in 1827 and the couple purchased the property from Mary in 1828. According to an 1830 local census, however, Mary and Michael were still living there as well (NHA 1830: Collection 35, Book 15: 221-230).

Mary Boston Douglass passed away at age 66 in 1834 and the property was split up among the three children she had had by Freeborn: William (b.1804), Eliza (b.1805), and Charlotte (b.1809). The home is described in the deed in detail, allotting to each household certain rooms and giving all parties access to a nine-foot "road or Passway left at the Westward of said Dwelling House" and the well and pump "in front and rear" (NRD 1836: DB 35: 423).

11

The household saw dramatic changes in the second half of the 19th century. San Francisco drew many black maritime workers and soon had a substantial black community (Daniels 1980). These fortunes drew at least a few Nantucketers, including Lewis Berry, the husband of Mary and Freeborn's daughter Eliza. Lewis left Nantucket for San Francisco sometimes between 1850 and 1860 [US Federal Census 1850; US Federal Census 1860; John G. Waite Associates Architects (JGWAA) 2005: 13, 35].
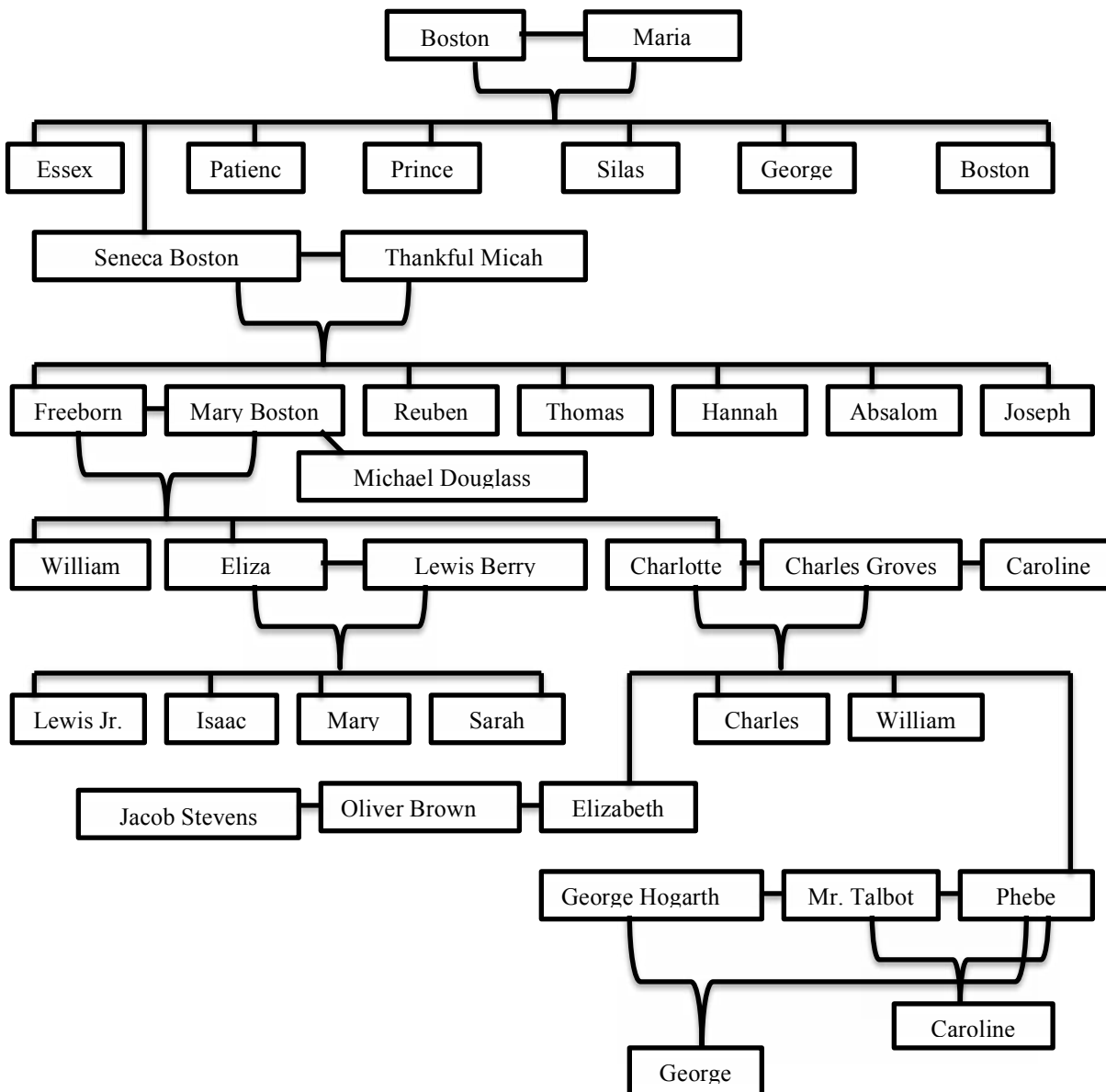
Figure 1.5. Abridged Boston Family Tree. Shows only those families that occupied the Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham House 1774-1919.

Lewis settled in San Francisco and became an active member of the growing African American community there. Lewis was a whitewasher and accumulated a good deal of wealth during his time there, before his tragic death at the hands of his son Isaac. Lewis had become a sexton for the AME Zion Church in San Francisco and was on the Board of Trustees in the 1860s and 1870s.

In addition to Lewis moving to San Francisco, mid-century changes in the family also came with illness when on April 4th 1851 Charlotte Groves (neé Boston) died. Her husband Charles left Nantucket between 1851 and 1855 for Brooklyn, New York. He had roots in Brooklyn and likely brought two of his children Charles Jr. (b. 1841) and Phebe (b. 1844) there when he left the island. He died in 1853 and at this time she may have moved away. Charles Sr. appears in Brooklyn city directories in 1855 and 1856. In 1855 he is listed as a "ferryman" and in 1856 he is listed as a "seaman" and is living at the same address with a Caroline Groves, and is presumably remarried (Smith's Brooklyn Directory, 1855-56: 88; Smith's Brooklyn Directory 1856-57. P.139) In June of 1857, the *Brooklyn Eagle* reported that trial of John Smith, who had murdered Charles L. Groves, the "cook of the brig General Pierce" on February 10th of that year (*Brooklyn Eagle* June 1 1857).

Eliza Berry (nee Boston), Lewis Berry's wife, lived out her life on Nantucket. Most of this time was likely spent alone, or in the employ of another family. Eliza worked as a domestic for at least part of her time on Nantucket. She is listed as living in the Starr Household in 1870. In 1883, she died in her home, under the care of her niece Elizabeth Stevens.

Elizabeth Stevens had by 1883 been marries twice, widowed, and had no children. She lived in Brooklyn for much of her adult life, until she was called back to Nantucket to care for her aging Aunt Eliza. Sometime after Eliza died, Elizabeth decided to stay on the island permanently and died there in 1915. It may have been that Elizabeth decided to live on the island as she herself was a widow, without children, and saw a comfortable economic opportunity in Nantucket (JGWAA 2005: 15). Elizabeth was one of the parishioners at the Pleasant Street Baptist Church and was one of the signers of the deed transfer when the Baptist Church's building was sold (NDR Book 95, p. 94).

Elizabeth Stevens sold her property on Nantucket in 1914 to her sister Phebe's children, Caroline B. Talbot and George Groves Hogarth. The property was sold for the nominal fee of "one dollar and other valuable considerations." (JGWAA 2005: 15). In 1915, Elizabeth died. There is no evidence that either Caroline or George lived at the property. In fact, George died a few years later on June 16th 1919, during WWI and was buried at Arlington cemetery in Washington DC. It was only a few months later that his stepmother, Mary Hogarth, and his stepsister Caroline B. Talbot would sell the Nantucket property to Edward H. Whelden of Nantucket (JGWAA 2005: 16). Whelden may have never lived there either and less than a year later Florence Higginbotham bought the property. In 2001, the Museum of African American History in Boston purchased the property from Angeleen Campra, the wife of Florence Higginbotham's late son. The house retained much of its original fabric and character today (Figure 1.6)

Figure 1.6. Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham House, 2010.

This introduction of the Boston-Micah family and their descendants hints at some of the relationships that laid the foundation of the 19th-century community of color on Nantucket. It is because this family was so central to the community that an historical archaeology of their everyday lives can show us the ways that the experiences of individuals and families articulate with the needs of a community. Through an analysis of the life-histories of several of the central occupants of the house, I hope to show the ways that their actions and material worlds were part of contemporary discourse on citizenship rights, racial inequality, and gender inequality. The contributions of individuals to these conversations helps to contextualize the popular image of New England's regional identity by showing the ways that people of color were vital to the political and economic successes this region experienced in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Looking to the everyday consumer choices, moments of activism, family struggles in communities of color in the 18th and 19th century shines a light on the ways individuals confronted racist models of personhood and citizenship that intended to exclude people of color. The legacy of a white, liberal, middle-class regional identity in New England remains and the microhistories presented here will shed light on the historicity of racial and gender constructs in the present.

Standpoint and research questions

It has now been twenty years since Ruth Frankenberg wrote "white people *and* people of color live racially structured lives" (1993: 1) in her ground-breaking sociological study *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness*. Still, there is little recognition of the persistence, durability, and scale of institutionalized racism. Most recently the election and

re-election of President Barack Obama has been seen by some as a sign of a post-racial America. Historians and cultural critics have cautioned against this even as they recognize that his election represents, a positive shift in American political life (Coates 2012; Martin 2011). Indeed, racial discrimination and broad institutional racism remain and white Americans are complicit in their perpetuation. Racial inequality, which "racial realists" might ascribe to individual racism, on the part of whites, or individual failures, on the part of blacks, is indeed a structural issue that shapes everyday experiences for all Americans (Brown et al. 2003; Frankenberg 1993).

Feminist theory provides a useful framework for critiquing structures of inequality in the present as well as dominant historical narratives that favor white, middle-class historical actors. Feminist theory demands not only that researchers make their political standpoints clear, but also that each researcher recognizes that no account of the world can be "objective." Feminist theorists ask researchers to acknowledge their social location as the starting place for building their "situated knowledge" (Harraway 1988). Research is not a neutral process, as each person's standpoint represents a political position, based on one's perspective, history, and goals.

As a middle-class, white woman, recognizing the privilege attached to my own subject position is not simple. Both middle-class status and whiteness are normative and privileged positions within American society. Positions of power such as whiteness define themselves based on what they are not. This situation makes whiteness difficult to pin down as it is a category that seems "empty." Toni Morrison (1992:59) writes that "whiteness, alone, is mute, meaningless, unfathomable, pointless, frozen, veiled, curtained, dreaded, senseless, implacable." Blackness, as the constitutive outside of whiteness, becomes the marked category.

As my perspective is partial and from a privileged position, in many ways, I will never "get it" (Thompson 2001:xviii). Still, working to recognize the mechanisms of white privilege is a project, not an endpoint. If I hope to be part of the solution rather than paralyzed by the problem, I have to believe that progress can be made by questioning the status quo and rejecting the meaning systems that privilege whiteness. If white supremacy is the problem, then white people need to be involved in changing it. One of the approaches we can take to dismantling gender and racial privileges is to research their structure and history and demystify their seemingly natural and inevitable qualities.

A feminist perspective shapes the questions I bring to the history and archaeology of the community of color in the Newtown neighborhood of Nantucket. One of the projects of feminism is to critique dominant narratives and historical myths, such as those associated with New England's myth of widespread 19th century equality and abolitionism. Dominant historical narratives of activism and freedom are the cultural fabric of this region and they obfuscate other experiences and interpretations of the past.

Naturalized notions of racial and gender differences underwrite these dominant historical narratives of the region. Inspired by black feminist theorists (Collins 2000; hooks 1990; White 2001) and archaeologists (Agbe-Davies 2007; Battle-Baptiste 2011; Franklin 1997, 2001; Wilkie 2004), I see one goal of a feminist perspective as asking questions which deconstruct dominant portrayals of gender and race in the American past as contributing to broader myths. In developing my standpoint as a white woman, I endeavor to understand some aspects of the history of racism and sexism in the hopes of creating anti-racist narratives of the past. My perspective has been structured by my personal experience and my education, which has allowed me to recognize gender inequality in my everyday experiences and racial inequality to some degree as I work to recognize white privilege. This research involves breaking down dominant ideologies associated with womanhood and manhood, asking how both positive and negative

stereotypes become racialized, and recognizing that everyone experiences these ideologies in different ways based on their own life course.

In this dissertation I will attempt to show that creating purposeful communities identities was one means people of color in 18th and 19th century New England combatted racism and sexism, and in the 19th century these community identities were based on common values and gender ideals which challenged dominant gender ideologies that were exclusionary toward people of color. While I imagine the subjectivities of women in this context, I cannot completely decenter myself. As a researcher hoping to denaturalize notions of race, class, and gender, I can only use those aspects of my experience with respect to gender and race that have heightened my awareness of privilege and the multiple forms it can take on. As a feminist scholar, I firmly believe that there are many ways to understand the past, and the stories of the Bostons, the Berrys, and the Groves told here represent just one way these lives may have played out.

Overview of Chapters.

This dissertation is organized based on the research process that drove the Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham House Project. The early chapters emphasize the process of creating an historical context and undertaking the archaeological excavation itself, while the later chapters delve into the interpretation of the archaeological materials and the potential of archaeology in the future interpretive programs at the Museum of African American History on Nantucket.

Chapter 2 addresses the place of this research within anthropological archaeology. I discuss central themes in the development of African Diaspora archaeology and outline how these themes influence my theoretical approach to interpreting the historical and archaeological records at the Boston-Higginbotham House. I argue that we do not need to choose between making interpretations about collective identities that were mobilized around cultural tradition and heritage versus racial identity and common experiences of oppression. Feminist theories, including theories of performativity and black feminist theory, shape the ways I think about these experiences of identity. Performance theory forms a framework for talking about the ways that identities can be stable and enduring while also being contextual and malleable.

Chapter 3 develops the historical context for understanding the intersection of race and gender ideologies in northern communities in the late-18th and 19th centuries. This chapter discusses general trends in early communities during this time period and shows how citizenship, race, and gender were intertwined in various ways. This chapter traces the ways that dominant white models of womanhood and manhood excluded the possibility of black people embodying these norms. Black communities were constructing gender ideals in the early-19th to serve their goals of creating a collective community identity based on the values of respectability and racial uplift. I focus specifically on media, such as early-19th century black newspapers, to trace how certain values and personal characteristics became foundational to black gender ideals.

Chapter 4 discusses in detail the process of archaeological field and laboratory research undertaken for the Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham House Project. Although the excavations took place over the course of five weeks in the summer of 2008, preliminary research was undertaken beforehand and a variety of laboratory analyses were conducted afterward. I describe the ways that the project was geared toward the needs and research interests of the Museum of African American History, including making the assemblage navigable with a photo archive of many of the finds. After a description of the field methods, the depositional sequence at the site, and the lab methods, I describe the general patterns seen in the archaeological assemblage.

Chapter 5 is the first of two interpretive chapters, focused on the work lives of Seneca Boston and Thankful Micah at the Boston-Higginbotham House, from the late-18th – early-19th centuries. As described above, these individuals were in some senses pioneers, seizing their civil rights to marry and purchase land, taking on a sparsely populated area of the island, and starting a family which came to play a foundational role in the building of the island's community of color. While there are no historical records that speak to a sense of collective identity among the African American and Native American residents on the island at this time, the actions of Seneca Boston and Thankful Micah speak to the basic values of equality and citizenship in their everyday lives, values which became the basis for later notions of black community identity in the 19th century.

Chapter 6 represents an interpretation of the developments in the Boston family and in the community of color on Nantucket in the 19th century. This chapter undertakes a microhistory of the lives of several of the women who once lived at the house, in order to explore how they may have embodied or refigured dominant gender ideals as constructed in 19th century black media. The women focused on here include Mary Boston Douglass, Eliza (Boston) Berry, Phebe (Boston) Talbot Hogarth and Elizabeth (Groves) Brown Stevens, all of whom lived at the house for significant periods of time and were integral to the building of the family and the continuation of the family on the island. These women worked toward the survival of their families and their material record speaks at once to the embrace of black womanhood ideals and interpretations of these ideals based on real life circumstances. This chapter also considers the ways that the men at the Boston-Higginbotham House may have experienced or interpreted 19th-century notions of black manhood. The lives of Absalom Boston and Lewis Berry are analyzed with respect to how their choices speak to an engagement with middle-class black community gender ideals that emphasized patriarchy in the home and the community.

Chapter 7 summarizes the research undertaken in this dissertation, reflects on the research process and collaborative archaeology in practice, and makes some suggestions about the ways that the archaeological collection fits into the heritage program at the Museum of African American History, Nantucket. The Museum already undertakes programs that highlight the ways that heritage are both represented in objects and is an active process of engaging with the past. The materiality of the archaeological finds from this project and the personal narratives that they are a part of have the potential to resonate with a variety of visitors. By highlighting the everyday lives of past African American men and women and showing both the quotidian and activist dimensions of their everyday lives, these artifacts may also help to accomplish the wider goal of encouraging visitors to reevaluate the well-known histories of New England's past and reconsider the importance of African Americans in the building of New England culture and history.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Context for an Historical Archaeology of Race and Gender in the African Diaspora

The families that once lived at the Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham House, lived within a complex cultural context where racial, gender, age, class and cultural norms shaped the social expectations, challenges, and opportunities available in their everyday lives. As individuals living at the house navigated their racial, gender, and class subject positions, they were at once creating unique personal life histories and shared collective histories of family and community. Importantly, it was repeated everyday routines and choices, as well as those moments that marked important turning points in life, that underwrote how individuals experienced racial and gender ideologies and a sense of collective community identity.

The material and documentary traces of everyday practices are the substance of historical archaeology. The everyday lives of past people in the African Diaspora, as explored through archaeology and historical analysis, has been a subject of research for several decades. The interpretive frameworks that have dominated the subdiscipline have addressed questions of identity, belonging, and social collectivity in two basic ways. On the one hand, the importance of cultural heritage and modes of culture change have been a central focus. On the other, the importance of racial ideologies, the mechanisms of racial inequality, and the politics of identity have become vital to our understanding of the past. The challenge is to account for the diversity and complexity of cultural tradition and cultural interaction, while also recognizing how common experiences of racism contributed to uniting people, without being deterministic. One of our tasks as African Diaspora archaeologists is to find a middle ground. Such a space might lend attention to the ways that a sense of belonging is related to both our perception of cultural and sanguinal 'roots' *and* driven by the recognition of how collective identities are involved in the negotiation of power relations. It is not useful to suggest that cultural interactions and change can progress without being influenced by power inequalities nor that these inequalities will completely determine the form of cultural traditions.

African Diaspora theory underscores the dual nature of identity — drawing attention to the variability of experiences of colonialism by people of African descent in different parts of the world while also showing that there are commonalities in these experiences. Black feminist theory, as one subset of African Diaspora Theory, addresses some of the complexities of identification in African Diaspora contexts. These theorists focus at once on the analysis of intersectional identities, especially race and gender identities, while also calling for a critical analysis of how these identities are situated within the political struggles of the past and present. Archaeological research at the Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham house draws on the insights of some black feminist theorists in the interpretations of the household activities, consumer choices, and community involvement of the men and women that once lived at the house. The dominant discourses on gender, race, and class are recast in light of the unique subjectivities of the individuals at the house in the hope of shedding light on alternative meanings for artifacts and practices, which destabilize the dominant, white, middle-class narratives of Nantucket and New England history.

The analysis of experiences of identity for the household occupants is also undertaken from the theoretical perspective of performance theory. The Bostons and their descendants lived in this house in a complicated social and cultural context of 18th- and 19th-century Nantucket

when discourses on racial difference and gender ideals were an undercurrent in everyday life. In order to address the experiences of these individuals, the present research project employs the concept of performativity and embodied subjectivity, rather than assuming that their lives simply mirrored dominant discourse.

A focus on performance shifts the conversation away from discourse alone, toward the material world. Making interpretations with performance and materiality in mind requires a critical look at how social ideals may have been referenced in everyday gesture, personal presentation, and even household goods. At the same time, this framework provides space for the realities of everyday life, where the dominant narratives of social identity may have been challenged, revised or rejected by individuals. These alternate experiences of social ideals are not only rooted in the agency of individuals, but in the historical specificity of personal narratives. Birth, death, marriage, economic collapse, occupational opportunities, and even weather emergencies have enormous impact on the trajectory and meaning of everyday life. The particularities must be taken into account in interpretations, while being careful to avoid too far of a shift toward historical particularism. A theoretical framework that focuses on embodied subjectivity allows the researcher to consider both the dominant discourse about past ideals and the agency of individuals to challenge these norms. An examination of the micro-scale, such as in the case of the life histories of individuals at the Boston-Higginbotham house, enables us to also consider the impact of life events on the experiences of individuals between discourse and agency.

The attention to the nuances and complexities of individual lives forms the framework for the interpretive chapters of this dissertation (Chapters 5 and 6). The personal narratives that are generated by this approach are also part of the effort to make research on everyday African American women and men more accessible to modern audiences. These narratives offer alternate readings of Nantucket, and New England, history while also connecting these histories with specific lives and material objects.

The utility of historical archaeology of the African American past might be tested by our ability to make interpretations about past experiences of identity and belonging, trace how these experiences were embedded in material objects and landscapes, and relate these narratives of past lives to modern day social issues and the ways we might solve them. This chapter will outline the theoretical orientation of this dissertation as it relates to these challenges. After first tracing the place of this research within African Diaspora archaeology, the theoretical framework of this dissertation is detailed, including the influence of black feminist theory, theories of performativity, and feminist theory on the research questions and interpretive perspectives.

The Intersections of Archaeology and African Diaspora Research

Early Patterns

The development of African diaspora archaeology in North America has intersected with African diaspora theory in important ways since early archaeological research on African America began in the 1940s (Bullen and Bullen 1945). Historical archaeologists have actively sought out African Diaspora theory in the form of culture change theories developed in sociology and cultural anthropology as well as critical race theory and black feminist theory as developed in African American Studies. African diaspora archaeology has developed, and continues to develop, along a variety of trajectories with an active engagement with African diaspora theory. Researchers such as Ogundiran and Falola (2007), Leone and Franklin (2005), Franklin and McKee (2004), Singleton (1999), and Orser (1998) offer useful reviews of the history of the

subdiscipline.

The research questions brought to African diaspora archaeology are closely related to the social, political, and historical context of the research itself. Early developments in the field progressed according to a "moral mission" for archaeology to unearth the stories of supposedly "voiceless" past actors, including African Americans but also other minorities, women, children, and the lower classes (Singleton 1999: 1). The shape of early African Diaspora archaeology, or as it was circumscribed at the time, African American archaeology, was born both as a result of interest in marginalized pasts sparked by the civil rights movement (Singleton 1999: 1) and by the popularity of social change theories of researchers such as Melville Herskovits (1937, 1958) and E. Franklin Frazier (1939) (Orser 1998: 66; Ogundiran and Falola 2007: 17; Singleton 1986:8). Archaeologists sought evidence for cultural continuities between Africa and New World contexts, termed "Africanisms," in these early attempts to unpack experiences of collective identity in past African American contexts.

Since these early beginnings, however, African Diaspora archaeology has addressed questions of identity in a variety of ways, especially when taking into account the complex social relations that underpin the processes of cultural interaction and change in New World contexts (Singleton 1999:2). Research on culture change and continuities continues in the form of creolization studies (Dawdy 2000; Deagan and Cruxent 1993; Delle 2000; Groover 2000; Trouillot 2002; Wilkie 2000). At the same time, other topics such as class differences (Wall et al. 2008), the dynamics of racial ideology and identification (Franklin 2001a; Mullins 1999), and the role of gender in shaping past African American identities (Battle-Baptiste 2011; Teague and Davidson 2011) have become important themes.

Current Discourse on Questions that Count in African Diaspora Archaeology

Researchers interested in African cultural heritage and creolization have, in recent years, begun to contextualize their interpretations within processes of racialization and discrimination that characterized the social environment for both enslaved and free (Chan 2007; Edwards-Ingram 2001; Franklin 2001; Orser 2001; Wilkie 2000, 2003). Whether we have been successful in our attempts to address both "culture" and "race" at once remains a debate within the discipline (see Armstrong 2008; Bell 2008; Brandon 2008; Dawdy 2008; Mullins 2008a, 2008b; Wilkie and Bartoy 2000). Agbe-Davies (2007) suggests that cultural heritage and change research frameworks are not problematic insofar as they *also* address the institution of slavery and oppression that African Americans confronted every day. The debate continues as each researcher considers the ways cultural tradition and/or common racial experience shape consumer choices, social goals, family structures, and other elements of everyday life.

Wilkie (2003) employs these approaches in her analysis of the life of Lucrecia Perryman, an African American midwife, who lived in post-emancipation Mobile, Alabama. For example, the types of pharmaceuticals and food-medicines Lucrecia chose to purchase could be interpreted as both related to an African American cultural sensibility and a desire to embody normative middle-class modes of medicinal practice, such as scientific mothering. Thus, these objects could have been active parts both of Lucrecia's negotiation of cultural tradition and combatting of negative racial stereotypes. In addition to this, the decision to pursue midwifery itself was a means for Perryman to pursue a traditional occupation while also removing herself from a racist employment field that relegated most black women to domestic service for whites.

Maria Franklin has put race and identification at the forefront of her analysis while also exploring the ways cultural contribute to these processes (2001a). She suggests that when making interpretations of past identities, "self-ascribed identities be foregrounded" by

researchers and even where racial identities are recognized "alternative subject positions were undoubtedly crucial in negotiating the cultural and social terrain encountered during their lifetimes (Franklin 2001a: 89, 90). Her analysis of Southern foodways demonstrates the development of a culinary tradition that had roots in Africa, but had been transformed in the context of North American enslavement. Further, she demonstrates that these cultural traditions are racialized, "strategically essentialized," in the service of creating a united black identity (Franklin 2001a: 105).

Despite the strides that have been made toward weaving together research on cultural traditions with analyses of race and power relations, some researchers continue to draw sharp dichotomies and call for archaeologists to step away from locally-focused analyses of African American cultural identity. Mullins (2008a, 2008b) argues for the use of African diaspora studies theory that focuses on activism in the present. He suggests that a diasporic analysis must take a position in "antiracial discourses" rather than "negotiating between African anti-essentialism and the evidence for African cultural persistence" (Mullins 2008a:104). While he concedes that there is a place for "some claims to African heritage," these are secondary to the powers of racialization in structuring everyday life (Mullins 2008a:105). The discipline should welcome his call for archaeologists to actively dismantle stereotypes in order to create a "vindicationist archaeology," which creates a space for archaeologists to contribute to present-day discourses on race and difference. Whether this entails eschewing the study of cultural traditions, however, is debatable.

Armstrong (2008) supports Mullin's (2008a) call to active participation in modern discourses on race but has argued that an approach that focuses on defining a "normative concept of a single diasporan identity" is problematic. Broad narratives of racialization and the creation of difference in North America have room for more nuanced understanding of racial identities. He suggests that too much attention to global processes risks minimizing the importance of the local, overlooking the diversity inherent in the Diaspora, and excluding questions about the past that may legitimately have an important bearing on the present (Armstrong 2008: 123). He does not think that we need to choose between the diversity inherent in the notion of Diaspora and the concept of "collective roots," which has relevance for the experience of our social worlds today (Armstrong 2008: 123-124).

While the sub-discipline of African Diaspora archaeology began as a search for cultural roots and for omitted narratives of African American pasts, the implications of these original questions have had a lasting impact on present-day practice. Research questions continue to be posed that look for cultural connections with African practices in the creation of syncretism in cultural forms, creative innovations, and the repurposing of objects. A search for "origins" has now been stereotyped as a search for essentialized cultural narratives, particularistic histories of the local, and analyses that cannot connect small scale, everyday practices with the broad social processes that create and reproduce inequality. Those African diaspora archaeologies that foreground race and theories of how racial ideologies oppress some and empower others have also been stereotyped. These archaeologies are seen as starting from dominant racial ideologies and assuming that everyone thinks and acts the same way in response to them, depriving past subjects of agency, and denying the importance of their personal and cultural histories in their worldview. Recasting these sharp dichotomies between archaeologies of ethnicity or culture and archaeologies or race seems counterproductive.

Finding a Middle Ground

The struggle is to find a middle ground between research that only addresses group-defined ideas about belonging (ethnicity and cultural heritage), the struggles of these groups to mobilize this sense of belonging to combat oppressive social forces (race and social action) (Franklin and McKee 2004), while also relating these experiences to present-day social conditions. If we understand identification as a process that is situated in specific social and historical contexts, cultural identity and collective instrumental identities are not mutually exclusive. Attention to these historical contexts and how they relate to the present will further demonstrate how the process of identification in the past is relevant for discussions of difference, conflict, belonging, and collective achievement in the present.

Archaeology at the Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham House represents a research project that tries to address multiple ways that people in the Nantucket community of color created and experienced collective identities. Through an analysis of the archaeological and historical data, this project looks for evidence for ways cultural traditions may have been maintained and passed down in the face of racial discrimination and ideologies of difference that dominated the island's culture. At the same time, this project seeks to find ways that these communities may have been uniting around racial pride, civic goals, religious beliefs, political orientations, or class status as part of their experiences of identity. In many cases, these identities became "instrumental" in that they were first and foremost oriented toward accomplishing a goal (Jones 1997).

On Nantucket we see the creation of collective identities most clearly in the efforts of people of color to build a school in the early-19th century and in the later 19th century, demanding the right to enroll in public schools. The present project, looks also to the actions of everyday individuals in the 18th- and 19th-century Nantucket who may have contributed to a sense of community through actions that prioritized values promoted in black media outlets. The actions of individuals are seen as referencing collective ideas of appropriate behavior, while also reinforcing and revising these ideals over time.

The following section will discuss how theories of performance, embodied subjectivity, and intersectionality form a framework for interpretation in this dissertation. Performance theory provides a way to think about how identity can be at once stable and uniting, while also having the potential to be flexible and variable. The concept of embodied subjectivity provides a way to understand how the experience of identity is related to both discourse on identity (standards of femininity and masculinity for example) and the material realities of everyday life (physical bodies, changing roles over one's life course, and often-unpredictable life events). Black feminist theory creates a space for thinking about how to relate complex notions of identity, where several identities intersect to shape experience, with the social and political issues that were relevant in the past or are relevant in the present.

Feminist Theories of Performativity and Embodiment

Feminist theory and performance theory offer several modes for understanding the ways that identity can at once be a stable social identity, as well as instrumental and constantly changing. Scholars such as Moore (1994), Butler (1990, 1993), and Davis (1983) have helped to dismantle notions of a normative idea of "woman" and in turn destabilize the concept of durable, prediscursive identities. Black feminist theorists such as Collins (2000), hooks (1992), and White (2001) have encouraged researchers to confront the intersection of "multiple oppressions" rather than assuming a normative, middle-class, white female experience. All of these researchers

critique dominant narratives of history and contemporary social issues and challenge researchers to reflect on their research standpoint and the array of blind spots they bring to their work.

<u>Theories of Performativity</u>

Performance theory creates an interpretive framework for meeting the demands made by feminist scholars that we consider identity as historically specific, socially situated, and experienced at the intersection of a number of subject positions. The concepts of performativity, citational precedents, and embodied subjectivity represent a theoretical framework that brings together discourse on behavioral ideals, the actions of individuals, and the material world. As explicitly engaged with the material world, this type of approach is well-suited for archaeological analyses. I have reviewed in detail the place of embodied subjectivity and performance theory within the discipline of archaeology and will review it only briefly here (see Bulger and Joyce 2012).

The research of Butler (1990, 1993), Moore (1994), and Fausto-Sterling (2000) have been particularly instrumental in demonstrating the unstable nature of identities such as "woman" and "man," which are often naturalized as simple matters of binary biological difference. Social categories such as sex and gender (and by extension, race, class, age, etc.) are created through the regulatory power of discourse and the material world. They are "performatives" which Butler (1993: 107) defines as something which "[functions] to produce that which it declares." Gender is performative because it produces an effect of a core, static, stable center through the behaviors, speech acts, and gestures that reference it (Butler 1990: 174). The announcement that "It's a girl!" reproduces the idea that there is a stable identity of "girl" that one can "be." These identities are reproduced through everyday practice.

One of the implications of this critical look at identity and biology is that we need to ask, for all aspects of identity—sex, gender, race, class, age, etc.: How can these identities appear stable while being underwritten by variability and the need to be reiterated? To answer this, researchers need to take a close look at discourse and the material realities of specific subject positions that past actors were dealing with. Discourse — the ways that people defined normative ideas of certain types of identity — sets the precedents for behavior which were referenced in everyday choices. How to dress, what to buy, and where to go are not simply decisions rooted in one's own personal agenda, but in the expectations and history of the community in which one lives. Butler (1993: 225) uses the term of "citational precedent" to underline how it is the action of referring to (citing) a disciplinary norm (precedent) that reinforces the appearance that that norm is stable and gives it continued relevance.

For archaeologists, imagining past subjects citing social "laws" or everyday precedents by repeating these in action has potential material implications. Identities are not simply created through discourse. The elements of dress chosen, the gestures used, the appearance of one's house and yard, are material means of communication with others. It is in these intersubjective exchanges that norms are reinforced and, in some cases, revised. Public displays may leave material traces in the form of personal adornment objects or household objects used in semi-public contexts. For example, those knick-knacks, decorations, and tea-wares used in a parlor would have been used in the performance of social identities during tea rituals or other social gatherings. This objects represent material traces of the ways that people navigated discourse on belonging and social grouping; part of the apparatus through which subjectivities are reiterated and partially stabilized over time. Embodied action, practices which involve the physicality of the body to create their meaning, is an important part of this. The ways that one stabilizes a sense

of identity through embodied action and the material world, referencing social norms and ideals with these practices, might be understood as "embodied subjectivity."

Archaeological approaches to embodied subjectivity seek to detect patterned traces of behaviors that referenced discourses on race, gender, and class. Fisher and Loren (2003) argue that personal adornment and body modification are material traces that can shed light on past embodied experiences of subject positions. Their interpretations lend attention to both discourse and materiality when they suggested that "bodily praxis is situated in a discourse of appropriate bodily action and bodily experience [and] is given meaning through that discourse" (Fisher and Loren 2003: 227–228). They have shown that through practices of dress, individuals literally embodied femininity, maturity, status, and other modes of personhood. Through embodied performance, a temporary stabilization of identity is made possible, and through repeated performances, the appearance of a stable identity was created.

This type of attention to identity, materiality, and performance has been incorporated into a number of research projects in historical archaeology. Goodwin (1999) pays special attention to the material and behavioral aspects of manners as they related to the negotiation of identity and social position for merchants in 17th- and 18th-century New England. Goodwin argues that courtesy literature defined social precedents for polite behaviors in ways that allowed for greater access to respectability and membership in a middle class (Goodwin 1999: 44). Consuming material goods with the attributes of luxury, novelty, and patina enabled individuals to identify themselves as respectable individuals. While her analysis focuses primarily on clothing, ceramics, architecture, and the ways that these are discussed in contemporary courtesy literature, her analysis also involves a close look at the way the body is used in the process of taking on new identities. Particularly in her discussion of luxury, Goodwin shows how dress, props, graceful movements, and control of the body were essential for signaling one's social worth (1999: 113–118).

In an analysis of personal adornment objects in colonial Louisiana, Loren (2001, 2003) describes how discourses on dress articulated in nuanced ways with lived experience as individuals negotiated political identities. Clothing artifacts, such as buttons, found at two domestic sites conformed to expected patterns based on ethnohistoric illustrations and sumptuary laws (Loren 2003). The archaeological evidence for beads, tinklers, guns, and knives suggests that decorations hung on or attached to articles of clothing enabled a great deal of style- mixing, outside the sumptuary laws. Loren argues that this mixing of clothing styles was evidence that "individuals within different categories were able to negotiate imposed differences visually to constitute political identities" (Loren 2003: 236). Loren found similar patterns in her survey of research on personal adornment objects in North America (Loren 2010) where she argued that artifact patterns from a variety of colonial contexts demonstrate creative reuse and repurposing of objects across racial and class lines according to the types of social identities that individuals were interested in creating. Adornment practices were venues where discourse on the body was embraced, rejected, and rearranged through lived experience.

Personal adornment artifacts are also at the center of historical analyses of embodiment at 18th-century domestic sites in New England (Beaudry 2006; White 2005, 2008). Analyzing an historic 18th-century homestead in Massachusetts, White (2008:17–18) suggests that personal adornment artifacts were involved in the identification of their wearers with particular groups, while simultaneously distinguishing them as distinct from other groups. Citing Butler's emphasis on the performativity of gender, and by extension other aspects of identity, White suggests that wearers intentionally inscribed their bodies in a process that communicated their perceptions of

themselves while also reflecting their awareness of the perceptions of others (White 2008: 18-19). Buttons, buckles, beads, cosmetic spoons, and brooches were involved in the articulation of femininity and masculinity, class, and degrees of maturity (White 2008: 33).

Research at the Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham House extends an embodied subjectivity approach beyond the analysis of personal adornment to the analysis of the material traces of a multitude of practices involved in discourses on race, class, and gender in 18th- and 19th-century New England. The practices within the domestic space of 27 York Street were informed by community discourses within the 19th-century middle-class black population while also being involved in shaping, defining, and revising these same discourses.

Black Feminist Theory and Historical Archaeology

Black Feminist theory, at the intersection of African diaspora theory and feminist theory, has become an important source of inspiration for many historical archaeologists seeking to interpret the identities and experiences of people of color in the past and taking a reflexive look on how their research can engage with contemporary political discourse (Agbe-Davies 2007; Battle-Baptiste 2011; Franklin 1997, 2001b).

The intellectual tradition of black feminist thought can be traced to the 19th-century split that black and white women activists had over suffrage rights (White 2001). Early black feminist literature, such as the work of Kimberle Crenshaw, brought attention to the ways that the intersection of race and gender defined black women as a class that was marginalized in multiple ways (Crenshaw 1991: 1244). Black feminist thinkers highlighted the importance of looking at these in combination because of the importance of recognizing "intersecting oppressions" (Collins 1998, 2000; White 2001). Many black feminist theorists seek to ask new questions about the salient relationships and social constructs that shaped past experiences. For example, White (2001) points out the importance of the daughter-mother dyad in the survival of the family and the community. Researchers such as Higginbotham (1993) and Dabel (2008) draw attention to the roles of black women in the public sphere as vital to black communities. Patricia Hill Collins brought attention to specific roles, such as those of black mothers, in coping with the intersecting oppressions of class, race, and gender, even as the "injustices characterizing these oppressions" were not necessarily escapable (Collins 2000: 195).

Black feminist theorists are not simply concerned with making black women in the past and present visible, but challenge resaerchers to dismantle a variety of dominant narratives that have implications for maintaining social inequalities. One influential social critic, bell hooks (1990, 1992), has called for a variety of critical analyses of race relations, privilege structures, and African American history. In her discussion of the homeplace, for example, she argues that "the home" has never been simply a neutral space for African American families, but has always been charged with meaning (hooks 1990). The way we think about homes must be reexamined in light of the variety of challenges that stood in the way of their maintenance. Families in enslaved contexts, 19th-century free contexts, and in modern settings face institutional racism and the repercussions from these social barriers. With these contexts in mind, the homeplace becomes not only a space, but also a center for social and emotional support and a symbol of the effort involved in the survival of the family itself.

Black feminist African Diaspora archaeologists such as Franklin (1997), Agbe-Davies (2007), and Battle-Baptiste (2011) challenge researchers to question their own subjectivities with respect to their research and ask what research questions can have the most impact on correcting present-day injustices. Franklin (1997) called for archaeologists to be self-reflexive about the reasons they undertake African Diaspora archaeology. She urged that researchers needed to

orient themselves toward meaningful collaboration with descendant communities at the critical moments during the formulation of research questions as well as at other stages of research. Additionally, awareness of the power of archaeology and history-making brings up questions of intellectual transcripts (Ogundiran and Falola 2007)—who gets to be the voice of past peoples? From the perspective of critical archaeologists, race becomes a central research question in addressing injustice and inequality. Not just in terms of tracing how race categories constrained and enable people in the past, but in denaturalizing present-day notions of race and biology.

Black feminist theorists charge researchers with the task of addressing social context, subject position, and the material and historical realities of an individual's life course simultaneously. Historical archaeologists have begun to integrate black feminist thought into their research as they confront the ways that past discourses on race and gender shaped everyday life (Battle-Baptiste 2007, 2011; Edwards-Ingram 2001; Galle and Young 2004; Teague and Davidson 2011; Wilkie 2003). Research such as Battle-Baptiste (2007, 2011), Wilkie (2003), and Teague and Davidson (2011) have directed attention specifically to the ways black women have performed womanhood by reiterating or transforming cultural traditions, class status, community concerns, and dominant Victorian ideals. Much of this research is focused on the American South and Mid-Atlantic states, addressing both enslaved and free contexts. Gender ideologies within black communities in 19th century, in the Northeast and otherwise, have been explored in detail by several historians (Bacon 2007; Dabel 2008; Higginbotham 1993; Horton 1993; Landry 2000; Perkins 1981; Peterson 1995).

Black feminist theorists encourage us to question narratives of the African American past that may otherwise be unconsciously shaped by modern notions of racial difference and inequality. For example, in her reexamination of the archaeology and history of Lucy Foster's home in Massachusetts, Battle-Baptiste (2011) challenges the original interpretations, which focused on Lucy's poverty and her reliance on town charity. Battle-Baptiste chooses to interpret the site according to the labor that appears to be going on there —sewing— as a sign of Lucy being actively employed and likely a domestic. While Lucy was poor, she was working. Moving toward a perspective that highlights Lucy's active role in supporting herself shifts the conversation away from the assumption of dependency and the pernicious stereotypes of poor black families.

Just as black feminist theory draws on a variety of intellectual traditions, the insights inspired by this body of research is not limited to the analysis of the experiences of past African American women. The critical eye that black feminist theory demands allows researchers to explore the complexities of subject positions based on a multitude of personhoods. Race and gender also articulate with other modes of social identity, including religious affiliation, occupation, or economic class. Each of these identities may be burdened by societal constructions that oppress particular individuals while privileging others. Explorations of the ways black masculinity was experienced in late-19th century America (Teague and Davidson 2011) and the contrasting of lower and middle-class African American domestic life (Wall et al. 2008) are two directions that researchers have taken in recent analyses. This type of research challenges assumptions about the homogeneity of past African American experiences.

Inspired by feminist queer theory and black feminist theorists, the Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham House archaeology project seeks to denaturalize narratives of 18th- and 19th-century African American men and women in the North. This research demonstrates that the 18th and 19th century middle-class African American community defined alternate notions of womanhood and manhood to serve their own social and political goals. In some cases the values

that underwrote these ideals overlapped with middle-class white ideals, but we need to question why African Americans were engaging with these discourses to begin with. In many cases, black Americans were constructed as outside the bounds of normative gender and class ideals, representing the opposite of proper men and women. Some researchers have argued that black men and women were attempting to emulate white standards, but it is important to ask in what ways these standards took on new meanings, were embodied selectively, and were at times repurposed or revised.

Conclusion

Archaeology at the Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham House attempts to build on the work of African diaspora archaeologists while drawing inspiration from African Diaspora theory, feminist performative theory, and black feminist theory. Attention to African cultural heritage, especially in the form of institutions and family structures, is a vital component of interpreting African diaspora contexts. In addition to this, it is important to address the ways that African American communities engaged with discourses on race and power inequalities imposed by white communities through racist customs and laws.

Drawing especially on those African diaspora archaeologists who at once address experiences of culture and race, this dissertation unpacks the ways the Nantucket community of color defined their collective identities and the ways these identities were experienced or altered by individuals. Theories of performance and embodied subjectivity allow us to conceptualize the ways that identities were related to, but not determined by, norms and dominant discourse. "Performativity" becomes a way of understanding how norms are referenced in everyday life without simply being duplicated mindlessly. Through everyday practices, individuals embodied their subject positions, which were at once connected to discourse and the material realities of their bodies and their historical contexts.

This research project seeks alternate histories and to destabilize dominant narratives of New England life and liberty in the 18th and 19th centuries. Insights from black feminist theory have influenced how I view the subject positions created by the intersection of unique subject positions in everyday experience.

Attention to discourse is vital to theories of performance, embodiment, and intersectionality. For 19th-century Northern black communities, discourses on standards of femininity and masculinity, seen in newspapers and other media, emphasized character attributes such as respectability, racial pride, and religious virtue. In the following chapter, this dissertation considers the ways that community discourses on respectability and racial uplift molded expectations for the form and behavior of families in the African American community, creating the ideals of a respectable black womanhood and manhood. Attention to community discourses on class, gender, and age show the ways that community identities might be defined on a broad scale, creating space for the experience of a unified African American identity. At the same time, however, there were a multiplicity of ways to embody these identities as well as reject, manipulate, or "work the norms" that were outlined in this discourse.

Chapter 3: Historical Context of Race, Gender, and Family in 19th-century New England

The dominant historical narrative of New England and the American Northeast tends to emphasize that region's early support of the abolition of slavery, with the assumption being that the dominant public sentiment was anti-slavery and pro-racial-equality. The reality of the racial climate of the 18th- and 19th-century Northeast was much more complicated. The decisions of states in this region to implement gradual emancipation and provide minimal legal rights for African Americans was countered by a pervasive system of social inequality that was restrictive and oppressive in many of the same ways that slavery in the region had been (Litwack 1961). African Americans, and other people of color who were treated as less-than full citizens, chose a variety of strategies to combat white racism. These strategies involved demonstrating personhood, citizenship, and the right to full participation in American life in both civil and social action and creating social networks by which to affirm these rights.

Communities are constructed based on common values and actions taken to assert common purpose. Our understanding of how communities of color were constructed and flourished in the 18th- and 19th-century in the Northeast is based on the historical record of an initially small population of African Americans, relatively scattered throughout the region, many of whom were enslaved. We have only a few "voices" from the earliest years. We have evidence of many acting toward common values of freedom and equality. The voices we do have show the importance of anti-slavery for African Americans in the Northeast and the ways religious doctrine was used to defend this position (Cameron 2010). The early actions of men and women in this region show people suing for their freedom and resisting their enslavement or subordination in their everyday lives (Cameron 2010; Piersen 1988).

Some of the African American strategies in seeking out freedom and citizenship involved joining forces with Native American groups in the area. During the late-18th-centruy, it was relatively common for African American men to intermarry with Native American women. These marriages ensured a free status for their children, regardless of the legal rights of the father. At the same time, gender imbalances in both populations and complementary gender roles suggest that there were a variety of reasons why these groups found common ground and intermarried widely. Distinctive cultural identities were often integrated into a collective culture of politicized unity in African American communities. In some communities, a broad notion of shared ancestry in Africa was prevalent. In both cases there was a degree of plurality, rather than an identity built on a singular ethnic heritage. For these "communities of color" that began to crystalize in the late-18th century, the struggle to attain freedom itself, and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, were the strongest uniting ideals for a relatively dispersed population.

In the 19th century, more concentrated populations of free people of color in the Northeast, coupled with more organized efforts at defining collective identities based around common values led to a distinctive sense of shared identity. It was in this context that Northern middle-class blacks actively pursued a collective community identity that was at once culturally rooted in shared African ancestry and underwritten by uniquely American experiences of discrimination and oppression (Bethel 1997). The form of this collective identity changed over time, with a sense of African-ness being a priority in the early-19th century as people of African

descent sought to recast their ancestry in a positive light. Later in the 19th century this sense of transnational identity became a tool of the white majority to cast black citizens as aliens while at the same time the people who made up black communities were coming from increasingly diverse backgrounds. By the 1830s the common experience of uplift and elevation on the one hand, and racism and exclusion on the other, became the motivating factors for African Americans and others to come together around racial identities in black communities (Bethel 1997: 55).

The collective efforts at creating shared community identity manifested themselves in two central ways. A sense of community interrelatedness, self-sufficiency, and interdependence was promoted in speeches, sermons, pamphlets and other media. At the same time, a doctrine of racial uplift and respectability was also promoted through these avenues. Black communities tied notions of community respectability to the actions of individuals within that community and thus to community-defined notions of appropriate behavior for men and women.

Black womanhood was most clearly defined by the dominant black media in the early-19th century. The values that underwrote this model of behavior included modesty, Christianity, education, and intelligence. Because most of these black women were working class and poor, this ideal was difficult to realize. Nonetheless, black media promoted the notion that the activities of women were to be directed at the maintenance of her home, the emotional well being of her husband and children, and self- improvement. In addition to this, she was expected to direct her womanly morality and caretaking out into the community sphere to practice a type of public womanhood within her church, mutual aid societies, and local women's political societies.

In many ways, ideals of black middle class womanhood overlapped with the ideals laid out for white middle class women in that the Cult of Domesticity and the Cult of True Womanhood dictated certain virtues be embodied by "true women." At the same time, the experiences of black women were nuanced by their direct contact with racial stereotypes that excluded them from the model of normative womanhood. As such, the embodiment of some aspects of True Womanhood, such as modesty, took on greater meaning while the embodiment of other aspects, such as submissiveness, were altered or dismissed altogether in favor of an active, public womanhood.

Black manhood was also crucially involved in the assertion of black community identity. Freedom itself had, in the 18th century, been highly gendered as a masculine trait, while at the same time both enslaved men and women made efforts to seize their freedom (Horton and Horton 1993). The routes toward exercising freedom came to be masculinized as well, as males were more able to participate in public declarations of freedom and equality, such as serving in the military during the American Revolution. In the early-19th century, black manhood became strongly associated with a patriarchal family structure and the responsibilities that came with being the head-of-household for a family. Patriarchy involved both protection of and control over one's spouse and children. An effective patriarch was also expected to bring this role into the public sphere with the defense of the community through various political efforts. These might include court battles for equal education for one's children, demanding voting rights or the right to serve on a jury, or defending one's country in the military. While both men and women were encouraged to be active in their communities in order to strengthen community self-sufficiency and promote group solidarity, men were expected to take most of the public leadership roles in declaring and defending the collective purpose of the community.

Clearly, in order to understand the strategies used by black communities to create shared identities it is important to see the ways that gender shaped how certain values became embodied in everyday life. Black womanhood and black manhood came to take on forms recognizable to the dominant white middle-class as respectable while also serving the social, and to some degree contrasting cultural, purposes of the black community. A sense of collective identity in Northern African American communities of the 19th century began in the 18th century with the abolitionist goals of a few active voices as well as laypeople claiming their personhood everyday.

Nascent collectivities in the late-18th century

The history of African American culture and community in the Northeast is at once unique and typical of many other African diaspora networks in the New World. These communities were at once composed of people from diverse cultural backgrounds with contrasting worldviews and traditions. In many ways they also shared a sense of collectivity born out of the common desire for freedom and elevation the experience of being excluded from freedom and full citizenship. Research on the history and culture of these communities shows that there were 18th-century common values voiced by free African Americans, at times enslaved African Americans, and people of mixed ancestry, which spoke to a desire for freedom, citizenship, and equal treatment regardless of skin color.

Diversity and Community: 18th-century Communities of Color

The diversity of the 18th-century African American population in the Northeast is evident in the history of enslavement, emancipation, and intermarriage that characterizes this region. The many enslaved people who were brought to the Northeast region in the 17th and 18th centuries were coming from diverse regions of Africa and were living in relatively isolated contexts (Gomez 1998; Piersen 1988). Where there was marriage among enslaved people, this would have been recognizable as a cultural intermarriage as the participants were likely from very different cultural backgrounds (Coughtry 1981; Gomez 1998; Piersen 1988:87). Thus, from their earliest moments in the Northeast, enslaved Africans were creating new cultural forms. In some of the more concentrated urban areas, a more cohesive sense of collective cultural background was possible. Piersen (1988: 14–15) argues that the "clustering" of people of color in neighborhoods in the 18th century allowed for the creation "of a black subculture in New England which a more scattered settlement might have precluded." Bethel (1997: 33–34) has similarly argued that the small numbers of African Americans in the Northeast was compensated for in the high degree of concentration of this minority. Adding to the complexity of this subculture were intermarriages with Native Americans in the area, a common occurrence, especially in the late-18th and early-19th centuries.

Marriage, and the familial social relationships that this contract created, were powerful tools that served as an asset to some marginalized groups while in others cases represented barriers to social and political goals. Ties between Native Americans and Euro-Americans, for example, often gave Native descendants access to the English legal system and rights that were not afforded others who did not have such ties (Bragdon 2009: 127–128). At the same time, ties between African American men and Native American women were often seen as advantageous for men, but a liability for women. Marriage between African American women and Native American men was less common, in part because population sex ratios were not imbalanced in ways that favored these marriages. For the Narragansett, these unions were problematic as they could potentially dissolve the land holdings of the tribe and jeopardize Narragansett claims to being a distinct cultural group (Plane 2000: 99–100; Sweet 2003: 172). With women as primarily

associated with the inheritance of land rights, "the control of resources and power related to gender more than concerns about race, seem to have been the primary issue surrounding struggles over intermarriage" (Mandell 1998: 474). For centrally organized tribes with large landholdings such as the Narragansett, strategies for maintaining these landholdings were important and often meant a prohibition against marrying outside of Native families (Mandell 1998: 478–485; Plane 2000: 170).

Intermarriage in other cases led to the strengthening of community ties, even as a sense of Native American identity became somewhat secondary to associations as "people of color." For non-centrally organized tribes such as the Wampanoag on Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard or Cape Cod, a lack of community land and the rights associated with this resource led to different motivations and criticisms of African American and Native marriages (Mandell 1998: 485). In these contexts, there was no reason to exclude African Americans for their potential to jeopardize the distribution of land or the tribe's cultural homogeneity in the eyes of white men. Instead, the tribe's survival might have actually been *enhanced by* fluid boundaries that afforded an opportunity for new people to embrace Native culture (Mandell 1998: 485).

Intermarriage most often occurred between African American men and Native American women. Some attribute this pattern to the imbalances of the slave trade and within Native populations, with the slave trade bringing larger numbers of men and Native populations having larger number of women (Greene 1942: 198–200; Piersen 1988: 19–20). In addition to this, intermarriage enabled black men to both distance themselves from the suffocating racism of white communities and help secure the freedom of future generations (Mandell 1998: 469; Sweet 2003:174). According to Plane (2000: 123) it was just this "vulnerability to enslavement" that many Native people were trying to avoid when they chose *not* to marry African Americans. For Native women, intermarriage might have also represented an opportunity to reduce her workload as 18th-century gender roles for Native people in southern New England generally assumed women would do all domestic and agricultural work (Sweet 2003: 174). One attractive aspect of African American men may have been their involvement in a broad range of productive labor, which could potentially lighten the labor of Native women (Piersen 1988:20).

The history of intermarriage in the region — especially the ways that some communities came to identify as Native American while others identified as People of Color — is directly relevant to understanding the social context of the African American community on Nantucket. This community, as historians such as Karttunen (2005) have traced extensively, was home to many intermarried couples. Many of the residents of this community moved among other areas of southeastern New England, including the island of Martha's Vineyard and the Cape Cod reservation of Mashpee, Massachusetts. The community on Nantucket came to create a politicized identity in the 19th century that aligned most closely with the identifier "People of Color," in part due to imposed racial notions of difference and in part based on perceived cultural heritage. This is important as other mixed race communities, such as the Narragansett, often rejected the political and philosophical orientations of such communities in the early-19th century (Mandell 1998). Many African-Native American marriages were initiated after the American Revolution. Differing social and economic values as well as differing worldviews between these communities by the mid-19th century, however, reduced the number of these marriages as time went on (Mandell 1998: 489–490). The community on Nantucket was built on a variety of shared values rooted in civic, social, and political goals more than they were tied to a single cultural tradition.

One civic and political priority shared between African and Native people on Nantucket was the importance of education and the way that this empowered one to defend one's rights. The ways that a sense of pluralistic African American *and* Native American roots were deployed by the Nantucket community can be seen in documents such as an 1822 letter written by three prominent men from the Newtown community, two of whom were Bostons. All claimed both Native and African American ancestry.

In 1822 Essex Boston, Peter Boston, and Jeffrey Summons wrote to Reverend Frederick Baylies of the *Society for Propagating the Gospel Among Indians and Others in North America* (SPG) to assert their eligibility for the funding and educational services of the SPG. The letter read: "There are among the coloured people of this place remains of the Nantucket Indians, and that nearly every family in our village are partly descended from the original inhabitants of this and neighboring places" (Boston et al. 1822). Upon receiving the letter from the leaders of Nantucket's black community, Baylies included it in his report to his superiors in Boston. While a school had been in existence in the neighborhood since at least 1819 (Karttunen 2005: 80), and some construction may have begun already on a schoolhouse, the need for funding would have been great in this mostly working-class community.

In some ways, this shows that the citizens of color on Nantucket were very aware of the diversity of their origins— which we know from historical records *were* quite complex for many families. Jeffrey Summons was married to a Mashpee Wampanoag Indian, Martha Dartmouth, and Essex and Peter both had family members who were married to Wampanoag women. On the other hand, this declaration, sent to a missionary in charge of providing funding for schools where reading, writing, and basic math were to be taught, was not an objective or selfless statement. Essex Boston, Peter Boston, and Jeffrey Summons were likely emphasizing their roots both because of the financial and social incentive they saw in getting funding and personnel for a school *and* because they had a strong and meaningful personal association with these branches of their family trees.

While a shared identity may have been based on shared priorities such as education for many Native and African American residents of Nantucket, they also shared a common social position as marginalized groups within New England society. An increased crystallization of notions of racial difference— with whiteness being defined as preferred and superior, and blackness *or* Indianness lurking on the constitutive outside of this racial identity— served to strengthen, from the outside, the united identity of the non-white people on Nantucket in the early- and mid-19th centuries.

<u>Early Roots of a Collective Identity</u>

Despite the restrictions placed on African Americans, both free and enslaved, in the late-18th century a common sense of political ideology developed that was often in conflict with the beliefs of White Americans, even as it drew on the ideals they espoused in the American Revolution. Underwriting the broad concepts of freedom and citizenship that the leaders of the Revolution repeatedly declared were the Enlightenment ideals of natural rights, self-sufficiency, and republicanism. While our present-day perspective on the rhetoric of the Revolution may suggest to us that this rhetoric should have logically translated into an anti-slavery campaign, many scholars have pointed out that this was not the case in the hearts and minds of white Americans (Davis 1999). David Brion Davis has argued in detail that the abstract notion of freedom was in many ways tied to the *continuation* of slavery for white Americans (Davis 1999: 262), based in part on the notion that slaves were property and freedom was based on the protection of one's property.

For black Americans, freedom and equality were fundamental rights of all people (Cameron 2010; Horton 1993). The preeminence of these rights are, importantly, seen in the few 18th-century documents we have that represent African American voices, including the writings of Phillis Wheatley, Lemuel Haynes, and Caeser Sarter. Drawing on these texts, Cameron (2010) argues that in addition to the secular ideals of natural rights and self-sufficiency, the influence of Puritanism was palpable in early anti-slavery rhetoric among African American political leaders. These writers built an argument for anti-slavery that was at once based in religious virtue and in the same modes of speech that the leaders of the revolution were citing when resisting England (Cameron 2010: 98). These early voices would have been foundations for the shared values of a community as their anti-slavery tracts were circulated among enslaved and free African Americans in the Northeast.

As with all civil rights, the possession of these rights was based on assertiveness for both men and women to claim them. Historical records of slave resistance show that both men and women acted out against their oppressors and asserted their freedom by running away, faking illness, and otherwise taking control of their own lives in whatever way possible (Horton and Horton 1993: 94). In the northern states, many cases of people suing for freedom, purchasing freedom, and being awarded it for military service created a growing group of African Americans in the late-18th century who were actively engaged in defining their freedom (Bethel 1997: 29–33).

African American participation in the American Revolution attested to the importance of "achieving freedom" in the sense of escaping from slavery. The rhetoric of "rights of men" so popular at the time in defining white manhood was only relevant to black understanding of manhood inasmuch as it related to "freedom of body and soul" rather than "tea and taxes" (Kaplan and Kaplan 1999:189). Once this could be achieved, pursuing the civic rights associated with citizenship would be made possible.

While freedom was theoretically a fundamental human right, experiences of and access to freedom were not equal between the sexes, in large part because freedom became defined in masculine terms (Cullen 1999; Horton and Horton 1993). As men pursued freedom through avenues such as military service and maritime occupations, women did not have these options. Additionally, the role of family structure in discourses on freedom led many African Americans to put precedence on achieving a patriarchal family structure as a symbol of freedom (Horton and Horton 1993; Adams and Pleck 2010). This led to the re-inscription of a subordinate role for black women as a matter of course in the pursuit of freedom.

As will be discussed in the following sections, the gendered and racialized concepts of "freedom" underwrote the system of gender norms that developed in 19th century in black communities in the Northeast. Increasingly, discourse on citizenship and freedom became binary, with the rights and personhood of white men set in contrast to all others— black persons, white women, and, to a large extent Native persons (Bertoff 1989; Freeman 1802). Within communities of color, an emphasis on a politicized black identity, over specific African ethnic affiliations, developed. black womanhood and black manhood were defined as overlapping with, though different from, white gender ideals. The practice of an alternative set of Black community gender ideals, which were nonetheless readable and in many ways "written in the same language" as white ideals, was fundamental to strategies for achieving equality and personhood for all people of color in 19th-century New England.

Nineteenth-Century Family and Defining Community

   Gender ideals are not static prescriptions and the 19th century saw dramatic changes in the ways that Americans viewed the roles of men and women as well as the ways they pictured their "natural" characters. These gender ideals took on strong racial and class differences, fueled by dominant middle-class white discourse. For lower-class whites and African Americans, the strictures imposed by economic means or racial prejudice prevented them from fully embodying the ideals of womanhood and manhood that became proscribed by wider society (i.e. middle class and elite whites) through models such as the Cult of True Womanhood and the Cult of Domesticity (Coontz 1988; Horton and Horton 1993; Landry 2000: 43). Despite these strictures, the gender ideals that came to be defined and promoted by black communities did not represent a deficient model of white gender roles or an attempt at emulation but rather the result of different set of cultural traditions, economic circumstances, and social priorities.

<u>Separating the Spheres & Defining the Bounds of Womanhood</u>

   The economic and social conditions of the late-18th and early-19th centuries in the United States had distinct impacts on the shape of the Euro-american family and the gender roles which underwrote this institution. The notion of "separate spheres" was still very much in flux at this time, not truly crystallizing until the 1830s (Coontz 1988). In 18th-century Euro-American women's lives, as Ulrich (1982: 8) suggests, were "defined in a series of discrete duties rather than by a self-consistent and all-embracing "sphere." Women embodied a host of roles that fulfilled economic, educational, and procreative needs within the household and were at once considered "complementary and at the same time secondary" to her husband (Ulrich 1982: 8). The role of "deputy husband" is often cited to highlight the ways that women occasionally were expected to undertake male responsibilities. Within this framework, patriarchy was still the norm and the authority of the male head-of-household was underwritten by a host of religious and social hierarchies.

   The American Revolution disrupted social hierarchy by upending the authority of the king while promoting a philosophy of equality, individual independence, and the idea of democracy abounded (Coontz 1988:154). This philosophical change, in conjunction with the changing economic climate in the newly formed United States, disrupted the old ways of defining difference and inequality within the home as well as other realms. In this context, there was a growing need to explicitly define women as associated with domesticity and separated from public and political action. In the early-19th century, the home was seen as a haven from "aristocratic corruption" rather than the realm of women and children, but by the 1830s it had been carved out as women's sphere by a variety of social actors (Coontz 1988: 161). Black values were quite similar as seen in at least one article in *Freedom's Journal* where the home, but more specifically women themselves, are portrayed as a being a haven from prejudice (*Freedom's Journal* 1827c).

   By the 1830s, the separation of the public and private spheres within the American economy underwrote a new idea of family. Coontz (1988:193) suggests that "family patterns and values, especially the sexual division of labor…[became]… indicators of class (Coontz 1988: 193). Further, Coontz argues that the cult of domesticity became popular among middle class families as a "strategy for *resisting* too complete a separation of home and work" in that an escape into the home meant that men were not fully subordinated to market forces and the cruel anonymity of the public sphere (1988: 193, emphasis in original). It is in this context that the Cult of True Womanhood emerged, which espoused the ideals of piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity (Welter 1966). Women were actively involved in redefining the domestic

sphere, a calling that Coontz (1988:180) describes as "evangelical motherhood." Archaeological research on white middle-class households in New York from this time period supports the notion that women were actively making moves toward the separation of home and workplace in the early-19th century well before these were widely recognized as separate (Wall 1994).

As discussed above, for free African Americans in the late-18th and early-19th centuries, philosophies of equality born out of the Revolution became the cornerstone for anti-slavery movements in the 19th century (Horton 1993). However, the attendant *economic* shifts that separated the homes and the workplaces of the white middle-class and reinforced the home as women's sphere were not as prominent a feature of African American households. This is not to say that there weren't features of domesticity and "true womanhood" that Black families incorporated into their ideals, but rather that these were not driven by the same economic forces.

The Cult of True Womanhood, while an important part of white women's lives, did not apply to the experiences of black women as both enslaved and free black women had different relationships to industrial capitalism (Davis 1983:12). Free African American households in the North were reliant on both the income of men in low-paying manual labor jobs and women working as domestics or laundresses (Bacon 2007). In many cases, women's work as domestics was available more consistently. In an analysis of city directories from mid-19th-century Boston, Horton and Horton (1999) found that women were often employed in several jobs in addition to being the managers of the home. In 1860, 50% of married women were employed and many of these took on the job of "washerwoman." In addition to this, families took in boarders, extended family members, and orphans, which created a more labor-intensive home environment for women. While women were taking on more work, they were also doing so from a position of community responsibility (Horton and Horton 1999:18–19).

Jones (2010: 109) suggests that in the late-19th century being a laundress was a preferred position even though it was very labor intensive and had a low profit margin. She suggests that, "for mothers, washing and ironing clothes provided an opportunity to work without the interference of whites, and with the help of their own children, at home" (Jones 2010: 108). Being at home also created opportunities for socializing with neighbors and reinforcing community ties by "allowing family members to merge with the community" (ibid. 109).

Archaeological research on late-19th century African American working women suggests that at least some of them made a special effort to find work close to home, within their communities. In her research on Lucrecia Perryman, a midwife living in late-19th and early-20th century Mobile Alabama, Wilkie (2003) shows that working and mothering were not mutually exclusive. Perryman, after a lifetime of raising children and caring for her husband, found herself widowed in 1884. In the 1890s she turned to midwifery, an occupation that offered both an opportunity to work according to her own values and time commitments, be a mother to community members, and support herself. Wilkie argues that midwives played important roles in the community not just as medical professionals, but also as moral guides and intergenerational mediators (Wilkie 2003: 120). The archaeological evidence for food medicines, household decorations, and other material associated with this period of her life showed that she was engaged with dominant discourses on scientific mothering, Victorian womanhood, and also continuing medicinal practices which had roots in African American traditions (Wilkie 2003). Battle-Baptiste (2011), in her reinterpretations of the sewing artifacts from the excavation of Lucy Foster's homesite, suggests that in-home occupations such as sewing were one means of maintaining one's independence in old age. Even as Foster did need help from the town at times, her archaeological assemblage suggests she may have worked from home.

While Perryman managed to find an occupation that allowed her to continue mother-work within her community, many women entered the workforce out of necessity and took on jobs such as domestic work that took them away from their families for much of the day. Jones (2010:139) suggests that in the early-20th century the large number of black women having gainful employment was a measure more of the difficulties with which their fathers, brothers, and husbands found work than their desire to enter the workforce. At the same time, however, it seems that this was a choice made even in situations when working was not truly necessary. For example, black women during this time period worked more than white women of the same socioeconomic status (Jones 2010:140). This was in part due to the low household income that they had as a family, but at the same time resulted in greater security in old age as the family pooled their resources more efficiently (Jones 2010:140).

The Bounds of Womanhood and Defining Black Families in the 19th century

Beyond the question of who in a household might be working and what they were doing, black families were shaped in part by the strictures of life in the antebellum North and experiences of racism. Black communities dealt with the pressing issue of racial oppression in the North and enslavement of their fellow African-Americans in the South. This resulted in different priorities as to how people would spend their money, how the home was used for domestic and political purposes, and how both men and women would spend their time when not working. Notably many chose to pursue anti-slavery activism.

Additionally, black men and women were in an oppressed social position because of slavery. This institution, as previously noted, had created a situation where African Americans were constructed as inherently different and inferior to Euro-Americans. Out of these prejudices and the conditions of captivity arose stereotypes of black womanhood that attempted to typify black woman as jezebels, mammies, matriarchs, etc. (Collins 2000; Wilkie 2003). According to Collins (2000), "mammies" were figures that were concerned with the families of white employers more than their own, "matriarchs" were domineering and emasculating men in their own homes, and "jezebels" were sexually loose and disinterested in motherhood. As stereotypes, these images could be imposed on black women depending on what was convenient for the white-dominated media. These stereotypes were instrumental in constructing the notion of black womanhood as the opposite of white womanhood and therefore disqualified black women from participating in the Cult of True Womanhood (Welter 1966:16).

While these stereotypes were prevalent in the early-19th century, they grew in potency over time. By the later-19th century, with emancipation, it became clear that a lot of people outside the free black community had something to say about what black womanhood should look and act like. As many researchers have pointed out (Horton 1993; Jones 2010; Landry 2000), black women were expected to be laborers rather than tending the domestic sphere after emancipation. Landry suggests that black domesticity was seen as a "waste" by southern planters and white Northern Reconstructionists alike (2000: 40). There was a marked refusal of black women to work in fields as a means of rejecting being cast as laborers rather than mothers, wives, and human beings in general.

In the North the legacy of slavery and its treatment of black families was still potent after gradual emancipation and affected both attempts of white Northerners to "think" or imagine the black family and the choices that African Americans were making to pursue certain freedoms with respect to their families. Under enslavement slave-owners controlled the family. Some of the implications of this were the breaking up of families through sale without recourse, the strategic suppressing of family size, and preventing families from organizing according to their

own values (Sweet 2003). Importantly, during enslavement in the Northeast there was a widespread sense that slave children were a burden to the household (Sweet 2003: 154). In contrast to Southern plantation situations, children were not seen as an investment that would pay off. In addition to this, the late-18th century implementation of gradual emancipation laws made the lives of children even less of a profitable investment. Black womanhood in these contexts becomes a liability unto itself. Sweet (2003) suggests that the language used to describe enslaved women effectively "distanc[ed] the figure of the slave mother from the regard and respect originally accorded maternity" (Sweet 2003: 154). Linguistic markers such as "breeder" alienated enslaved women from the concept of motherhood as a *social* role and identified them simply as *physical* vessels for reproduction.

"Family" amongst enslaved people in the North was anathema to the notions of domesticity, individual property, and rights for white Americans and was to be avoided at all cost. While here I am talking about the enslaved families of New England, this inability or reluctance to "think" the black family as a valuable, powerful, or respectable unit became entrenched in New England's dominant worldview, racializing the concept of "family" itself. Free people of color were in a position where they were getting married, starting families, buying real estate, and passing their houses down to further generations, in a context where these practices had been associated almost exclusively with white males in the colonial and revolutionary eras.

Because many of the stereotypes and defining characteristics of slavery became transferred from the identity of "slave" to the identity of "black," we need to consider these ideological precedents. Constructing a notion of enslaved people as being excluded from the concept of family set a precedent for how free people of color were viewed, represented in the media, and treated in public institutions, including courtrooms, hospitals, schools, almshouses, and places of entertainment. One's participation in a family was fundamental to one's identity—"true womanhood" and manliness were wrapped up in the notion of family. A person without kin wasn't a person at all and did not need to be afforded the rights of persons formally or informally.

Adams and Pleck (2010) have argued that the primary vision of freedom for African Americans in the 18th- and 19th-century North was one based on the right to build patriarchal families. Patriarchy underwrote the American legal systems (and the rights dictated by such) and was a fundamental tenet of Christianity. In a context where being a good Christian and a good citizen both had associations with embodying patriarchal principles, it is no wonder that these became a priority for many black Americans. The importance of patriarchy will be discussed further below in the context of black masculinity.

An Alternate Model of Womanhood in Black Communities

In many ways, the boundaries of the Cult of True Womanhood were defined by caricatures and stereotypes about those women who were excluded from the ideal. As Patricia Hill Collins (2000) has argued, the archetypes of jezebel, mammie, and matriarch were perpetuated through a variety of dominant white media as representations of the truly degraded character of black women. Many researchers have offered a critical analysis of women's roles in 19th-century America and suggest that within black communities, alternate models of womanhood predominated (Collins 2000; Higginbotham 1993; Horton and Horton 1993; Jones 2010; Landry 2000; Peterson 1995). Within the black communities of the Northeast, a variety of cultural, economic, and political forces shaped a contrasting model of ideal womanhood.

The ideal woman was an emotional center for the family but was also often a wage-earner, an activist, an educator, and a Christian — all aspects of a much more public sense of womanhood than in the white dominant discourse. In the early-19th century, for the black middle class, womanhood was directly and frequently addressed in public discourse. As these ideals were promoted by middle-class media, they may seem exclusionary in some ways, however, this alternate model of womanhood was flexible enough to allow a variety of occupations, class-statuses, and cultural backgrounds to occupy and embody it. By showing that the middle-class women of early-19th century Nantucket embodied the ideals but also went outside them in some ways, it will become clear that middle-class womanhood was forged in action and not necessarily in rhetoric. A much more inclusive notion of womanhood resulted, which was to be built upon in the later-19th century with the increased acceptability of women working and pursuing political and social goals outside the home (Landry 2000).

Black men and women in the early-19th century were well aware of the gender ideals held up within white society and of the ways that these ideals were racialized to exclude them. Defining their own gender ideologies was a matter not only of countering negative and exclusionary stereotypes, but also of continuing cultural traditions, dealing with economic conditions, and reaching social goals for people of color as a whole.

Many of the values that came to be embraced by the black middle-class overlapped with values within the white middle-class (Yee 1992:40–59). When values such as morality, Christianity, domesticity, and education were promoted in black newspapers or in oratory, however, these values were recast. For example, since black women were acting under the weight of racial stereotypes, such as the sexually promiscuous specter of the "jezebel," virtues such as "modesty" became deeply important. Precisely *because* black men and women were so actively constructed as different, unequal, and outside the realm of proper manhood and womanhood, they *had more at stake* as they performed these roles. Consequently, the choices they made as to what characteristics, virtues, and values they chose to emphasize represented more than the individual, but also their communities.

The "true" woman held up by black media was a respectable woman who was at once an emotional center for the family but also an important and active member of her community. Middle class women found these gender ideals most accessible, but these were also values embraced by poor and working class blacks committed to individual and collective uplift. By looking at the roles that women took on in their communities and the rhetoric about gender roles found in black newspapers and oratory, we see a clear image of respectable womanhood as based on dual commitments to community improvement and service on the one hand and one's family and domestic sphere on the other.

A Public Womanhood

The re-envisioning of womanhood within black communities in the early-19th century focused on a dual commitment to the family and the community. The specific economic realities within black families, requiring many women to enter the workforce, and the community goals of racial uplift and civil rights gains, created an environment where the public sphere was just as much a venue for the performance of womanhood as the home. In most families, women were wage earners and in care of the household (Collins 2000: 55, 78; Horton 1993:99). Collins (2000:184) suggests that "in contrast to the cult of true womanhood associated with the traditional family ideal, in which paid work is defined as being in opposition to and incompatible with motherhood, work for black women has been an important and valued dimension of motherhood."

Working outside the home was a driving force behind a re-envisioning of womanhood in black communities as something that was more public and outwardly focused than white womanhood. Carla Peterson (1995:16) has suggested that the community represented a space *between* the public and the domestic spheres for African Americans. The community sphere was at once outside the home and took on many of the features of the home in terms of the relationships and activities continued in spaces like churches and dance halls.

An 1827 article in *Freedom's Journal* suggests that women rather than men were more suited toward participation in societies in part because their "spirit of enquiry…is always greater than among an equal number of males" (*Freedom's Journal* 1827e). Yee (1992:46) argues "although a number of black spokesmen clearly held rather strict standards of female propriety, concern for the advancement of the race precluded complete opposition to the participation of women in business and politics." One person who did endorse women's involvement in public speaking was ardent abolitionist Frederick Douglass but this endorsement was tempered by the requirement that they continue to act as "respectable ladies" (Yee 1992: 117, 126). Black women were active in anti-slavery, literary, mutual aid, and temperance societies, among others. Many female moral and anti-slavery societies in black communities predated white societies of a similar nature (Perkins 1981:319–320).

Participation in organizations associated with promoting racial pride, community self-sufficiency, and religion was considered most appropriate when practiced on a local, community-specific scale. Women were still expected to exhibit a degree of modesty and reserve in their behavior. In the April 20, 1827 issue of *Freedom's Journal* women were cautioned against speaking out of turn as they should not "implicitly wield their better judgment to their fathers and husbands, but let them support the cause of reason with all the graces of female gentleness" (*Freedom's Journal* 1827b). This grace and gentleness was most appropriately practiced within the home in the early-19th century.

Respectability, gender consciousness, and Christianity were closely linked concepts in the black community (Adams and Pleck 2010: 189). Christianity, with its emphasis on patriarchal authority, served as a model for family organization and gender roles that was not imposed on the black community, but could be interpreted and embodied on its own terms. Higginbotham (1993) argues that in the late-19th century the black church *became* the public sphere of the African American community. In short, she suggests, "the church itself became the domain for the expression, celebration, and pursuit of a black collective will and identity" (Higginbotham 1993: 8–9). This collective identity came to be linked directly with Christianity itself and an African American concept of a respectable "middle-class" was underwritten in no small part by the values and gender roles communicated in sermons and in the bible.

Adams and Pleck (2010) discuss the embrace of Christianity and its virtues as one of the ways that African Americans defined freedom itself. They argue that evangelical Christianity in particular offered a style of worship and a sense of individual connection with God that was appealing to African Americans. Part of the appeal of evangelical Christianity has been attributed to styles of religious expression that have roots in African and African American religious styles (Horton and Horton 1999: 47–48).

Many of the earliest mutual aid societies in black communities of the Northeast were started by middle-class, black, Christian women. For example, Portsmouth's "Ladies African Charitable Society" was established in 1796 and in Newport the "African Female Benevolent Society" was established in 1809 (Adams and Pleck 2010: 189). These and many that followed in other communities, on local scales, were directed at raising money to help members when they

were out of work, in need of support, or for funeral services. In addition to this, though, these societies were also involved in anti-slavery activism. Although there were dues associated with these societies, this was often not as much of a roadblock as might be expected. The "Colored Female Religious and Moral Society of Salem" (est. 1819) was not only an early example of such a society but its rolls included both affluent and lower class women (Adams and Pleck 2010: 190). As will be discussed below, participation in activist groups was not fully accepted by the black community, according to newspaper accounts about women's "proper" character. Still, belonging to groups based in churches and fulfilling one's Christian duty were avenues for women's activism to be seen as within their proper sphere of behavior.

On 19th-century Nantucket women were involved, often along with their husbands, in the initiation of a variety of black community institutions. Within this community, we see very early involvement of women in the public sphere as they participated in the establishment of the first school for free children of color, in the re-organization of the African Baptist Church, and in the fight for school integration in the late-1830s and early-1840s (Karttunen 2003; White 2009). Two women, Priscilla (Sally) Thompson and Mary Ann Boston, were employed in the early years at the African school to teach the "womanly arts" of sewing and knitting to the female students (Baylies 1822, 1823). Boston and Thompson's involvement in this public activity may have been considered acceptable because blacks were deeply committed to educating their children. Teaching was also considered acceptable because the school was sponsored by a religious society and these women were related to prominent men in the community. When the African Society, established in 1821 by black Baptist Nantucketers, was reorganized in 1831 as The African Baptist Church, seven of the nine members who signed the new charter were women, including Charlotte (Boston) Groves (Karttunen 2002: 94–95). Finally, when the debates over public schooling and integrated classrooms were being waged in the 1830s and 1840s, and racial tensions on Nantucket were at their height, female students Eunice Ross (in 1838) and Phebe Ann Boston (in 1846) were at the center of these debates (Karttunen 2002: 105–107). Women were not only active participants in the creation of institutions and the moral guidance of their community, but they also personified civility and morality at times when racial tensions were highest on Nantucket at mid-century.

The involvement of black women in community-based organizations throughout the country intensified in the second-half of the 19th century. As discussed above, after the Civil War, the Freedman's Bureau had intended all slaves to remain active; this model "fostered a view of all black women…as laborers" with identities such as mother or sister as secondary (Landry 2000: 42). Many women rejected this assumption by choosing to stay home, when possible, or seeking occupations they could practice from inside their homes (Jones 2010:108). At the same time, for many women, the simple fact of needing to work outside the home created an opportunity to take part in political and social movements of the second half of the 19th century. Some of these women had the opportunity to gain economic independence and worldliness that allowed them to participate in "evangelism, abolitionism, temperance, and women's rights" (Peterson 1995:16). Just as the community sphere had begun to be defined during the early-19th century as a space outside the home but where women's involvement was acceptable, this trend continued with the club and social movements of the later-19th century (Dabel 2008; Peterson 1995).

On Nantucket, the strong development of women's organizations in the black community was impeded by the crash of the Nantucket economy in the 1850s and 1860s. As whaling enterprises shifted to New Bedford or dwindled due to lower demand, the economy on Nantucket

was forced to shift as well and many people migrated off-island. Those people who stayed on Nantucket and sustained the black community placed increased attention on the few institutions that remained and on their personal presentation as individuals of color in the public sphere. Some of the activities we see black women continuing to participate in include the annual Agricultural Fairs of the 1850s and 1860s that were held on the island to promote the farming business there and bring in off-island visitors to patronize local growers (*Nantucket Inquirer* 1863; *Inquirer and Mirror* 1866, 1869). In addition to this, the African Baptist Church was reorganized as the Pleasant Street Baptist Church in 1848, with several women continuing as central members of the organization. In the late-19th century, Elizabeth Stevens, granddaughter of Seneca Boston, would be a central figure in this organization and would oversee the sale of the building once membership had dwindled to fewer than 10 members in the early-20th century (NRD 1911: DB 95: 54).

The bounds of womanhood in the early-19th century were being redefined, in part by black media, but also by the actions and goals of black women themselves. In the following section I discuss the ways that black womanhood became delineated within black newspapers and oratory as associated with responsibilities to the emotional maintenance of the family and the education of oneself and one's children. While some of the values that underwrote these priorities overlapped significantly with white middle-class ideals of womanhood, in lack families these values took on new meaning due to institutionalized racism.

<u>Black Womanhood and the Family's Emotional Center</u>

Even as black women were increasingly taking on more public roles throughout the 19th century, the domestic sphere and a woman's responsibility to her family were still important. The emotional support of women within the home and women's influence on their husbands and children were held up as crucial aspects of social life within black families. Black women were also expected to be modest and reserved, though not altogether silent and submissive. A reprinted article from *Freedom's Journal* points to these virtues when describing the ideal woman in her early life as a "young and bashful virgin," later to become a "kind and affectionate wife," and finally the "chaste and virtuous matron" in her later years (*Freedom's Journal* 1827a). The speaker goes on to exclaim — "Oh! there is something in contemplating the character of a woman that raises the soul far above the vulgar level of society" (*Freedom's Journal* 1827a). As mentioned above, these virtues had been racialized as "white." Seizing and redirecting these virtues, as part of their own identities, was one means for black women to reject white racism and define themselves.

Embodying these virtues was part of what imbued women with moral and emotional influence over her family. In an 1832 address, Maria Stewart, declared to women that "your example is powerful, your influence great; it extends over your husbands and your children, and throughout the circle of your acquaintance" (Richardson 1987:55). In a similar vein, an article in *Freedom's Journal* speaks directly to the role of women in the home, as the emotional support that countered the negativity of a racialized public sphere. The writer, a man only identified as "S," proclaimed that when "prejudice" and "slander" had taken their emotional toll in the public world, "nothing can render the bowers of retirement so serene and comfortable, or can so sweetly soften all our woes, as a conviction that a woman is not indifferent to our fate" (*Freedom's Journal* 1827c).

The domestic realm, the homeplace itself, was very much an emotional haven and space for recuperation (hooks 1990). Bell hooks (1990) has suggested that in addition to being a haven, the creation of the "homeplace" was an intentional political statement. Because dominant white

culture had excluded black women from the very concept of domesticity and womanhood, the active choice to create a homespace that maintained a sense of family and stability was politicized action. Hooks emphasizes that "historically, African-American people believed that the construction of a homeplace, however fragile and tenuous (the slave hut, the wooden shack), had radical political dimensions" (hooks 1990: 42). The maintenance of a home was part of the performance of humanity, respectability and equality.

Within black media and from the oratory of black leaders, we see similar messages in the second-half of the 19th century. "Womanhood" ideals continued to be aligned with the emotional support of her family, close attention to the moral and intellectual needs of her children, and, to some degree, the observance of patriarchal authority (Dabel 2008:47–49). In practice, the realities of women working within and without the home and participating in a variety of community-aid organizations resulted in an experience of womanhood that was much more complex. Bart Landry (2000:76–77) argues that within this time period, a conception of womanhood that was more inclusive, virtuous but not asexual, and focused on active roles for women became dominant.

Women's influence over her family was taken seriously and became entangled with the issue of woman's education itself. In a letter to the editors of *Freedom's Journal*, "Matilda," appealed to the readers of *Freedom's Journal* in the August 10th 1827 issue, arguing that women should be educated. She declared, in a deferent tone, that "the influence that we have over the male sex demands that our minds should be instructed and improved with the principles of education and religion in order that this influence should be properly directed." She continues that women's influence on children doubly requires that women's education be made a priority. She suggests that mothers encourage their daughters to read books so that they might gain knowledge that cannot be taken away from them. Immediate action was called for as "there is a great responsibility resting somewhere, and it is time for us to be up and doing" (*Freedom's Journal* 1827d).

Representations of women in Black newspapers often tacitly portrayed many as educated, or at least literate. In *Theresa — a Haytien Tale,* a story which appeared in *Freedom's Journal* in 1828, all the women characters are literate and this literacy plays a crucial role in the plot (Foster 2006). In this piece of short fiction, which takes place during the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804), Theresa takes it upon herself to deliver news to the rebel army, leaving a note to explain her absence for her mother and sister. The author represents Black women as both educated and clever, as they act outside the normal bounds of womanhood, "overstep[ing] the bounds of modesty," to secure freedom (*Freedom's Journal* 1828).

The value of education was also evident in the Boston family in particular. Seneca and Thankful's son, Absalom Boston, was active in the fight to gain equal education rights for people of color on Nantucket on behalf of his daughter Phebe Ann Boston (Karttunen 2002: 107). In addition to this, one of Seneca Boston and Thankful Micah's great grandchildren, Phebe Boston Groves Hogarth, became a teacher in the post-war era. Eliza and Lewis Berry's boys went to school, according to census records, and both Lewis and Eliza signed the 1845 petition to the Massachusetts State House for the integration of schools (White 2009: 92).

The true woman in the black community was an educated woman, if only so that she might educate her children and their quality of life might be improved for it. Maria Stewart, in an address published in *The Liberator* in 1831, implored mothers to raise their children disciplined and pious and to teach them. She declared to mothers "it is you that must create in the minds of your little girls and boys a thirst for knowledge, the love of virtue, and the abhorrence of vice,

and a cultivation of pure heart" (Richardson 1987: 35). Women were seen as responsible for raising educated, Christian, citizens. A respectable woman would take on this task in stride with her many other domestic and community commitments.

An Alternate Model of Manhood

In order to understand the appropriate roles of women in the black community during the 19th century, we need to take into account how manhood and womanhood ideals were defined with reference to each other and were often portrayed as complementary in character. As is the case with black womanhood, black manhood was also a contentious issue in the eyes of the dominant white society. Black men were variously portrayed as lascivious, hyper-masculine, brutish, or submissive, as based on a range of stereotypes rooted in rationales for slavery (Adams and Pleck 2010:14; Horton 1993:80–82). These stereotypes reinscribed racial hierarchies in everyday interaction as a means of naturalizing these hierarchies.

Nineteenth-century ideals of manhood espoused by white communities emphasized individuality, self-assertion, and aggression (Horton 1993). Charles Rosenberg (1973) has suggested that the prototypes of white masculinity in the early-19th century were that of the "masculine achiever," an unsentimental man who was aggressive in the marketplace, and the "Christian gentlemen" the traditionalist who valued selfless behavior and religious principles. Bederman (1996) has described this early–mid-19th century Victorian manhood as "manliness," with its focus on morality and a reserved nature. Both of these models of manhood excluded black men, although the stereotypes of the savage and the Sambo paralleled and expanded upon the negative aspects of white ideals. The savage was imagined as a barbaric individual who exhibited unchecked aggression while the Sambo was a contented, submissive servant, epitomized by the "Uncle Tom" character in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Horton 1993: 82).

The community ideals of manhood that came to dominate within the black community in the 19th century drew both on the dominant models of patriarchal manhood and the specific cultural and social experiences of African American men. Black manhood became a prominent theme in the oratory of leaders in the community and a host of ideals came to be advocated by different individuals. Prominent among these ideals was the notion of patriarchy, idealizing men as the head-of-household and protector of family. As Horton (1993:113) argues, freedom and citizenship were essential aspects of claiming equality for all black Americans, but becoming "full participants in American life" also meant "an obligation to live out the gender ideals of American patriarchal society."

In addition to patriarchy, however, value was placed on assertiveness and aggression, where necessary, by various voices in the black community to different degrees. David Walker in his *Appeal* in 1829 argued that resistance, violent if necessary, was the only means to seize freedom and equality (Walker 1848). Henry Highland Garnet delivered a similar message in his 1843 *Address to the Slaves of the United States of America* where he implored slaves to confront their masters about the sinfulness of slavery and if that did not change their ways, it was in the hand of the enslaved to act. He encouraged them to "strike for your lives and liberties" and in their struggle "let your motto be resistance! *resistance! resistance!*" (Walker 1848). Other activists were less enthusiastic about violent approaches. Maria Stewart and Frederick Douglass, in particular, were careful to argue that aggression was necessary in some cases, but was by no means the only route to manhood (Richardson 1987; Martin 1984). For these leaders in the early-19th century, a non-violent route to equality could be pursued through self-improvement, service to one's community, and non-violent protest.

In the late-19th and early-20th centuries, there was a shift happening within the dominant white culture to redefine manliness "in terms of racial dominance, especially in terms of 'civilization.'" (Bederman 1996:20). In this model of masculinity, African American men were categorized with women—as dependents, deprived of 'manhood rights' and "forbidden to vote, hold electoral office, serve on juries, or join the military" (Bederman 1996: 20). At the same time the dominant white middle-class was co-opting working class activities and values. Only in the last decades of the 19th century were working class institutions like "saloons, music halls, and prizefights" and values such as "physical prowess, pugnacity, and sexuality" incorporated into a the dominant middle-class notion of masculinity (Bederman 1996: 17). In this context, African American men had to navigate their continued exclusion from normative masculinity by demonstrating an individual and collective sense of respectability while also acknowledging and engaging with dominant ideas of masculinity, which were shifting toward the values of aggression and contrast with womanhood.

The masculinized ideals of freedom and equality continued to be most important to African American notions of masculinity as the 19th century progressed. As with the case of black womanhood, masculinity was also underwritten by a commitment to the complementarity of domestic and community life. On the one hand, manhood hinged on performing a patriarchal role within the family and on the other, manhood was embodied through the service to the community and the nation through civil action in the military and in politics.

Manhood and Family

The lack of control over family structure under enslavement reinforced the importance for both women and men to determine their family and domestic life after emancipation. For those families that valued a patriarchal structure, freedom was in many ways equated with the rights and responsibilities held by men as heads-of-household. Henry Highland Garnet asserted in 1843 that slavery enabled the violation of one's daughters and wives and in the process "drew upon one of the most powerful justifications for the link between physical prowess and masculinity in American gender ideals— the responsibility of men to protect their families" (Horton 1993: 89). While abolitionists, especially pacifists such as William Lloyd Garrison, did not universally embrace violent measures, the need for aggression in order to assert equal rights and defend one's family was recognized by most African Americans of the era (Horton 1993: 89).

As Adams and Pleck (2010) have argued, a family arranged according to the authority of the father allowed black families to engage in the same legal and social models of behavior that would allow them to fully embrace citizenship. Most successful, economically stable, black families were arranged according to the notion of patriarchy (Yee 1992: 13). These families were concerned with "female respectability and prescribed sex roles" and were thus interested in maintaining "the patriarchal family structure that symbolized progress and success in American society" (Yee 1992: 13).

Maintaining a patriarchal household involved creating an atmosphere where the man of the house was in control of his wife and children. A range of rights came with marriage between a free black man and a free black woman. Included in these for men were "a right to moderate chastisement,…legal custody of his children, and the rights to determine the residence of his wife and children" (Adams and Pleck 2010: 115). As Adams and Pleck (2010: 103–125) have documented, respectable womanhood was policed by husbands as a matter of course to defend a man's honor. The conflict between the expectations of black men and women in post-emancipation era marriages was about fundamental notions of control within the family, not just

financial matters (Adams and Pleck 2010: 118). As one researcher has suggested, "perhaps the most important, and lasting, change freedom and fighting wrought was in African American families…demonstrating manhood was important not only for what it taught the outside world but also for the authority it would give him at home" (Cullen 1999: 499).

While patriarchy was an important model of family in the black community, it did not rule out the importance of women's roles in the community. As discussed above, in building a sense of public womanhood, black women tended to the community sphere. This sphere of action was conceived of as respecting the bounds of patriarchy, loosely defined as men having the ultimate authority in household and political matters.

An article by "Matilda" in an 1827 *Freedom's Journal* speaks to the balance between the value of patriarchy and the values of women's voices in the Black community. In the article, Matilda makes an argument for the education of women. At the same time, she is submissive and asks first for permission to speak before stating her claim. She begins "will you allow a female to offer a few remarks …" before going into her argument (*Freedom's Journal* 1827d). While her ultimate message is for women to be allowed to have access to education, her deferential tone recognizes the authority of men within the community. In another *Freedom's Journal* article, the author speaks to the balance of women's influence and her "proper" place within the household: "A woman who would attempt to thunder with her tongue, would not find her eloquence increase her domestic happiness. We do not wish that women should implicitly wield their better judgment to their fathers and husbands, but let them support the cause of reason with all the graces of female gentleness" (*Freedom's Journal* 1827b).

The issue of women's speech led even prominent speakers such as Maria Stewart to be marginalized. As a woman, Stewart was in a controversial position to be a representative of the black community, added to this was her message, which often criticized black men for not being active enough in proving their Christian morality and equality with white men (Richardson 1987:16–17). In one speech in Boston, she promoted the "basic Christian principles of thrift, sobriety, and hard work" and was met with hostility when she suggested that black men were not pursuing these goals adequately (Yee 1992:115). In the 1833 she stopped her public tour in Boston because she didn't feel she was making a difference in her call for her people to change their behavior and focus on community uplift (Yee 1992: 116).

The negative repercussions for black women under patriarchy have been acknowledged by a number of researchers (Adams and Pleck 2010; Horton 1993: 94–95; Yee 1992). As has been discussed above, such a model required that women perform within the model of the Cult of True Womanhood in ways that economic restrictions, social preferences, or a combination of these, did not allow. While pursuing some aspects of the notion of True Womanhood *was* a strategy many black women pursued, these women were overwhelmingly middle-class or elite members of the community. For most women, some amount of work outside of the home was incorporated into their performance of womanhood, a situation that had consequences for relationships with their husbands. Within the home, the strategies for achieving equality and freedom for men and women were at times complementary and at other times in conflict. Attempting to embody the dominant ideals of manhood and womanhood within the home was neither possible nor preferable in Black households and gender ideals more suited to the needs of the community were pursued.

Manhood and Community

Whereas patriarchy was part of the ideal that black men sought to embody in their households to demonstrate freedom, outside of the home this quality was extended to a

responsibility to the broader black community through actions that would improve the living conditions of all African Americans. This responsibility outside the home can be seen in the types of leadership positions men took on in political efforts toward equal rights, which included the fight to gain access to the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, such as education, voting and jury service, and substantive participation in the military.

Men were the primary faces of political movements, with women having "important but not dominant roles" (Horton 1993:100). As Adams and Pleck (2010: 16) have pointed out, "even during slavery, black men were the chosen leaders of their people who enjoyed certain male privileges." Governor Elections, those mock elections held during the annual week-long festivals allowed to slaves on an annual basis in the North, excluded women from voting for "governor" of slaves (Horton 1993:101). Men were also the majority of the plaintiffs in cases where individuals sued for their freedom in the North. While these facts do not preclude the participation and importance of women in political struggles, as I have discussed above, they do suggest that men were more visible in these struggles for a variety of reasons.

In the context of free Northern States in the 19th century, black media discourse urged both men and women to be active in their communities. Rather than a gendered trait, this virtue was seen as necessary. As discussed above, in some ways women were seen as being particularly suited for certain roles in the community that would improve the well-being of church members and anti-slavery societies in a way that cast motherly role with a wider net. Stewart, for example, saw women's role in political action as a natural extension of their domestic roles in the sense that they could speak as authorities on morality in public affairs as it was seen as their purview within the home (Richardson 1987). At the same time, men were the primary players in most public societies, court battles, and activist movements.

The predominance of men in the public sphere, working toward their civil rights, can be seen on Nantucket. The individuals who appealed to the Society for Propagating the Gospel in order to get a school for Black children were three prominent men (PLPEM 1822: SPG Box, 1 Folder, 8:3). The individuals who argued for public schools to be accessible to all children, regardless of color, in the 1840s, were the fathers of these children. Most of the people recounted in stories of the abolitionist efforts on the island are also men. Notably, women were part and parcel of these efforts too, but in less showcased roles. Women worked at the SPG's school, female students were the center of the 1840s equal education debates, and wives and mothers also appear on the petitions to state legislators about equal public education and supported the efforts of abolitionist husbands. Leadership positions were seen as an extension of men's patriarchal duties within the home, extended to the community scale. Horton (1993: 102) points out that in many cases "mutual aid groups and fraternal organizations were specifically dedicated to the care of widow and orphans in the absence of husbands and fathers."

The role of serving the community was similarly underscored by those media messages that emphasized education and competition as ways to improve the condition of the entire African American community. Horton (1993:86) argues that Stewart advocated the "masculine achiever" model, prominent in the white community, by emphasizing the marketplace as an opportunity to prove one's equality. She urged men to seek self-improvement through education and service to their communities. In the oratory of Stewart, David Walker, and others, the economic success of black men was seen as contributing to the betterment of the community as a whole. In general, "great value [was] placed on black men becoming entrepreneurs, and acquiring skills was seen as one of the best routes to business success" (Horton 1993:103).

While service to the community could be something taken on by either sex, military service was one venue of public service that only men could participate in. Service in the military was a way to demonstrate full participation in citizen responsibilities, and therefore the equality of black men, in a way that other service could not. Sacrificing one's life for one's country epitomized this view. In the late-18th century, the American Revolution created opportunities for many African American men to "earn" their freedom if they had served on the side of the United States. While many men did serve and did gain their freedom, this participation only resulted in their own freedom and did not force the issue of "natural rights" for all men and women. By the mid-19th century, however, the Civil War brought to the fore a range of issues that forced the dominant white culture to consider black manhood. The most prominent symbol of manhood that African American men pursued was military service. As Cullen (1999:491) argues, in the mid-19th century "the word 'manly' was rich with connotation of an acquired sense of civilization and duty" in contrast to later conceptions of masculinity. He goes on to argue that black men as armed soldiers effectively demonstrated humanity and manhood in a way that broke down the rationale for slavery common in the South that cast black people as they were fundamentally children or animals (Cullen 1999: 496).

Importantly, the advocacy of military service as a route to full citizenship did not equate with an advocacy of violent measures to secure freedom. While there were many men willing to take up arms to defend their freedom, especially after the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, it was important to do so within sanctioned institutions was important (Horton 1993: 92–93). Horton (1993) points to the fact that while over 2,500 men volunteered to join militias after the Fugitive Slave Act became law, participation in efforts that actually took armed action against the government, such as John Brown's rebellion of 1859 was minimal. The distinction between sanctioned and non-sanctioned violence was especially important because of the likelihood such actions would fail as well as the negative stereotypes promoted by white media characterizing black men as aggressive, unruly, and animal-like. Violence was only sanctioned in the realm of the military, where it served to demonstrate dedication to one's country, and in defense of one's family, where it served to demonstrate one's patriarchal role.

Long before black men were allowed to enlist, Frederick Douglass was one of the main promoters of military service as a route to citizenship and an equal status with White men (Martin 1984: 62–65). Douglass often discussed military service in his periodical, *Douglass's Monthly*, associating "manhood and freedom" with participation in just and warranted conflict (Cullen 1999). Douglass argued that prejudice prevented black people from being allowed to enlist. When finally they were allowed, in 1863 earned less than white soldiers (Douglass 1882: 412). This reluctance to accept black troops and unequal treatment once they became part of the Union Army upset Douglass. Still, he "was not discouraged, and urged every man who could enlist; to get an eagle on his button, a musket on his shoulder, and the star-spangled banner over his head" (Douglass 1882: 414).

Cullen (1999:493) argues that this focus on "civilized warfare" suggests a definition of manhood that was "less the amoral use of brute force than the controlled application of power to achieve a just objective." The theme of encouraging men to pursue service in the armed forces, then, was rooted in the same principles of seizing one's civil rights that underwrote advocacy of political activism in the black community through established court systems and non-violent means. In this way, the leadership positions that men took within their communities and within the armed forces were in the same spirit of reasoned, respectable, behavior of citizens fulfilling their responsibilities to their community and country concomitantly.

Conclusion

African American community identities in the 18th and 19th centuries were born out of shared values of freedom and equality, shared experiences of oppression, and a desire to seize full civic and social equality. Collective values were based in universal desires to have freedom and equality. In the 18th century, these community identities were in their infancy, and common values were based on anti-slavery agendas and the individual exercise of civil rights. In the 19th century, these collective values for freedom and equality became articulated in all dimensions of social life — not just civic activism. Black communities were organizing in public realms around social goals, but just as important they were defining gender behavioral ideals that also served the goal of racial uplift. The community construction of gender ideals created a standard of behavior that middle-class men and women could engage with to define their own identities by embodying, disregarding or altering these ideals to their own needs. In many ways these gender ideals mirrored middle class white ideals, however, these ideals did not take on the same meanings in black contexts because of white racism and the exclusionary nature of dominant ideals. Additionally, for lower class men and women, the community ideals, especially with respect to mothering and patriarchy, were not necessarily realistic. In some ways, the dominant models were irrelevant to the well being of men and women facing economic or social hardships which made activism difficult. To understand the ways that specific gender identities were embodied or altered based on the needs of a specific context, we must now turn to our case study, the families that once lived at 27 York Street on Nantucket, the Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham House.

Chapter 4: Archaeology at the Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham House

As described in the introduction, the lives of the families at the Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham House are an ideal case study for thinking about the experiences of black families in New England in the late-18th and 19th centuries. These families were part of building a neighborhood, establishing institutions, and tending to local relationships— the foundation of a community. At the same time, they saw hardships and challenges, reminding us of the complex experience that is being part of a family and a community.

We turn now to the archaeological investigations at the site in order to ask fundamental questions about the materiality of the relationships and experiences of people at the Boston-Higginbotham House. In what ways was the household scale important for the reaffirming of community, family, or gendered identities? How was the material world used to navigate a racialized social landscape on Nantucket? In what ways did the families at 27 York Street engage with the dominant narratives exhorted within the black press?

In this chapter, I will outline the research questions that came to define the project then describe the archaeological excavations and the depositional history of the site. Finally, I will describe the lab analyses and the artifact patterning found in the ceramic, glass, and small finds assemblages. This framework is meant to give the reader both a sense of the archaeological deposits themselves and the types of information that might be drawn out of the artifact assemblage.

Beginnings of the Higginbotham House Archaeology Project (HHAP)[2]

The Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham House is a site which is part of the Nantucket campus of the Museum of African American History (MAAH) and is important to the African American community on the island, the community of historians there, and the neighborhood in which it sits. From the beginning I was interested in making this a public archaeology project and a collaborative effort at research. The MAAH had specific research interests in terms of the types questions they wanted explored and the people they were hoping to learn about. In addition to addressing their research interests, the project was also directed at providing the Museum with information about the subsurface cultural resources at the site. This knowledge could be used to avoid damages to these resources during future site maintenance and potential renovations. In addition to the Museum's concerns, however, it was important to me to understand the types of research questions that the people in the African American community, the historian community, and the neighborhood were already pursuing or were interested in pursuing.

My own research on the island began with a visit there in summer of 2006. This trip was directed at visiting the Nantucket Historical Association archives in order to learn more about the history of women of color on the island, the history of the Boston family, and the Boston-Higginbotham House itself. I was more than a little surprised at the vast scope of research that

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[2] The Museum of African American History has named the site the Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham House. However, when work was begun on this project the house was commonly called the "Florence Higginbotham House," as on the HSR (JGWAA 2005). Thus, the official name for the archaeological project is the Higginbotham House Archaeology Project (abbreviated HHAP). This dissertation uses the more current name, the Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham House wherever possible.

had already been done on this family and I wondered how my research might contribute more. I began by talking with the site manager at the Museum of African American History, Sharon Liburd, who introduced me to a number of African American researchers and island residents. Sitting around a dinner table having coffee on my second night on Nantucket and meeting Sharon's friends — including past site manager Bette Spriggs and other local residents with an interest in the Nantucket African Meeting House— it was clear that the potential for archaeology and further research on the Boston-Higginbotham House was at once an exciting prospect and something of a concern for the local black community. Past research on the black community was often disconnected from the Museum, black scholars, or community members— specifically the research, organization, and implementation of the Nantucket Black Heritage Trail. It was important that from the beginning, my research be in tune with the Museum and the community. The discourse on community relationships and collaboration within the discipline of archaeology, as well, emphasizes the importance of research relationships with stakeholders and descendant communities (Agbe-Davies 2007; Franklin 2001; LaRoche and Blakey 1997).

In the years following the start of the dissertation in 2006, the input of people such as the women I met that night became important to how the project developed. The infrastructure of the local historian community would also be important. Nantucket's rich archives and extensive self-documentation make for a vast documentary landscape on the island— a landscape that is populated by more than a few historians writing about various topics on Nantucket's history. Historians, archives managers, and others at the Nantucket Historical Association made it possible for me to access a wide variety of information about the black community. This information was both abundant and complex beyond what I had imagined. I was glad that researchers such as Barbara White and Francis Karttunen had done extensive research on the history of the African Meeting House and the lives of the 19th-century people of color on the island over the years and were generous with their findings. Research such as theirs, and the research of others, delved into the lives of important figures such as Frederick Douglass and Anna Gardner and described the experiences of particular groups through the historical record— such as the prominent black women of the 19th century. My own research interest was in the culture of the Nantucket community and the black neighborhoods as part of this. The historical research was at the foundation of this investigation.

My support network and scholarly background for this research was also tied to the many institutions and scholars in Boston who had helped in the initiation of my research on New England history. The site managers for the Museum of African American History itself helped to bridge the interests of the local black community and the local historian community as well as the needs of the archaeology team itself. After my 2006 visit, I returned in 2008 with a field crew from UMass Boston for a month of excavations, lectures, and public archaeology activities. At this time, the site manager position was being taken over by Renée and Bill Oliver. This husband and wife team brought a vision for the incorporation of the Boston-Higginbotham House into the experiences of visitors to the African Meeting House as well as connecting our research with the community. The efforts of Museum Educator, L'Merchie Frazier, were also integral in that she coordinated visits from local schools and ran an archaeological field camp called "Dig and Discover" for all the fourth grade students from Nantucket elementary schools.

During our excavations the neighborhood residents, descendant community members, interested tourists, and local residents came to the site on a daily basis. A few of the women I had met two years before with Sharon Liburd around a kitchen table came by as well as many

more. Many of the visitors brought questions, asking about what kinds of access the island had to trade goods, what evidence of southern roots might be present in the cuisine in the black community, and how domestic life at this house might compare with other households of the same time period. These types of research questions, as well as those suggested by the Museum staff itself, guided our outlook on the project.

On a very basic level, however, our research was also a cultural resource management project and our objectives were in part defined by the bounds of the Antiquities Act and our responsibility to the Massachusetts Historical Commission. What follows is a description of our archaeological methods in meeting the legal needs of the Museum but also our attempts to compile an artifact database and storage system which is useful to the Museum immediately as they not only prepare for renovations at the site but prepare for future researchers and publics who may be interested in the material past at the site. The interpretive chapters to follow address many of the research questions of interest to site visitors and the Nantucket community.

Defining the Project Area

The scope of our site examination was defined by the standards detailed in 950 CMR 70.00, the Massachusetts Historical Commission system of complying with the Antiquities Act. In this document a "site examination" is described as "an archeological field investigation at an archeological site which gives a preliminary definition of the size, data contents and spatial arrangement of artifacts and features for the purposes of assessing a site' s integrity, research potential, and significance, and in order to make an opinion of the potential eligibility of the site for inclusion in the National Register". This work was done under Massachusetts Historical Commission Permit Number 3028 and involved the excavations of 12.95 m^2 square meters of dirt over the 3.5-week period.

These goals were met through a mixture of techniques, including remote sensing, shovel test pits, and excavation units. Remote sensing, including a conductivity survey and a ground penetrating radar survey, was used to identify potential subsurface features. In addition to this, recommendations outlined in the Historic Structures Reports (JGWAA 2005) for preservation efforts at the site had potential subsurface impact, many of which were investigated with archaeological excavation. Remote sensing, coupled with these excavations allowed for an interpretation of the potential cultural integrity of subsurface deposits in different areas of the yard (Figure 4.1: Boston-Higginbotham House Site map indicating areas of variable sensitivity).

Excavation Objectives

The Historic Structures Report (HSR) recommended several goals for archaeology at the site. These suggestions are listed below (see JGWAA 2005: 259), along with the excavation units that were placed in order to address each:

A. Attempt to determine if the Higginbotham House was relocated on the site while the c.1920-1930 foundation was poured. (EU3, EU11, EU8, EU13)
B. Attempt to locate Seneca Boston's weaving shop at the northeast corner of the site prior to undertaking foundation and paving repairs at the garage. (EU9)
C. Attempt to locate the foundation of the former east addition of the house prior to undertaking repairs of the concrete driveway paving. (EU13)
D. Undertake salvage archaeology prior to building new foundation for the cottage and hen house. (EU2 and STP7 & STP6 respectively).

E. Undertake salvage archaeology where site utilities are disturbed. (This has yet to be addressed, and will need to be undertaken on a case-by-case basis)

Beyond the areas that the HSR identified as sensitive, it was difficult to identify and test the space that might be affected by future renovations to the site as these plans have not been finalized. Therefore, a central objective (as reported in the completion memo) of the excavations was to determine the nature of the deposits in several areas of the yard in order to enable the MAAH to make informed decisions about future building projects that might affect subsurface deposits.

As part of answering these questions, our research was directed at compiling a site depositional history to explain the landscape changes that took place since the property was purchased by Seneca Boston. The differences in the use of yard space through time and in specific areas of the site were of particular interest.

The broader goals for this research were aligned with those of the MAAH in that our excavations and analysis are directed at answering questions about black domesticity in the 19th and 20th centuries. These goals have been pursued not only through excavations, but also through extensive archival research on the lives of the occupants of the house and their descendants in different parts of the United States. In addition to this dissertation, the archaeological processing was directed at creating an accessible Minimum Vessel Count catalogues for the ceramic and glass artifacts such that the Museum can easily browse the collection electronically for their future interests.

Excavations

Archaeological excavations at the Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham House were based around several of the questions raised in the historic structures report as well as a few research questions that archaeology is particularly suited to answer. In addition to asking if the Boston-Higginbotham House was in its original location, we were interested in site formation processes and the history of the use of space in the yard. In total, twelve excavation units (EU1-EU11 & EU13) and seven shovel test pits (STP1, STP2, STP4-STP8) were excavated (Figure 4.1)

Excavation methods included a both shovel test pits and small excavation units, (generally 1 x 1 m), which were dug by hand trowelling. This method was focused on the vertical relationships between layers of dirt at the site and establishing a chronology for the changes that took place there. All dirt was screened through 1/4" mesh screens, except in the case of features when a 1/8" mesh was used. Sampling for paleoethnobotanical analysis were taken from several contexts on a judgmental basis, where plant remains were likely to have been present due to a concentration of artifacts or favorable preservation conditions. The limitations of this analysis are discussed in the lab procedures section, below. No other environmental samples were taken.

Artifacts were saved and temporarily packaged in heavy-weight plastic bags, each of which was labeled with the appropriate context information. Some groups of artifacts were not saved, or only sampled at the discretion of the excavator including: furnace scale, coal, brick, mortar, and plaster. Paper excavation forms were used for recording information about each context and drawings were made at the base of each level (however, if no soil color differences
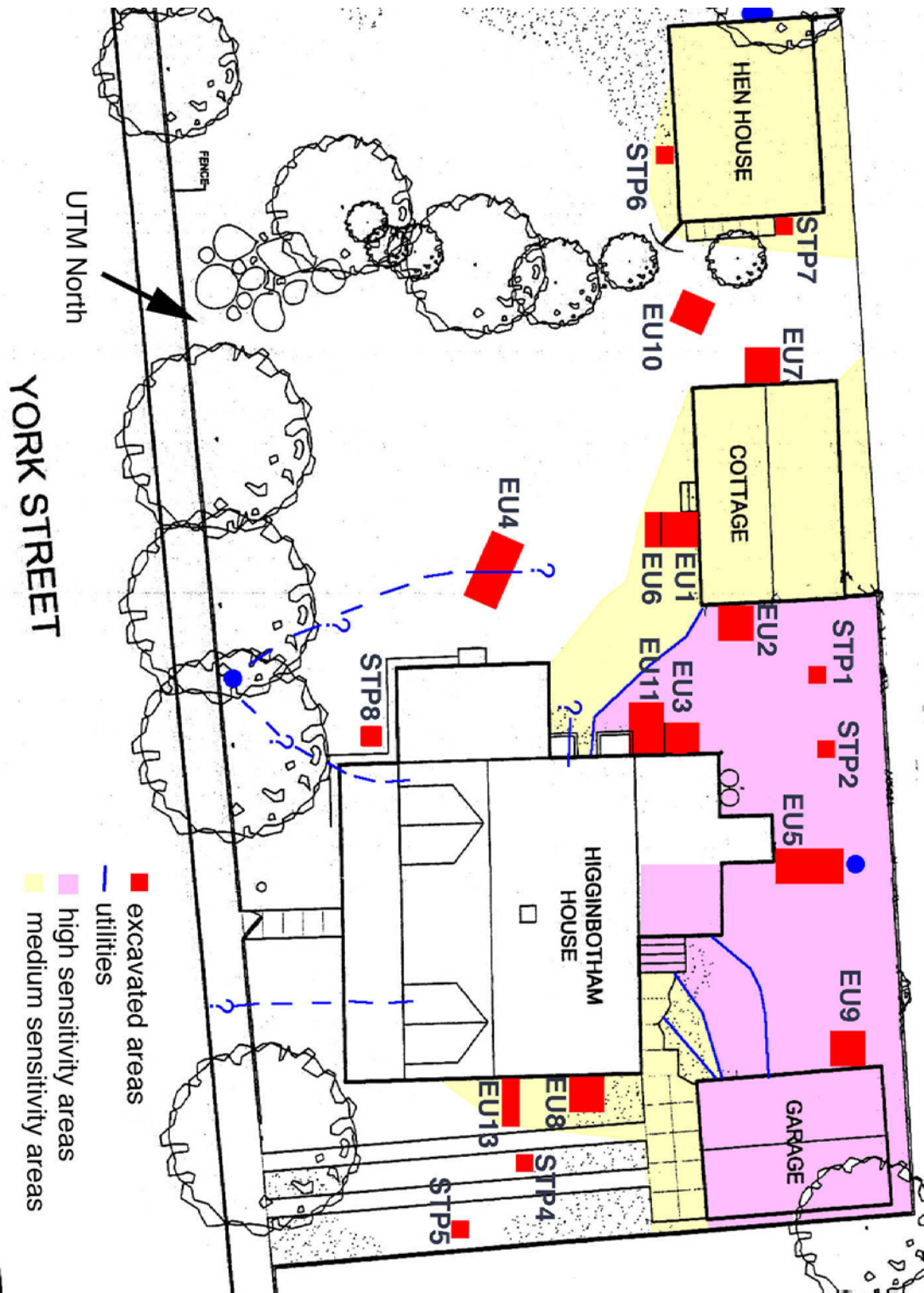
Figure 4.1. Boston-Higginbotham House Site Map, indicating archaeological sensitivity band excavated areas.

or artifacts were visible, no drawing was made). Photographs were taken at the base of each level as well as at the discretion of the excavator. Separate excavation forms and digital photographs were created for each feature. At the completion of each unit, drawings were made of two profiles to illustrate the stratigraphy in that area and a description of the relationship between the stratigraphic levels was completed (Unit Stratigraphic Record).

What follows is a detailed description of the excavation of each unit, the types of artifacts encountered, and the depositional events represented.

Hen House Area (STP6, STP7)

The Hen House Area is close to the western end of the Museum of African American History's Nantucket property, adjacent to the Nantucket African Meeting House (NAMH) and so the early deposits in this area are likely closely associated with this structure. Florence Higginbotham built the Hen House in 1936.

Our excavations included two 50 × 50cm shovel test pits on the south and east sides of the Hen House structure (STP6 and STP7 respectively). The stratigraphy in the yard had already been well defined by previous excavations at the Nantucket African Meeting House in 1993 and 1996 (Berkland 1999; Beaudry and Berkland 2007). Both STPs were excavated using a trowel and were dug in 20cm arbitrary levels, except where natural stratigraphy was encountered.

STP6 was located on the south side of the Hen House, to the east of the present-day front door (Figure 4.2). This unit came down upon a flat stone at 7cmbs, which appeared to have been an earlier iteration of the paving stones that now lie around the edge of the structure's foundation, or may have simply acted as a step-stone for the front door. STP6 did not reveal any evidence for any other sub-surface features, however, it did yield a variety of 19th- and 20th-century artifacts and provides another point of reference for reconstructing the landscape history at the site. The stratigraphy conforms almost completely to the stratigraphy found by Berkland (1999) in the African Meeting House's East Yard. One of Berkland's nearby units, Unit 4S15E, had very similar stratigraphy, including the dark yellowish brown silty sand lens (Level 2a) between 40-50cmbd (much deeper than STP6 L2a). Because the color of this layer (10YR 4/6 in STP6 and 10YR 4/4 in Berkland's 4S15E) resembles much deeper deposits found across both sites, it is possible that it was redeposited during some type of renovation at the African Meeting House in the mid–late-19th century. Level 3a proved to have only 19th-century artifacts and likely represent the yard space during the early-19th century. Level 2a was identified as evidence for "swept yards" in Berkland (1999), however, we did not open up enough area horizontally to further support this conclusion.

STP7 had similar stratigraphy to STP6 with the dark brown A-Horizon extending about 40 cmbs, giving way to lighter orange-colored B-Horizon, and finally to a very light orange sandy parent material at about 60 cm below surface (Figure 4.2: STP7 Stratigraphic Profile). The Hen House itself sits on a wooden sill foundation, which also became visible in both STP6 and STP7, as dirt had accumulated beyond the sill, the step-stone, and a portion of the first course of shingles. Sill construction would involve no builder's trench as the foundation sills are set directly on the ground. This type of construction suggests that there was little subsurface disturbance with the construction of the Hen House in the 1930s by Florence Higginbotham so previous features, associated with the Nantucket African Meeting House, may still be in tact. The accumulations of sand around the structure (approximately 10 cm since it was built) also give us an idea of how quickly dirt accumulates at the site.

The artifacts in the upper levels of STP7 (L1 & L2) consisted of a mixture of 19th- and 20th-century materials. In Level 3, artifacts were sparse but included a mid-19th-century figural

face-pipe in addition to 8 fragments of refined 19th-century earthenware, including whiteware. Little cultural material was found in the upper portion of Level 4, and the lower portion was sterile.
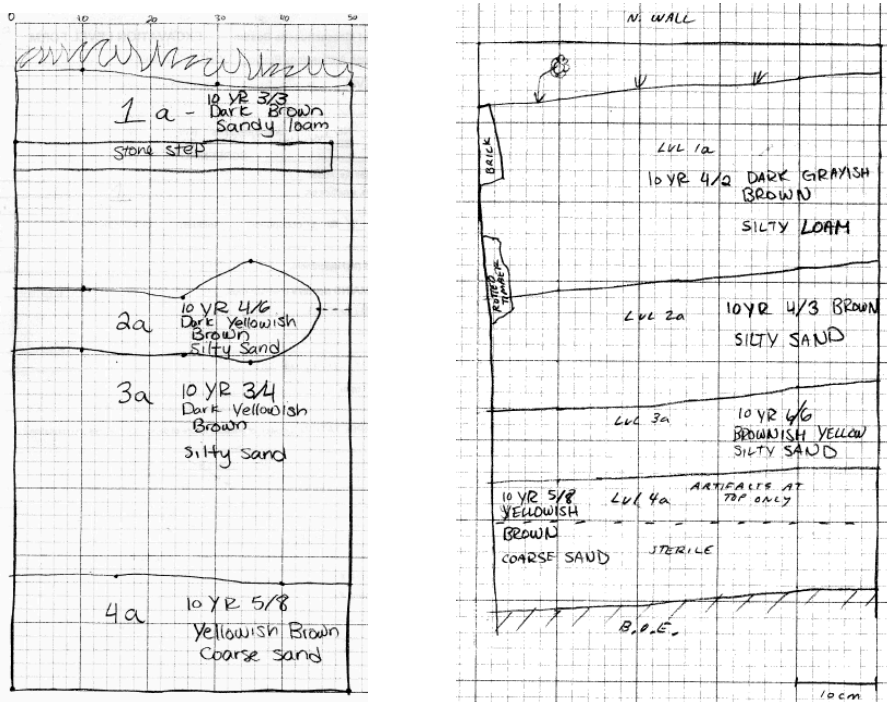
Figure 4.2. Hen House Area Stratigraphic Profiles. *Left*: West Wall Profile, Shovel Test Pit 6. *Right*: North Wall Profile, Shovel Test Pit 7.

West Yard (EU7, EU10, EU1/EU6, EU4)

The West Yard Area included the units associated with the south and west sides of the Cottage and west of the B-H House sunroom. These units have similar stratigraphic profiles and do not show the high artifact concentrations seen in the North Yard or the Trash Pit area.

Excavations in the Cottage Area were intended to gather information about the use of the Cottage in the 20th century as well as potentially locate features associated with the use of the yard before the cottage was built by Florence Higginbotham (before 1931; JGWAA 2005: 202). We discovered several small features in this area including a late-19th/early-20th century trash pit, several late-20th-century planting holes, and a post-hole.

The two excavation units on the west side of the cottage, EU7 and EU10, provide evidence for the 20th-century use of the area as a garden. EU7 was positioned against the western wall of the structure to gain information on its foundation structure. EU10 was placed a few meters west of the structure in order to ground-truth an anomaly detected in the GPR readings which suggested a possible "surface" at a depth of 30cm. The surface vegetation in this area included a raspberry bush, which sometimes grow well close to privies, however, no privy was detected.

Within EU7 and EU10, Features 7, 8, 10, and 11 were all modern planting holes that contained a variety of 19th-century materials mixed with modern (mid-late-20th century) trash

such as vegetable bags (Figures 4.3 & 4.4). Interestingly, several of these planting holes had chicken skeletons buried in them, presumably dead animals from the Hen House used as fertilizer. The stratigraphy in EU7 and EU10 is associated with 20th-century gardening activity although a relatively deep (though disturbed) A-Horizon went to a depth of 30 cmbd in EU10 and 42 cmbd in EU7. The soil patterns in EU7 suggest that the garden area may have been established about a foot from the cottage wall. Additionally, bricks had been placed along the ground at the base of the cottage wall to prevent the intrusion of rodents under the structure as it sits on the ground. EU10 did not reveal the anomaly detected by the GPR as hoped, suggesting it was relatively ephemeral (it occurred at a depth where the dirt transitioned between A and B horizon).
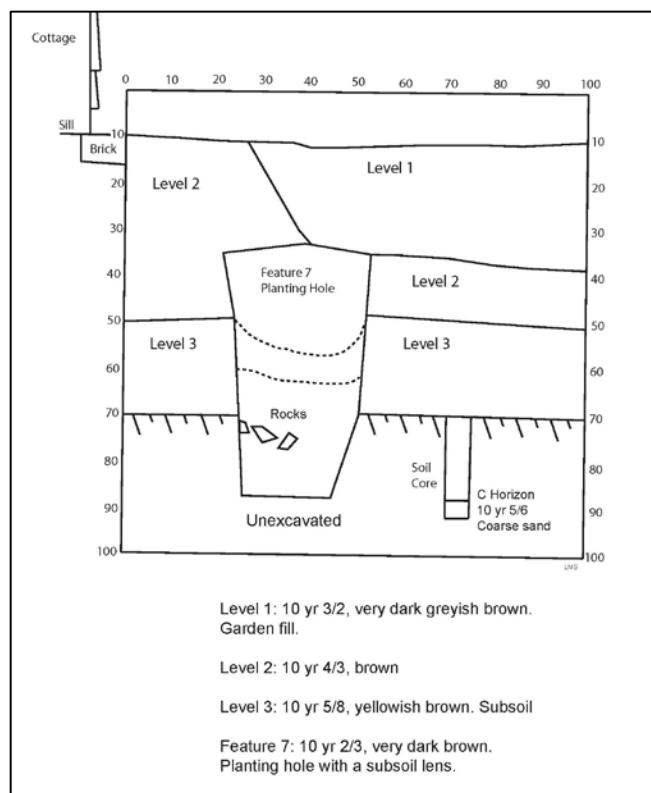
Figure 4.3. Excavation Unit 7 South Wall Stratigraphic Profile.

In EU7, 19th-century artifacts were recovered, however, no 19th-century midden level was detected. This is likely due to the long-term 20th-century use of this space as a garden area. Additionally, the quantity of 19th-century artifacts found in this unit was relatively low, suggesting that even before this area was disturbed by 20th-century activity, little trash had been allowed to collect in this area of the west yard by the Bostons and their descendants in the 18th and 19th centuries. A similar pattern was seen in EU10. One interesting small find from EU10 was a plastic charm of a seated figure with a silver coating (EU10 L1c, cxt 228). This charm is similar to Mexican charms of seated figures with hats drawn over their faces (Luscomb 1967: 130; comparable silver button, dates after 1920).
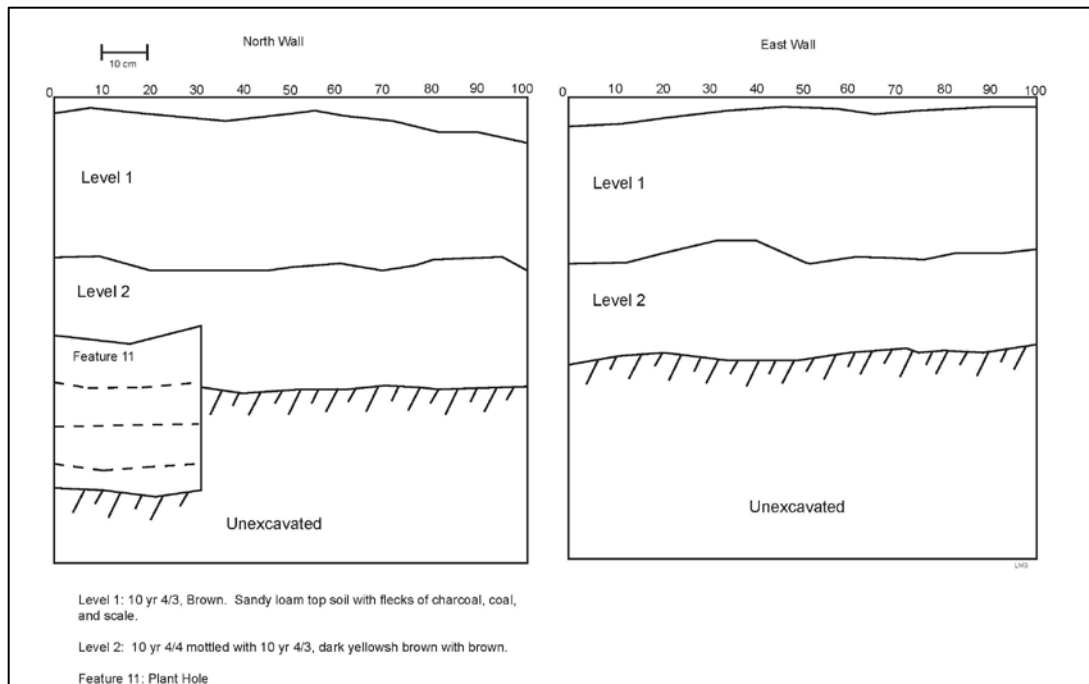
Figure 4.4. Excavation Unit 10 North and East Wall Stratigraphic Profiles.

On the south side of the Cottage, EU1 was placed to gain information on the foundation of the structure and to look for evidence of features in this area. EU1 was a 1×1 meter unit located directly east of the Cottage stairs. EU6 represents a .5m extension of EU1 south, which was put in to facilitate the excavation of Feature 2 (Figure 4.5: EU1/EU6 Stratigraphic Profile). The cottage sits on a sill foundation that now lies buried in Level 1 but was at one time above ground. If our interpretation that Level 2 represents redeposited basement fill is correct, than the law of superposition suggests that the basement was dug *before* the cottage was installed in 1936. This represents new information about the age of the basement.

Feature 2 was a trash pit from the late-19th or early-20th century that represents a single depositional episode. In the trash pit were about 30 tin cans, an 1876+ cast iron lamp stove, a machine-made milk glass basket-styled bowl, an enameled cooking pot, and a few other small artifacts (Figure 4.6).

Lamp stoves were invented in the late-19th century as a cheap and portable means of heating food or irons and in lighting small spaces. These stoves were fueled by oil, with a cloth wick heating the burners. The wick could be lit through a swinging mica window. In the case of the lamp stove from Feature 2, we have a three-wick stove, which would heat faster and hotter than the one or two wick varieties. The brand of the stove found on the Boston-Higginbotham House site is Florence, and was produced in Florence, Massachusetts sometime after 1876.

Because this feature is associated with throwing away a cooking assemblage—only the lamp stove, cans, a pot, and a milk glass bowl were found— this is not a house-clean-out event. If this were a house clean-out event we could expect more varieties of objects, specifically ceramics and glass.

One possible interpretation of this deposit is that it could be associated with someone trying to conceal their presence on the property. During the late-19th century Elizabeth Stevens may have lived at other houses to facilitate working as a domestic for some of her time on the

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island. In addition to this, Francis Karttunen has noted that during Florence Higginbotham's early years owning the house she spent much of her time on the east side of the island living close to the Underhills or off-island (JGWAA 2005: 18–19). This intermittent occupation could have opened up the possibility for squatters on the property.

Figure 4.5. Excavation Unit 1 (*Left)* and Excavation Unit 6 (*Right*) East Wall Stratigraphic Profile.

Figure 4.6. Photograph of Excavation Units 1 and 6 East Wall, Feature 2, lamp-stove in situ.

Excavations west of the sun porch (EU4) were intended to detect evidence for the use of the yard in the 19th and 20th centuries, including a possible pathway associated with the door to the sun porch. Excavation Unit 4 was a 1×2m unit placed approximately one meter west of the Higginbotham House sun porch door, extending east-west two meters (Figure 4.7). The placement of this unit was based on the ground penetrating radar survey as well as some inferences that had been drawn from the conductivity survey. EU4 was oriented with respect to the UTM grid rather than the houses and other structures. The GPR survey had suggested that there was some sort of anomaly that cut across the unit. This unit uncovered a 20th-century pipe trench for a water line into the house (Feature 1) and the remains of the passway which once ran on the western side of the house (EU4 L3a, East, cxt 150).

EU4's stratigraphy was generally consistent with other units in the west yard (EU1, EU6, and EU10; though EU7 is an exception) and was also similar to those STPs in the Hen House area (STP6, STP7). The A-horizon was fairly deep, extending to approximately 55 cm below datum and sloping downward to the north. This unit did not show the dense layers of redeposited 19th-century artifacts seen in the North Yard. No other features were found in this unit. The stratigraphy of the unit shows that the ground sloped north to south at a 10% grade (in both the past and present) and east to west at a 10% grade in the 19th century (interface at L3/L2 and L2/L1). The entire property today exhibits this east-west slope (though not has dramatic as the N-S Slope) and it can be seen in the HSR illustration of the north elevation of the Boston-Higginbotham House. This E-W slope was not detected in the stratigraphy of the units in the North Yard, however, our understanding of the depositional history in this area suggests that there has been a lot of 20th-century disturbance in this area, to a great depth.
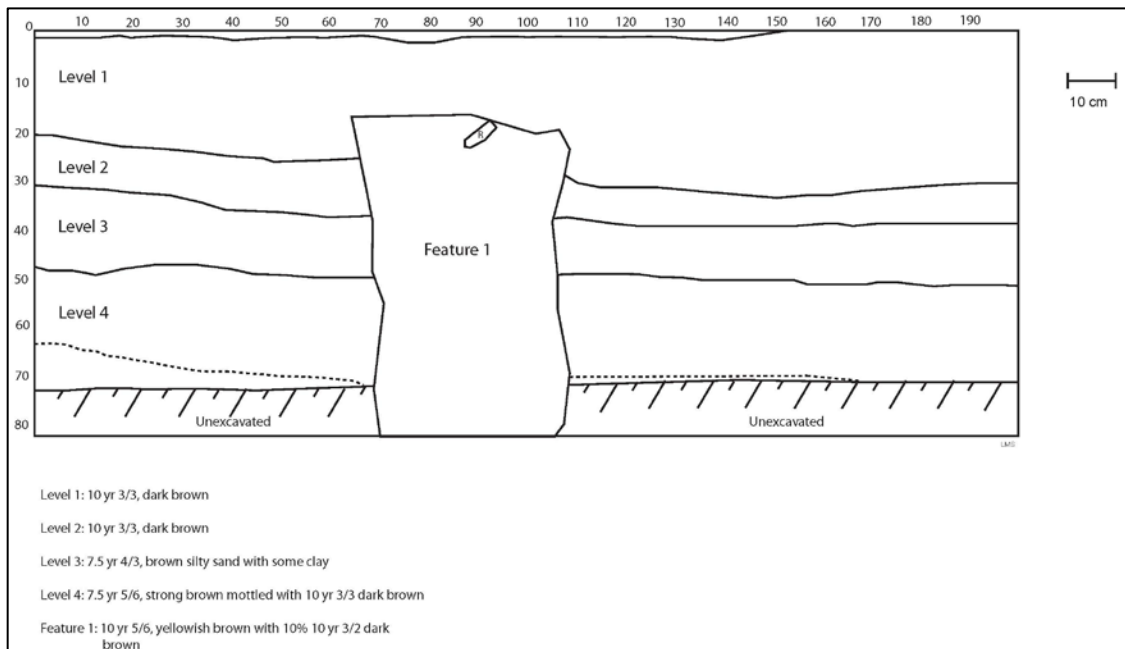
Figure 4.7   Excavation Unit 4 South Wall Stratigraphic Profile.

North Yard (Backyard) (EU2, STP1, STP2, EU5, EU9)

The North Yard posed the largest challenges for interpretation for the entire site. In the 18th century, this area was originally much steeper, sloping downward to the north, and has since been filled in on the Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham side of the property line and likely cut into and leveled on the West Dover Street side of the property line.

Our archaeological investigation into the North Yard consisted of three excavation units and two shovel test pits. The EUs and STPs that are part of the North Yard share some aspects of their depositional history, including the redeposition of dirt from the basement (circa 1926, JGWAA 2005: 19–20) and a 19th-century sheet midden that overlies the B-horizon. The archaeological deposits in this area show some differences, however, as some spaces were subject to higher rates of disturbance (e.g. EU5). Beneath the A-Horizon there is a sandy yellow (10 YR 5/6 or 5/8) B-horizon with few artifacts in the upper-portion and none at lower depths. Several features associated with outbuildings or fences intruded into this horizon.

Excavation Unit 2 (1×1m) was located 50cm east of the southeast corner of the Cottage (Figure 4.8). The upper layers of the unit are related to landscaping and the re-deposition of dirt from under the SB-FH House when the cement basement was excavated and poured, circa 1926. The interface between EU2 L2 and EU2 L3 represents a previous ground surface. Level 3 represents a late-19th or early-19th-century yard space. The artifacts from Level 3 are relatively sparse, and very small. Artifacts included faunal remains, architectural debris (flat glass, brick frags, nails), charcoal and scale fragments, clay pipes, white-bodied ceramics, and two shards of curved glass. The fragmentary nature of the artifacts is consistent with a trampled yard space, but the relative scarcity of all artifact types suggests that this space may have been kept clean, a pattern Beaudry and Berkland (2007) saw at the Nantucket African Meeting House at 29 York Street (next door).
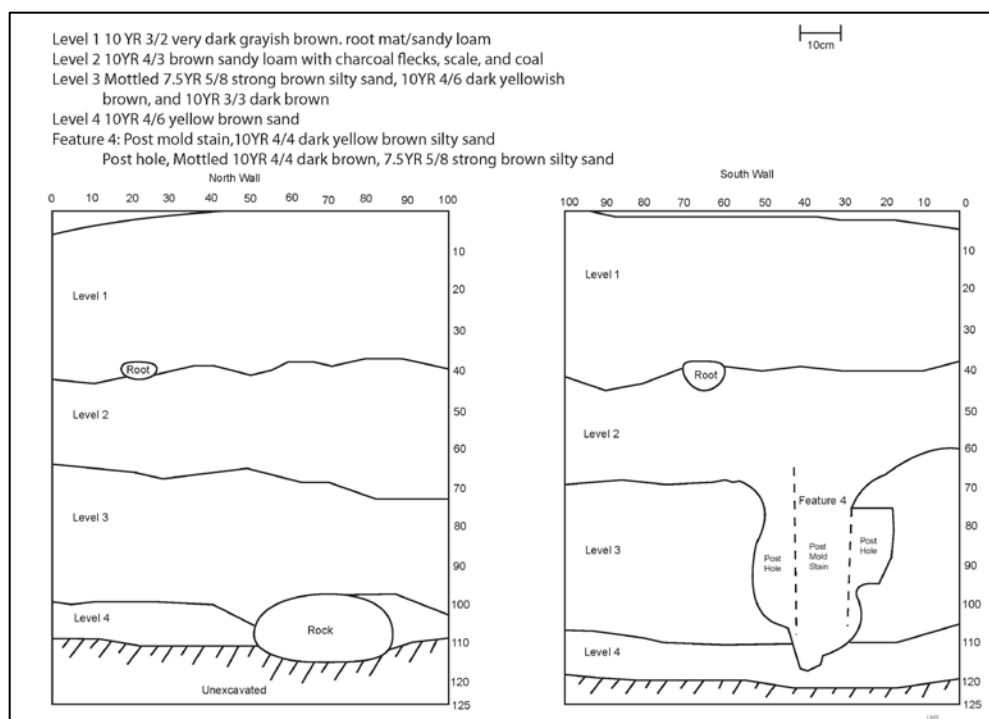
Figure 4.8. Excavation Unit 2 North (*Left*) and South (*Right*) Wall Stratigraphic Profiles.

Feature 4 (cxt 153 & 157 & 159) was post-hole extending from 70-104cmbd in EU2. It was encountered at the interface between Level 2 and Level 3. This post-hole was approximately 30 cm in diameter, with the post-mold only 13-14cm in diameter. This hole was dug into the early-19th century ground surface and the post likely rotted in place as no cultural material was recovered from the feature. The location of this post-hole aligned with the property boundaries laid out in the 1812 deed that ceded the house (minus the east chamber and garrit) to Mary Douglass after the death of Thankful Micah.

STP1 was located in the North Yard, east of the cottage, to the east of a tree and was 50 × 50 cm, with a depth of 125cm below surface. This STP has strata that are a result of 20th-century dirt displacement and natural accumulation (L1), 19th-century midden deposit (L2), a possible trashpit feature (L3), and subsoil (L4). STP1 L3 (cxt 114, 55-75 cmbd) was very "organic," had a low incidence of fire debris and a high concentration of mammal bones (10YR 4/3 silty loam with organic material). This level is likely part of a shallow pit dug to dispose of animal/food remains, however, our horizontal visibility was not significant enough to determine where edges of this pit may have been. Artifacts from this level included a moderate number of 19th-century ceramics (54 sherds) and sparse curved glass (2 shards).

STP2 was located in the North Yard several meters east of STP1, was 50 × 50 cm, and went to a depth of 100cm below grade. The strata in this unit represent 20th-century activity and basement-redeposition (L1), redeposited subsoil from basement excavation with some cultural material (L2), 19th-century midden (L3), early 19th century fill (L4), and glacial till with some artifacts (L5). The late-18th-century ground surface could have been between L4 and L5. Excavation to sterile soil was limited by the small size of the unit.

EU5 was a 1 × 2 meter unit, running N-S, in the North Yard (Figure 4.9). The southwest corner of this unit lined up approximately with the northeast corner of the basement egress. This unit was located in this area in part to gather information on the history of this portion of the
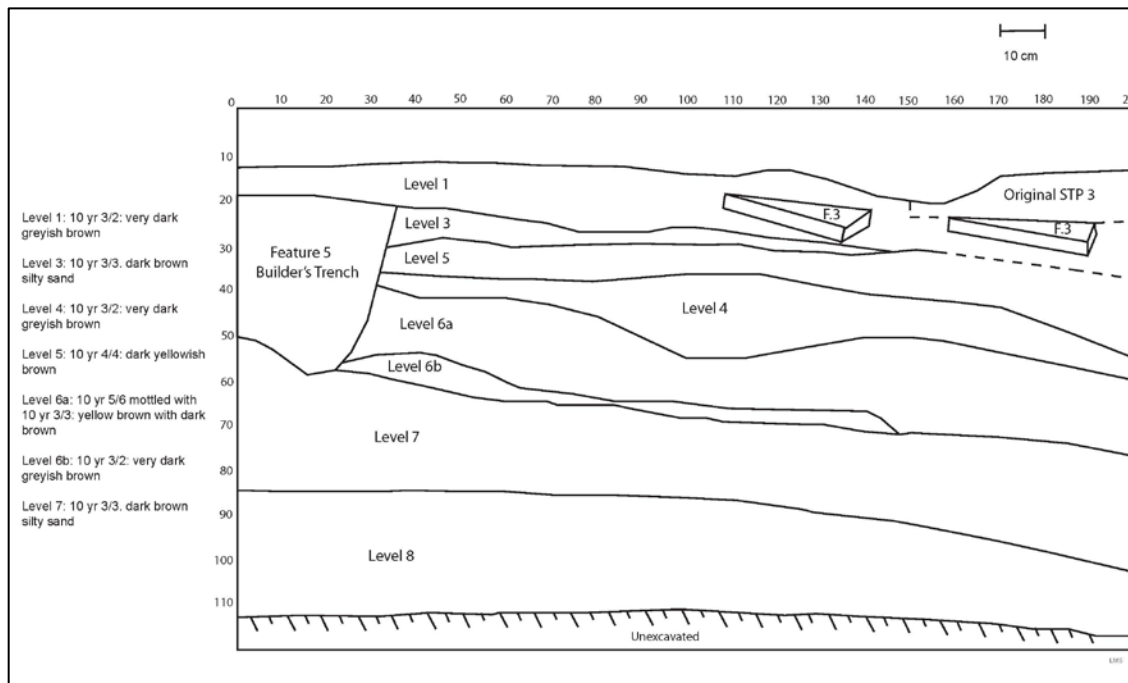
Figure 4.9. Excavation Unit 5 West Wall Stratigraphic Profile.

structure and also to follow out a feature uncovered during excavation of STP3. STP3 was located 2 meters north of the basement egress and came down upon a concrete tile within a few centimeters. Probing in the area suggested that there were more of these tiles under the surface. EU5 was opened up to see more of this surface which is a tiled patio area dating to the Florence Higginbotham era of the house's occupation (Feature 3, Figure 4.10).

Below the cement-tile surface was a complex series of deposition episodes (Levels 3, 4, 5, & 6) related to the construction or repair of the bulkhead entrance (Feature 5), the excavation of the house's basement, and possibly other earth-moving activities. Level 7 appears to be a 19th-century midden, similar to that seen in STP1 and EU2. This interpretation is based on the predominance of 19th-century ceramics and glass, although one fragment of machine-made glass was recovered. Level 8 is likely the original ground surface (A-horizon) in this area and proved to be dark in color. At the 86cmbd in this unit, another feature was found (Feature 15) which appeared amorphous at first, but firmed up to be the size and shape of a posthole, extending to 103 cmbd.

While the *terminus post quem* dates for the lowest levels (EU5 L7 and L8) suggest the accumulation of a midden during the 19th century, it is significant to note the similarities in artifact types seen in these levels as compared to more upper levels, such as Level 4. The occurrence of several ceramic vessel "feet" in both Level 8a and Level 4c suggest that there may be a higher amount of disturbance than previously thought. These pearlware, dark blue transfer-printed feet might belong to a teapot or soup tureen, relatively unusual vessel forms. Because they do not mend, it is also possible that they came from different vessels. It is important to note that many of the same ceramic decorative patterns seen in this unit are also found in EU3/EU11, where a large trash pit was created in the early-20th century with the transfer of the house between owners. Significantly, a "Barry's Tricopherous" bottle fragment found in EU5 L5b *mends* with fragments from EU11 L5b and 2a, on the west side of the house.

The garage area of the property included only one unit (EU9) as there was a high amount of disturbance in this area from utilities. EU9 was a 1×1m unit that uncovered cultural deposits that extended to 125cmbd (Figure 4.11). This unit was placed based on details mentioned in deeds about the presence of a barn or shop in this area.

The uppermost five layers (Levels 1-5) consisted of thick deposits of scale as well as late-19th- and early-20th-century trash. These layers are representative of redeposited dirt from the excavation of the house's basement and the disposal of household firewaste. At the interface between Level 2c and Level 2d, a 20% slope from north to south became evident (40cmbd in south, 60cmbd in the north), with artifacts lying along this slope. At the interface between Level 7 and Level 8, the slope was only 10% south to north (100cmbd in the south, 110 cmbd in the north) and underlying deposits continued to align with this angle. Level 8, 100–110cmbd, was an early-19th century trash midden lying on top of B-horizon. At 105cmbd, this unit was well into B-horizon when Feature 12, a large square pier stone hole, was uncovered.

Feature 12 was located on the southern edge of EU9 at a depth of 105cmbd and was dug approximately 30cm into the B-Horizon. At 105cmbd it was generally regular 26×30 cm square and it narrowed to become a 10cm diameter circle at 133cmbd, although in the lower portion of the hole, we may be seeing some root disturbance. A variety of artifacts were recovered from this feature including creamware, pearlware, redware, shell, fish bones, brick, vessel glass, calcined bone, unburned mammal bones, and charcoal. The presence of these artifacts suggest that the pier was removed at a certain point, and was likely associated with the dismantling of the building in this area.
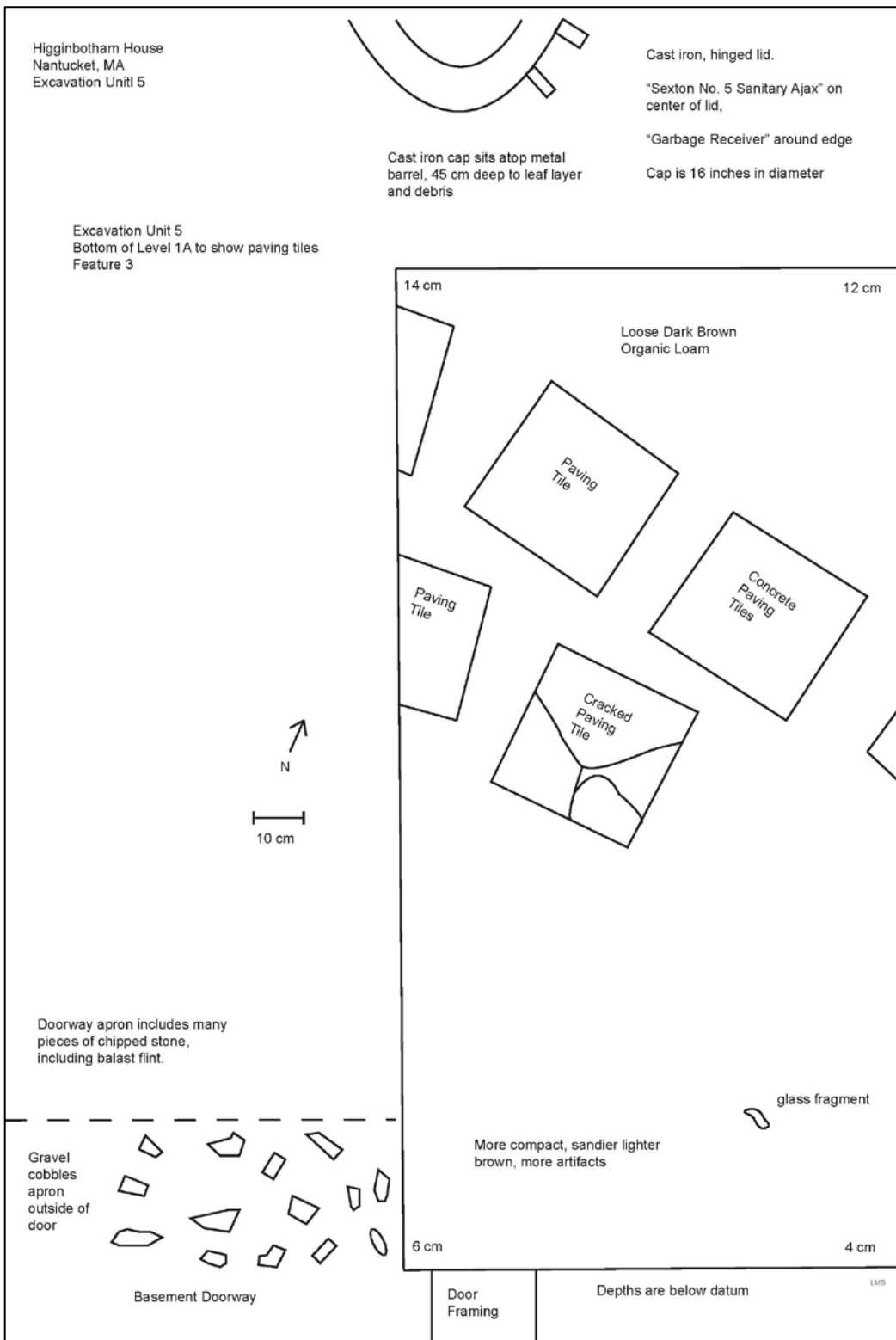
Figure 4.10. Excavation Unit 5 Plan Drawing of Tile Surface.
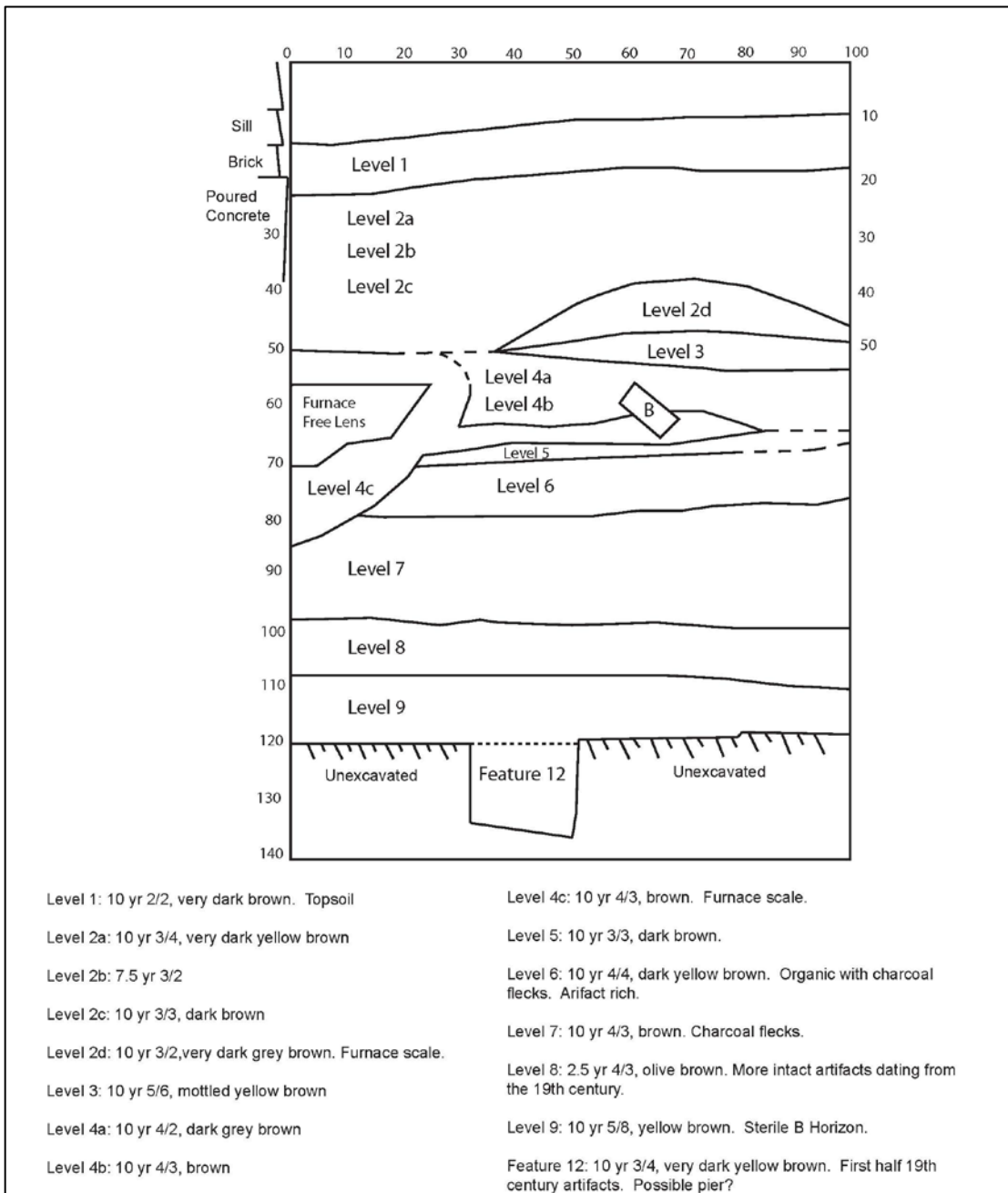
Figure 4.11. Excavation Unit 9 South Wall Stratigraphic Profile.

Given the size and regularity of the hole, it is likely that it once held a pier supporting a structure in this area of the property, rather than a post. In the early-19th century an out-building (barn or shop) was in this location, as seen in the 1832 and 1834 (Coffin 1834) maps. The Historic Structures Report suggests that this building may have been a "small dwelling built by the Groves on the parcel that they purchased in 1828" (JGWAA 2005: 10) but this is not substantiated by other evidence. Deeds mention a barn in this location (NPC 1812: PB5: 378).

Of note in the North Yard area is that there is a similarity of artifact patterns found here with those from the Trash Pit (EU3/EU11). These similarities suggest that the temporary proprietors in 1918 or Florence Higginbotham, between 1919–1926, cleared out the belongings of Elizabeth Stevens and her ancestors by digging a trash pit beside the house. Part of this trash pit was discovered in EU3/EU11, where there were many vessels recovered which were of sizes that suggested primary deposition (details discussion below in Ceramic Minimum Vessel Count section). Part of this trash pit, however, was later disturbed. Florence Higginbotham's excavation of the basement in the mid- 20th century served to level the ground in the backyard but also managed to disturb the ceramics and glass trash from a few years earlier. Much of this was redeposited in the area of the North Yard and the artifacts were broken further by this movement. These layers were likely deposited directly on the 19th-century midden in the backyard (For Example: EU5 L7, L8).

The deposits in STP1, STP2, EU5, and EU9 bring to light new information on the landscape history of the site. Some of these insights include the location of a rich sheet midden deposit which stretches to the north of the structure, evidence for 20th-century redeposition of dirt for the building of the concrete basement, and features associated with outbuildings and fences.

Trash Pit (EU3, EU11)

Excavation units EU3 and EU11 located a dense trash deposit associated with 20th-century activities, including the disposal of objects from the Boston's tenure at the house, sometime between 1918 and 1926, as well as demolition and construction that took place on the property in the 1920s.

EU3 (1×1 m unit) was opened first and was chosen based a strong GPR reading as well as the need to test deposits around the foundation of the structure (Figure 4.12). The unit came down on dense trash disposal levels almost immediately (20cmbd) with a variety of 19th century household debris that was often broken in-situ. EU11 (1×1.5m) was opened just south of EU3 in order to trace out the horizontal extent of the deposits, which were tentatively interpreted as a gradually accumulating trash pit underneath a porch or stairwell (Figure 4.13). After analysis it is clear that while the artifacts were broken in-situ and were protected (during certain time periods) by a stairwell, these deposits were not a gradual accumulation but a series of quick depositions in the 1920s.

It is most straightforward to reconstruct the stratigraphy of EU3 and EU11 from the bottom-up. Subsoil void of cultural material (EU3 L8; EU11 L8) was encountered at 70cm below surface in EU3's SW corner, though this level sloped downward to the north at a 10% grade. The base of excavation was approximately 100cm below surface.

Directly overlying this layer were artifact-dense deposits of household materials with a mixture of 19th- and 20th-century materials (EU3 L5, L6, & L7; EU11 L5b & L7). Much of this material was broken-in-place, or nearly so, such as ceramic plates and teacups. The glass from these levels was, however, much more fragmentary and comparatively sparse. Also of note, large pieces of bone were present, especially in EU3 L6a, including a pig jaw bone and other large mammal bones. These artifacts were deposited after a trash pit was dug in the early-20th century. This interpretation is based on the absence of a 19th-century ground surface, a cut into the subsoil visible in the south profile for EU11, and the mixture of 19th-and 20th-century material.
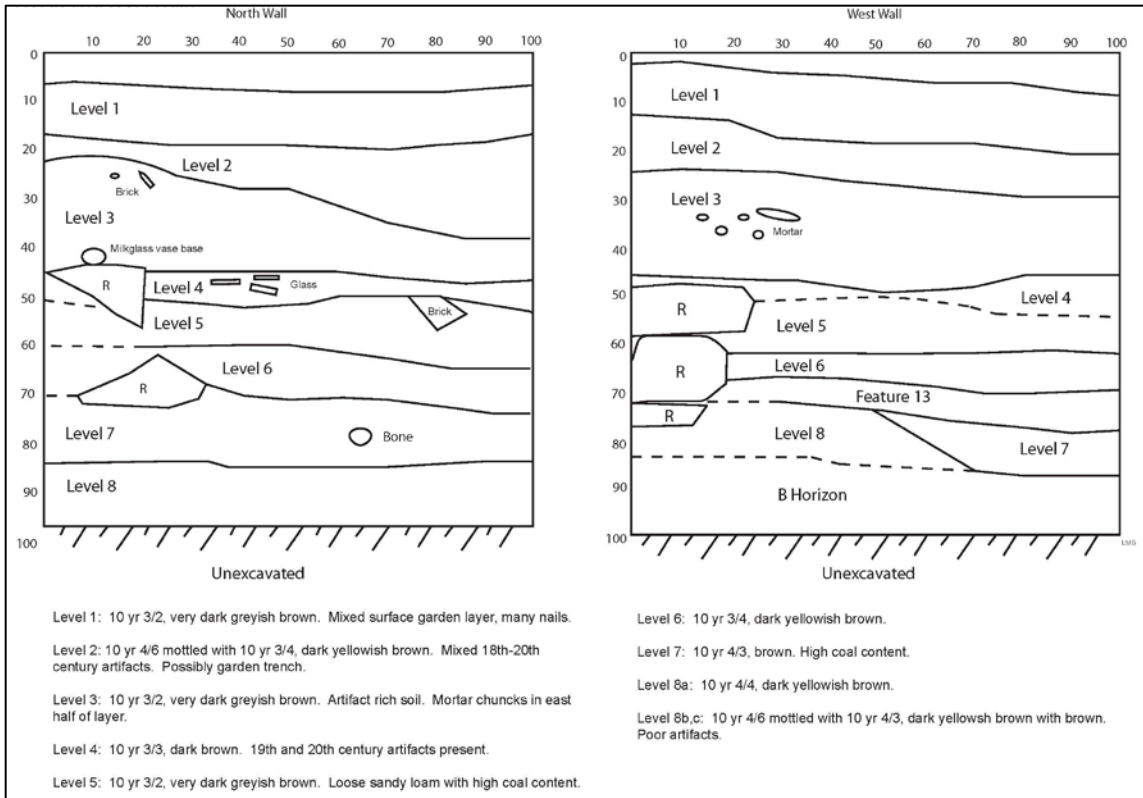
Figure 4.12. Excavation Unit 3 North (*Left*) and West (*Right*) Wall Stratigraphic Profiles.
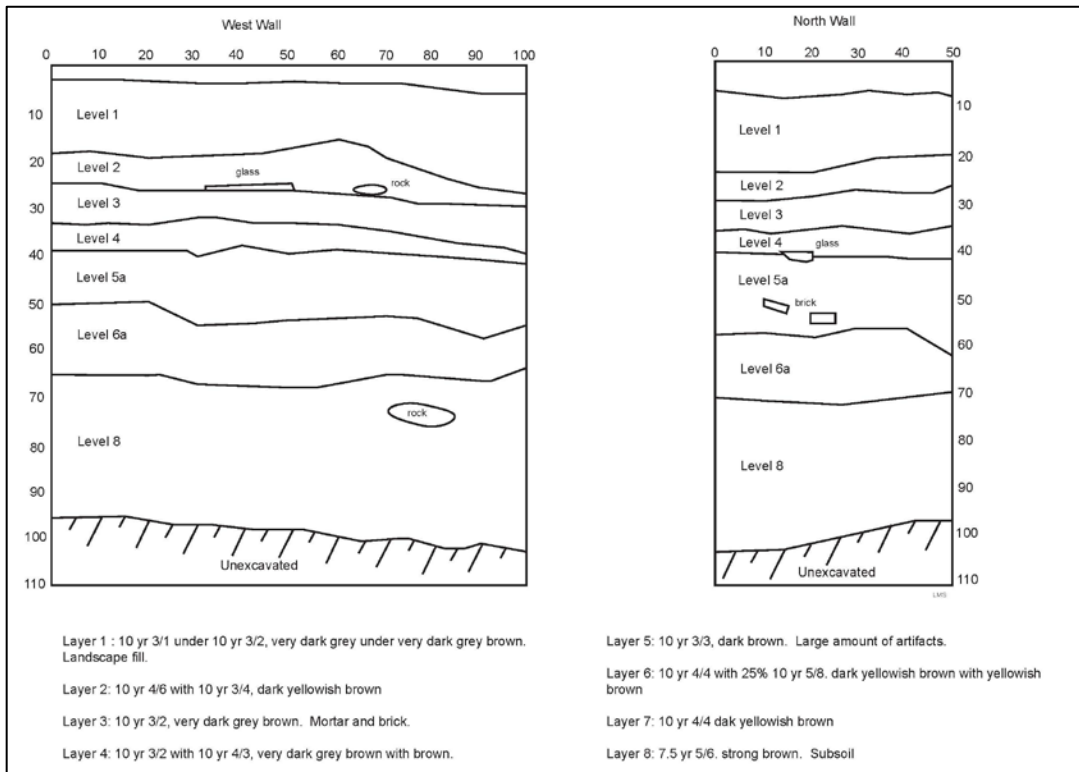
Figure 4.13. Excavation Unit 11 West (*Left*) and North (*Right*) Wall Stratigraphic Profiles.

The lower (earlier) layers in this clean-out event were most dense. Artifacts from EU3 Levels 6 and 7 were recovered in extremely high numbers (6,885 artifacts). The bulk of these artifacts were associated with ceramics (3,434 sherds), however a very large number were also bone fragments (1,632 fragments) although bones can become very fragmentary in the poor soil conditions of the northeast and brittle once they are removed from the dirt. Artifacts from EU11 Level 7 were recovered in high numbers (926) and included some architectural debris (41 nails, 135 shards flat glass) but was mostly ceramic fragments (633 sherds) with some curved glass (44 shards), bones (39 fragments), and a few significant personal adornment artifacts. Small finds included two cuprous buttons, a blue glass bead, and a cuprous pencil top.

A portion of the 19th and very early 20th century ground surface may have survived in the western 1/3 of EU11, Level 6a. EU11 Level 6a overlies Level 8 (subsoil) in this area, but is not part of the dense 20th-century dense trash pit deposit. While this may constitute a 19th-century ground surface, it is not completely undisturbed. One find pointing to an early date is an 1822 nickel found in the layer. Level 6a was somewhat demarcated by a line of bricks and stones running N-S in the unit (Figure 4.14). Artifacts in this level were more fragmentary and soil colors were different. Importantly, however, Level 6a is very mottled, suggesting some redeposition of dirt from other areas, this mottling casts doubt on the interpretation that this was an intact 19th-century ground surface.
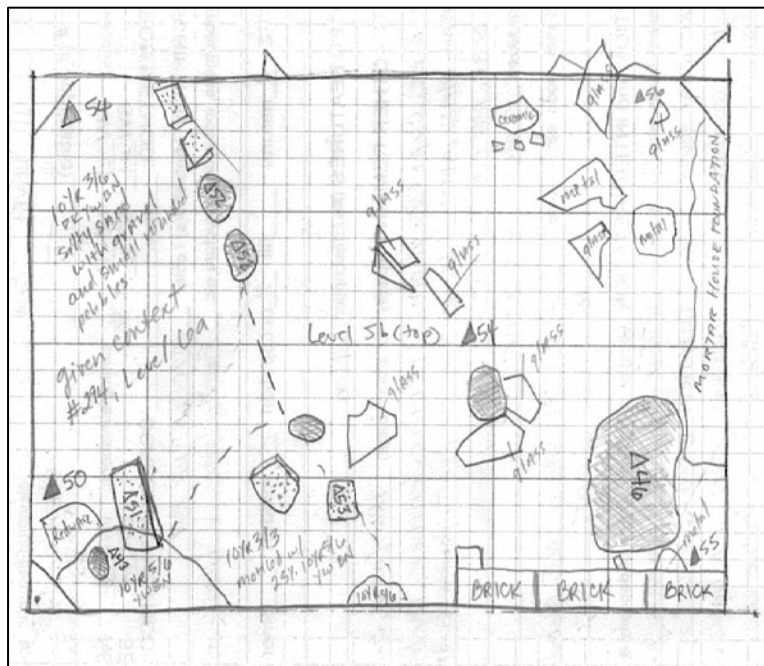
Figure 4.14. Excavation Unit 11, Plan Drawing Level 5a and 5b.

While no post-holes were found, several stones were stacked at the intersection of EU3/EU11 (EU3 SW corner; EU11 NW corner) between 45–70cm below surface (Figure 4.14). This arrangement suggests that there was a structure of some kind that once stood in this spot. Supporting this is the fact that there was once a doorway in the West side of the House, above EU11. While we do not know the nature of the structure that stood here, there would have had to have been at least a set of stairs in both the late-19th and early-20th centuries.

The household-clean-out deposit extends 1.25 meters away from the house but stops abruptly, in EU11, at a line of bricks and stones that are likely some of the debris associated with the stairs. The eastern extent of the trash pit cannot be determined because of the presence of the cement foundation, however, the similarity in the decorative patterns of objects from the Trash Pit and other areas where we see redeposited basement fill suggest that the trash pit may have once extended under the house to some degree or includes redeposited yard sheet-midden.

Overlying the household trash layers are two demolition and construction layers associated with renovations made to the house in the 1920s (EU3 L3 & L4; EU11 L3, L4, L5a). The first (chronologically, EU3 L4 & EU11 L5a) is associated with the alteration of the western façade to take out the doorway and window and put in one large window and removing the parged surface enclosing the crawl space beneath the building. The second (chronologically, EU3 L3 & EU11 L3 & L4) is associated with the dismantling of the brick chimney, continued cleaning out of the house, and the destruction of the east addition. *Terminus post quem* dates for the deposition of the cultural material depends on the presence of machine made glass (TPQ 1901) and solarized glass (1880-1920) as most of the artifacts date to the early-19th century. A few particularly-complete artifacts from EU11 L5a were the base of an oil lamp, found on the border between EU3 and EU11 (Figure 4.15)and a sad iron (Figure 6.??).

Figure 4.15. Oil lamp, EU11 L5a, cxt 281.

While we do not know whether Caroline Talbot, Mary Hogarth, Edward Whelden, or Florence Higginbotham herself cleaned out the house, it is clear that they did so in the early-20th century (1918-1926) and did not leave a striking number of contemporary tightly dated artifacts behind. According to John G. Waite Associate's Historic Structures Report, major renovations were underway in the 1920s with the house jumping from a value of $500 in 1921 to $1800 in 1926 (JGWAA 2005: 19–20). Florence purchased the property in early 1920 and her only son, William, was born in 1921. While she was not living there (rather, was renting to a single man) during the 1920s, a solarized-glass baby bottle found in EU3 L3a is likely associated with one of her trips to the property with her son William.

Some of the artifacts in EU3 L3 and EU11 L3 & L4 (cxts 154, 268, 166, 311) suggest the cleaning out of a drawer. High densities of late-19th century personal adornment artifacts were recovered and some which may date earlier. This included two Victorian brooches, eleven shell buttons, five prosser buttons, a garment hook, a safety pin (galvanized), two metal buttons, a hard rubber naval button (WWI), a bakelite button, a possible buckle and a small skeleton key for a drawer (See Table 6.1 for full list of small finds from Drawer Clean-out). Also of note is

the light blue art-glass vase finish that was recovered with overglaze painting still on it. While the house was cleaned out at an earlier time (as seen in deeper deposits), some furniture and other objects likely remained that needed to be disposed of. This could be an episode where Mrs. Higginbotham was continuing to clean out the house as she made renovations.[3] While the objects in the drawer seem to have collected over a long period of time, the contents would have last belonged to Elizabeth Stevens before being deposited.

Finally, overlying the demolition and construction levels are two layers associated with the redeposition of basement fill when the basement was dug out in the mid-1920s (EU3 L1 &L2; EU11 L1 & L2). These layers abut the formed-cement portion of the foundation so must have been deposited after it's pouring. Level 2 shows some sloping west-east which is likely associated with gardening and Level 1 is much darker in color, in the early stages of a developing topsoil. Sometime after this deposition, the original window well on the northwest side of the house was replaced with a brick window well that stands there today. This process left behind Feature 14, the trench for the brick window well, on the south side of EU11.

South/Front Yard (STP8)

Limited excavation in the South/Front Yard of the Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham was undertaken in order to investigate the integrity and nature of the stratigraphy in this area. This area was generally avoided because the Boston-Higginbotham House front yard will not likely be impacted by development of the property and access to the areas close to the house were inaccessible. Based on the Historic Structure Report (JGWAA 2005) and surface survey, parts of the front yard appear have been disturbed by utilities and a large area has been capped by the cement foundation of the front porch. Only one test pit was put in this area: STP8. This STP was intended to detect whether an alternate stratigraphic pattern was present in the front yard.

STP8 shows the area to be highly disturbed; including disturbance from garden activity, the digging of a nearby drainage trench, and rodent burrows (Figure 4.16). This does not preclude the possibility, however, that intact 19th-century deposits are located in the front yard area, especially under the cement porch. The interface between Level 2 and Level 4 was very hard-packed, recovered only early-19th century artifacts, and is potentially a previous ground surface.

Excavations elsewhere on the property (particularly the East Yard of the House) suggest that the A-horizon and the cultural deposits associated with it tend to get thinner as one moves south across the property. The cement porch may have acted to protect deposits, especially around the front door (away from the east and west disturbances of water and sewage respectively). Deposits in the central front door area will still have the potential to reveal information about previous configurations of the front yard.

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[3] John G Waite (2003) in their assessment of the Cottage noted that several furniture pieces still being stored there date to the early-mid 19th century (HSR Outbuildings section p.203). My own brief survey of the cottage suggests that many books date to this time period as well.
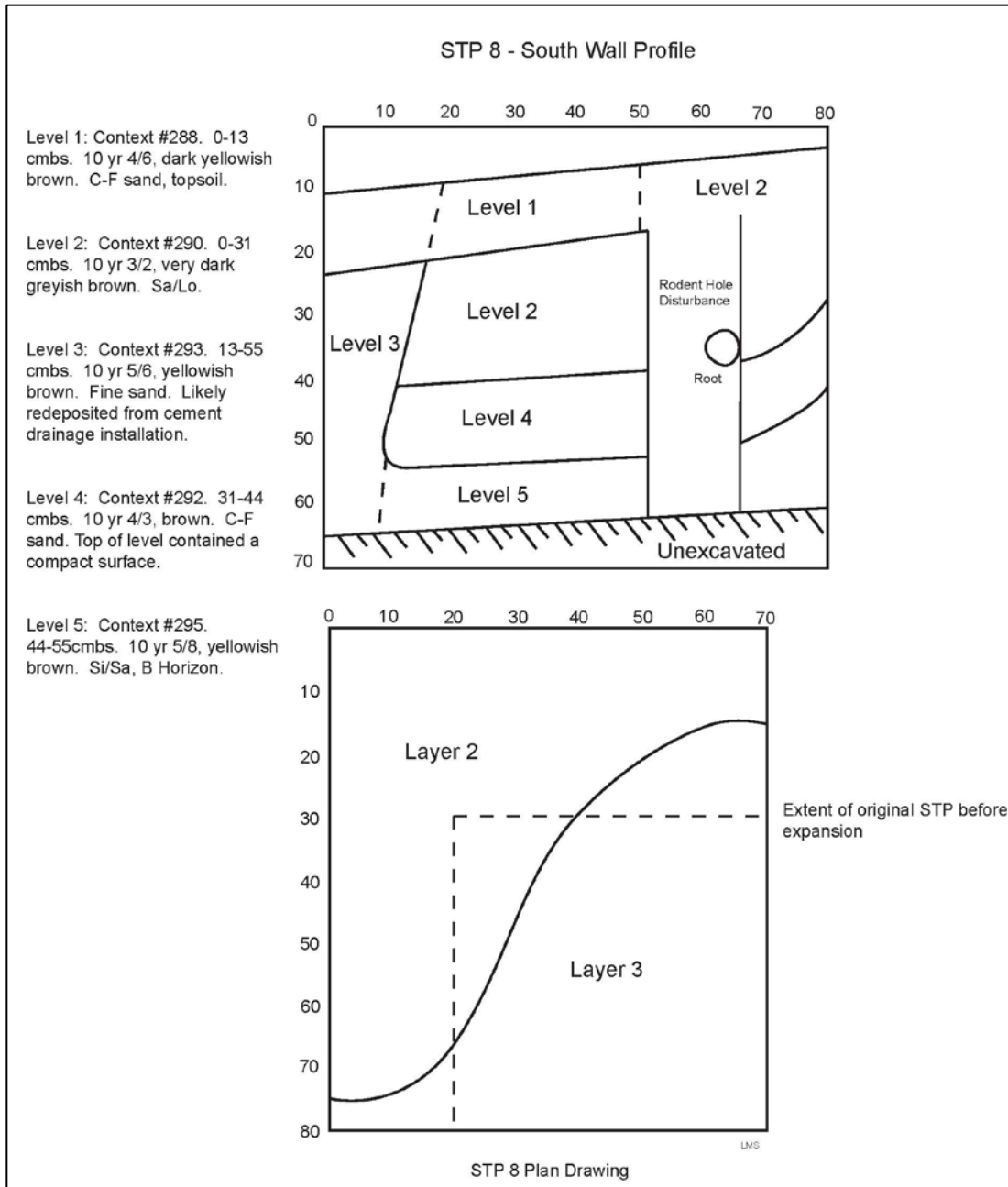
Figure 4.16   Shovel Test Pit 8, South Wall Profile and Plan Drawing.

East Yard (EU8, EU13, STP4, STP5)

The East Yard Area included that space in and around the driveway, directly east of the House. Excavation in the East Yard consisted of two excavation units (EU8 & EU13) and two shovel test pits (STP4 & STP5). The locations of several of these units were chosen in order to find architectural evidence for the original supports for the house or architectural supports for the east addition which was added in the early–mid 19th century and was taken down early in

the 20th century. Although these supports were not found, other evidence of architecture changes in this area was found.

EU8 was a 1×1m excavation unit located about a meter south of the northeastern corner of the House, abutting the east wall of the structure (Figure 4.17). This unit had no features. Stratigraphically, this unit exhibits a large amount of disturbance, a pattern also seen in other areas of the East Yard. A plaster-rich demolition layer was found in this unit, however the density of plaster was much lower than in EU13.
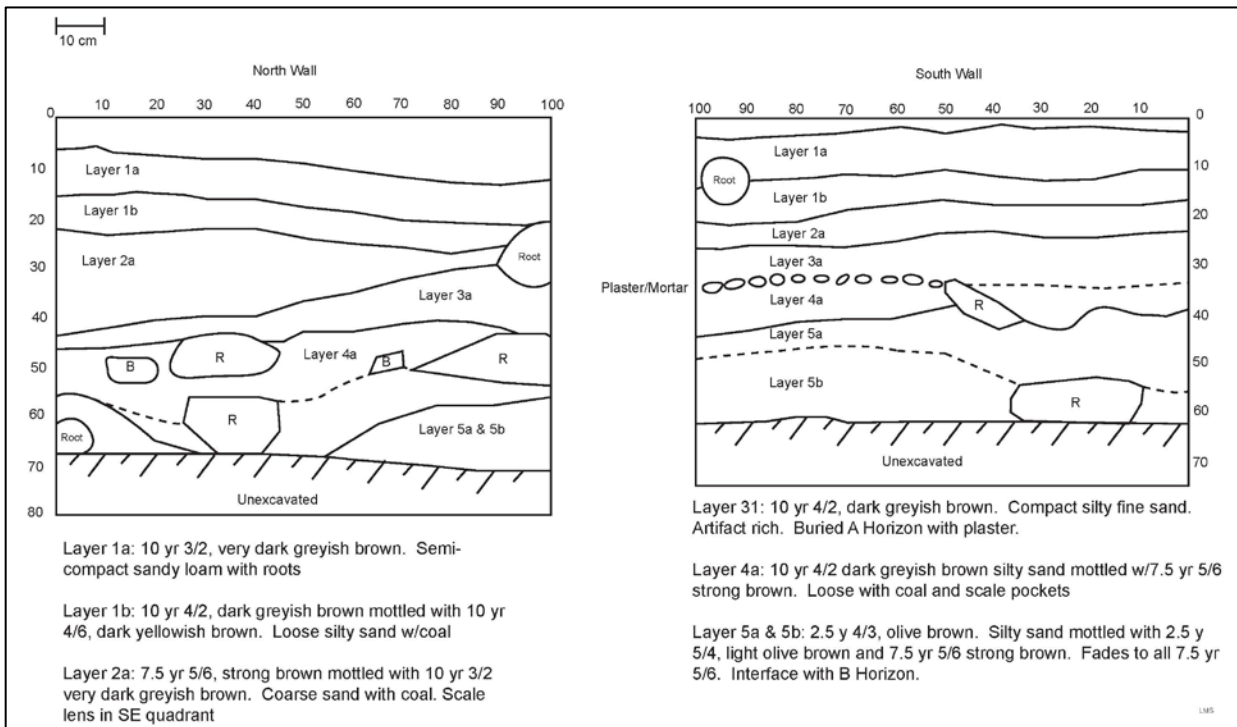
Figure 4.17. Excavation Unit 8 Stratigraphic Profile.

Excavation unit 13 was 0.5×2m, running only 0.5m along the wall, a few meters south of EU8 (Figure 4.18). While excavation in this area did not produce direct structural evidence for the outline or construction of the East Addition, this unit did reveal a dense demolition layer, Level 2b (cxt 280), thick with red-painted plaster. There is little to suggest that an intact 19th-century surface survives in this unit (or any other East Yard unit, except perhaps EU8 L5a, cxt 235).

The deeper levels of both EU13 and EU8 are associated with the destruction of the East Addition and the leveling of the ground for the driveway. For example, EU13 L4 (cxt 282) and EU8 L5a (cxt 235) show mottling of olive brown and strong brown soil colors, mixed with coal debris. These are likely associated with this earth moving. Some of this dirt may also have been associated with the excavation of the basement, however, the stratigraphy in both the East and North Yards suggest that the deposition of basement fill was primarily in the North Yard. This makes sense if the dirt from the basement was used to level the steep slope that was in the North Yard at one time. Significantly, a high density of personal adornment and small finds were recovered from EU8 L4 (cxt 220) level, including 6 buttons (3 shell, 1 military, 1 cloth-covered,

1 prosser), 3 beads, and several clothing fasteners (pins, grommets, garment loops). Several artifacts are associated with the demolition of the East Addition and these artifacts may be from the cleanup of this room, or simply what was left behind when the large pieces of debris were hauled away.

It is likely that the demolition of the East Addition happened at approximately the same time as the digging and pouring of the concrete basement. Not being a part of the original house, the addition may not have had the structural integrity to be raised up a few feet, a process which would have been necessary for the cement pouring. Examples of this type of process can be seen to this day on Nantucket Island as houses are raised to install basements. While most of the debris from demolishing the East Addition was apparently taken off-site, this process left behind significant plaster deposits in the southern part of the driveway (EU13 L2b, cxt 280), and some scattered pieces throughout the East Yard (EU8 L3, cxt 209). Several rooms in the Boston-Higginbotham House are identified as having red paint at one time. While plaster was also found in some of the layers on the west side of the house (EU3 & EU11), it is much denser here and directly related to the destruction of the East Addition.

Sometime after the leveling of this ground, in the early–mid-20th century, the East Yard was used as a firewaste disposal area. This resulted in high quantities of coal, charcoal, and furnace scale throughout the area (EU8 L4, cxt 220). While there was no coal chute nearby, and the orientation of the entrances to the house would not suggest that this was an easily accessible area from the fireplaces, the East Yard was out of sight of the busy intersection of York Street, West York Street, Pleasant Street, and Atlantic Avenue. The West Yard would be much more exposed to this traffic in addition to having a much larger space for outdoor recreation, gardening, and other yard activities. Significantly, little fire-waste was recovered from that area.
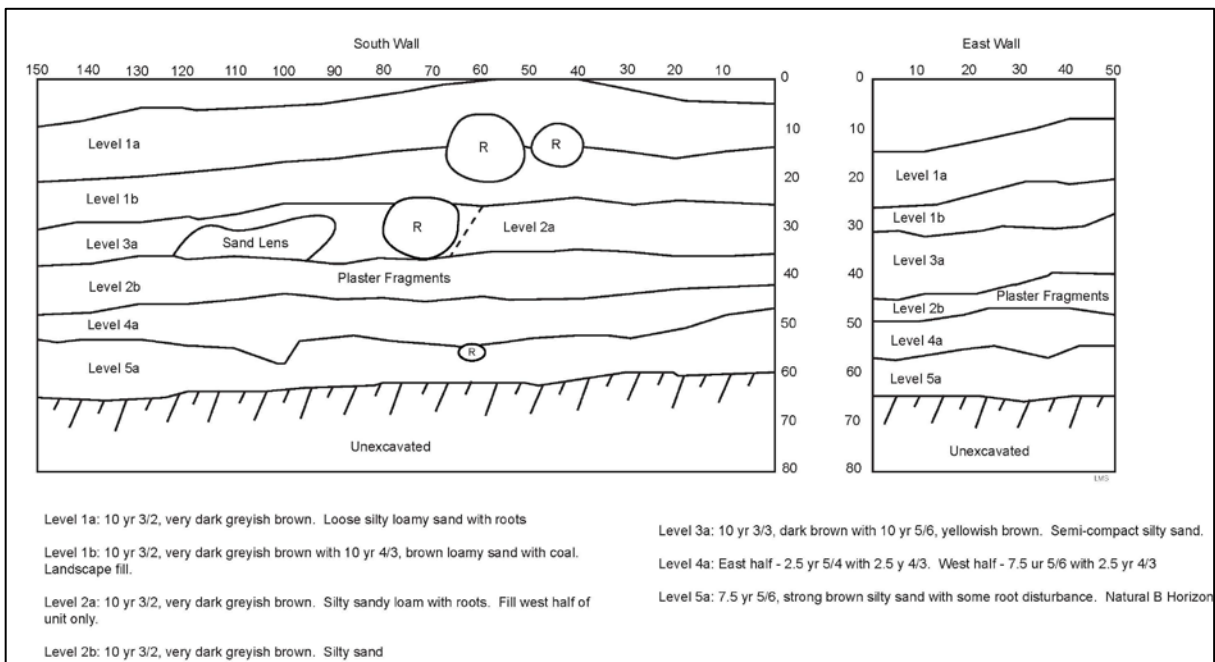
Figure 4.18   Excavation Unit 13 South (*Left*) and East (*Right*) Wall Stratigraphic Profiles.

STP4 was a 50×50cm test pit excavated in the strip of grass between the cement driveway tracks (Figure 4.19). This test pit had no features. It is likely that the area had been disturbed in the mid-20th century and possibly more recently. Earth-moving may have been associated with the digging of the basement, the destruction of the house's east addition (although plaster is largely absent from this unit), the leveling of the area to set down concrete plats for the driveway, or the construction of a gate on the driveway, visible in a picture form the 1980s.

STP5 was excavated along the eastern edge of the property and came directly down on a posthole feature (Feature 6; Figure 4.20). This posthole may be associated with an earlier iteration of the property-line fence or it may be associated with a 20th-century gate which stretched across the driveway, as seen in a 1988 photograph. The consistency of the stratigraphy in this STP with the other units in the east yard, however, suggests that this post-hole is much older than the last 30 years, more likely dating from the late-19th century or early-20th century.
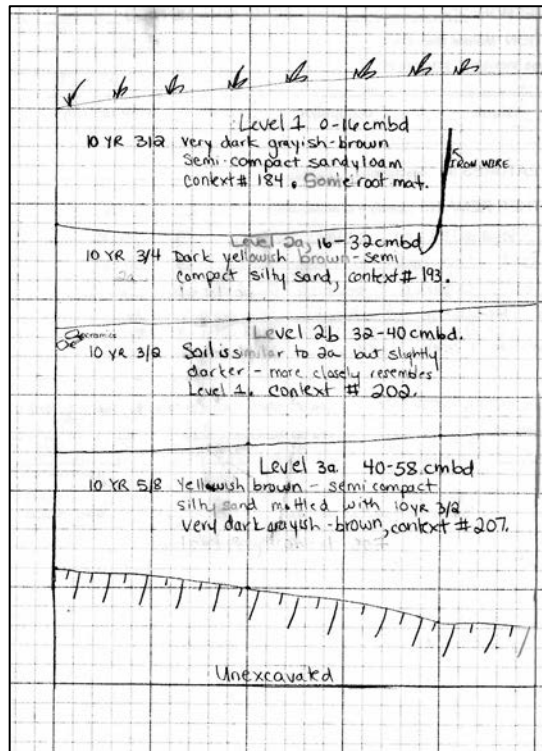
Figure 4.19   Shovel Test Pit 4 Stratigraphic Profile.
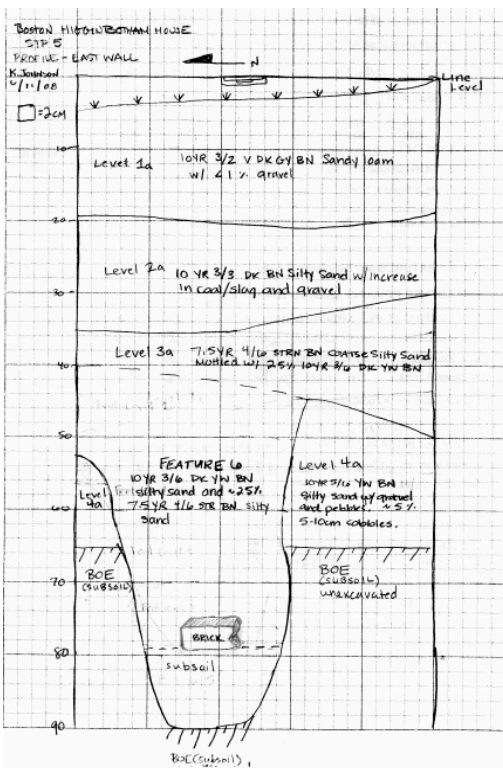
Figure 4.20   Shovel Test Pit 5 East Wall Stratigraphic Profile.

Depositional History Narrative

An important step in making site interpretations is deciphering the site depositional sequence. Without an understanding of how dirt got where it is today, we have no basis for understanding the artifacts in the dirt (Praetzellis 1993). At the Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham House, the depositional history was determined through a combination of techniques including looking at the present-day topography, the stratigraphic profile at a construction site nearby, and subsurface testing using shovel test pits (50×50 cm) and excavated units (1×1 m).

The neighborhood topography reveals that the Boston-Higginbotham House sits on the southern edge of what is an area of depressed elevation that runs east-west with borders at Pleasant St. (West), Orange St. (East), Silver St. (North), and York St. (South). The significance of this low-lying area is two-fold. First, this land was, in the late-18th century, probably relatively inexpensive due to its location a ½ mile from the center of town. Seneca Boston and several other free people of color chose to build here in the late-18th century and this area would later be known as "Newtown" or "New Guinea" (as termed by contemporary white chroniclers). This neighborhood consisted of Africans, African American, some Native Wampanoag, as well as some people of other ethnicities. The fact that the land made available to Seneca for purchase was on the southern outskirts of town, past a physical boundary of an area that frequently flooded, defined his and his family's status as beyond the pale of mainstream society.

Second, the significance of this low-lying depression is in the geoarchaeological history of the site. While today the Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham property slopes to the north, toward the depression, this slope would have been more dramatic in the past. This is evidenced

by the retaining wall that separates the Boston-Higginbotham property from the property to the north (14 West Dover Street) (Figure 4.21). Several of the properties on York Street, to the east, have similar walls suggesting that the need to shore-up the York Street properties was widespread. At some time in the past the residents at 27 York Street, 14 Dover Street, or both, made efforts to reduce the slope of their respective properties by moving large amounts of dirt. One of our goals in archaeological testing was to reconstruct how and when this earth moving took place.

Figure 4.21. North Elevation of Cottage, photo taken looking south from 14 Dover Street. *Courtesy of the Museum of African American History.*

As described above, our excavations in the North Yard Area of the Boston-Higginbotham property suggest that much of the leveling of the property was done in the early-20th century when the basement was dug out from under the house and the cement was poured for the walls. Deep deposits of re-deposited 19th-century midden and 20th-century debris were found in EU2, EU5, EU9, STP1, and STP2. If this filling of the backlot was a 20th-century project, it is likely that the northern two corners of the Boston-Higginbotham House originally sat on piers, just as Nantucket African Meeting House, built in the 1820s, has its northern corners on piers to account for the slope. These piers would have created a sub-floor space where trash and other debris could have accumulated, although we do know from Higginbotham-era (early-20th century) photos that an enclosure was constructed at one time to protect the underside of the house, presumably from rodents. The debris that collected under the house would have been displaced along with the dirt there, including some amount of subsoil, with the digging of the basement. Any evidence of a previous basement space has been destroyed by later construction.

The Hen House Area (STP6, STP7) revealed no features, but showed a clear A-horizon and B-horizon stratigraphic pattern, which is consistent with Nantucket African Meeting House excavations (Berkland 1999). The accumulation of dirt around the Hen House from natural processes such as wind and water movement is significant (10-15cm since construction). While no privy or other major features were detected, we consider the area underneath the Hen House as potentially important, as a privy for the Nantucket African Meeting House could be in this

location. Several 19th-century artifacts, including a figural clay tobacco pipe (STP7, L3 39-46 cmbs), were recovered from these test pits with 20th-century artifacts intermixed within Level 1.

The West Yard Area (EU7, EU10, EU1, EU6, EU4) is stratigraphically similar to Hen House area, but also shows some gardening features and a short-term clean-out event from the Cottage. The Cottage's western side (EU7 and EU10) was used most recently for gardening, although the paucity of artifacts suggest that this space was kept free of debris in the past. This pattern is seen throughout the West Yard, in contrast to both the North and East Yards. Some evidence for a passway in the West Yard was present in EU4 L3 (East) which may be a remnant of the original passway mentioned in deeds of the property. Excavation Unit 4 also uncovered a 20th-century pipe trench (Feature 1) and pipe for municipal water access. A well is mentioned in the 19th-century deeds, however, no archaeological evidence of this feature was found. A late-19th or early-20th century trash pit (Feature 2) was found in EU1 & EU6 with a lamp stove, approximately 30 cans, a cooking pot and a small milk glass bowl.

The North Yard Area (EU2, STP1, STP2, EU5, EU9) was the area that has seen the most dramatic change between the late-18th century and the present. As mentioned above, this area would have been at a lower elevation and on a greater slope. Excavations in EU9 suggest the 18th-century ground surface would have been a meter below present grade in the northeast yard area and slope downward to the north. In the northwest yard (EU2), the 18th-century ground surface was closer to 60 cm below present grade. The North yard was filled in by a variety of natural and cultural processes, including the intensive use of this space for trash disposal, firewaste disposal, and the deposition of dirt from the 1920s excavation of the basement. As a result, this area shows complex stratigraphy, however, several important features were detected including a posthole (EU2, F2) associated with a fence, a pier stone hole (EU9 F12) associated with the original barn on the property, and a possible posthole of unknown function (EU5 F15). In addition to this, a midden layer was detected in several units, which seems to have accumulated over the first half of the 19th century.

The Trash Pit Area (EU3, EU11) consisted of two units associated with one large feature used for 20th century trash disposal. While this unit did not conform to the stratigraphic patterns of any other part of the site, trash midden deposits from the 19th century were mixed in with 20th-century refuse. The trash pit associated with a house clean-out event sometime between 1918 and 1926. Approximately 50% of the ceramic artifacts from the site came from these two units alone. This unit also showed evidence for supports associated with a previous porch structure in this area, demolition and construction debris, and 20th-century gardening activities.

Excavation in the South/Front Yard included only one shovel test pit (STP8). This STP was dug to investigate the stratigraphic integrity of the front yard and compare the stratigraphic profile with the rest of the yard. Significant disturbance from rodents and other activities was detected. While no features were detected, the surface of Level 4 (31cmbs) was very hard packed and may have been a previous ground surface.

The East Yard Area (EU8, EU13, STP5, STP6) was represented by a series of excavations units and shovel test pits east of the house, in the driveway area. The major events seen in the stratigraphy of these units were demolition layers associated with the dismantling of the East Addition and thick layers of fire debris. This area seems to have been designated for fire waste disposal, at least in the early-20th century. Additionally, a post hole was found in STP5 which may be associated with a previous iteration of the property-line fence.

Laboratory Processing

After field excavations were complete in late June of 2008, artifact processing and analysis began in the laboratories at the University of Massachusetts, Boston and the University of California, Berkeley. The collection was primarily housed at UMass Boston and specific contexts and artifact-types were loaned to UC Berkeley on a temporary basis.

The objectives of the laboratory methods were different from the field methods. Whereas the field methods were primarily focused on the landscape history of the site, the lab analysis was focused on the artifacts themselves and what they can tell us about the people that once lived at the Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham House. The depositional history of the site was, of course, crucial in determining the dates of certain deposits and the artifacts therein. The types of lab analyses, including ceramic and glass minimum vessel counts and small finds analysis, in some cases helped to further develop interpretations about the depositional history of the site. In other cases, possible preferences for decorative patterns or types of consumer products became evident. Interpretations of these patterns will be further developed in the following chapters.

Conservation

Immediately following fieldwork, in July and August of 2008, a number of ferrous artifacts were removed for conservation. These conservation efforts involved the cleaning of specific objects, such as pot handles or hinges, allowing them to dry, then coating each object completely with several coats of tannic acid to seal the objects and prevent further rusting.

Cleaning & Inventory

Materials such as ceramics, glass, brick, and some bone were washed with water and a toothbrush while delicate materials such as metal, small bones, overglaze decorated ceramics, and most small finds were cleaned with a dry toothbrush or left somewhat dirty. Artifacts were generally not labeled, however, some ceramic and glass fragments were given small labels to aid in the process of identifying the Minimum Number of Vessels. These labels consisted of an abbreviation of the project plus the context number (e.g. Label for HHAP EU2 L1c, Cxt.131 would be written "HHAP 131").

The inventory-level catalogue was completed for the entire collection. This inventory involved categorizing and counting the artifacts in each excavation context within very broad categories. These categories included: Redware, Other Earthenware, Stoneware, Porcelain, Pipes, Curved Glass, Flat Glass, Bones, Shells, Coral, Nails, Other Metal, Brick, Mortar/Plaster, Wood/Charcoal, Stone Flakes, Stone Tools, Other Stone, Coal/Clinker, Small Finds, and Other (such as plastic). More detailed notes were taken at the discretion of the cataloguer on small finds or important artifact patterns. After a paper inventory was done for each context, the inventory information was entered into the UMass Boston artifact catalogue system, which is based on a Filemaker Pro 8.0 platform.

At the completion of the inventory, 54418 artifacts were identified. As seen in Figure 4.22 34% of these were nails (7594), flat window glass (5256), or architectural debris (5246) and 15% (8065) were accounted for by fuel or furnace by-products. As the specifics of fuel use and architectural details are not part of our research questions, we decided not to analyze these artifacts further. After excluding these, there were 28257 artifacts which required detailed analysis.

Detailed Cataloguing

Detailed cataloguing was undertaken for Ceramics (14912, 27%), Curved Glass (4855 6%), Pipes (250, 0.4%), Small Finds (339, 0.6%), Other Metal (3289, 6%), Other Organics (192, 0.3%), Lithics (37, 0.06%), Animal Bones (4855, 8.9%), and Shell (1290, 2.4%). Except for zooarchaeological remains, which were catalogued separately (see below), these materials were recorded on material-specific paper catalogue sheets for each context. Four different catalogue sheets were drawn up for Ceramic, Glass, Pipes, and Other Material. These sheets were important for recording information about the quantity, material, manufacturing, decorative techniques, degree of fragmentation, date of production and other important details. These catalogue sheets are bound and stored with the collection, but were not digitized. Digital catalogues were completed for Ceramic Vessels (Filemaker Pro 10.0), Glass Vessels (Filemaker Pro 10.0), Pipes (Microsoft Excel 2011), Small Finds (Microsoft Excel 2011), and Animal/Shell remains (Microsoft Excel 2011).

Ceramics accounted for 27% of the artifact assemblage, with a count of 14,912 sherds. Significantly, the high number is due in part to the environment of New England itself. The freeze-thaw cycles of the winters in this region tend to hasten the breakage of ceramics and cause many spalls to break-off as water intrudes into weaknesses in the ceramic and expands as it freezes. As will be discussed below, even with such a large number of sherds, the Minimum Vessel Count for the ceramic assemblage was only 179 vessels.

Glass, which is not effected by freeze-thaw cycles, accounts for only 6% of the assemblage. The Minimum Vessel Count for the glass assemblage was 126 (number 71–GV127). In addition to this, glass objects, including lamp chimneys and insulators were recovered.
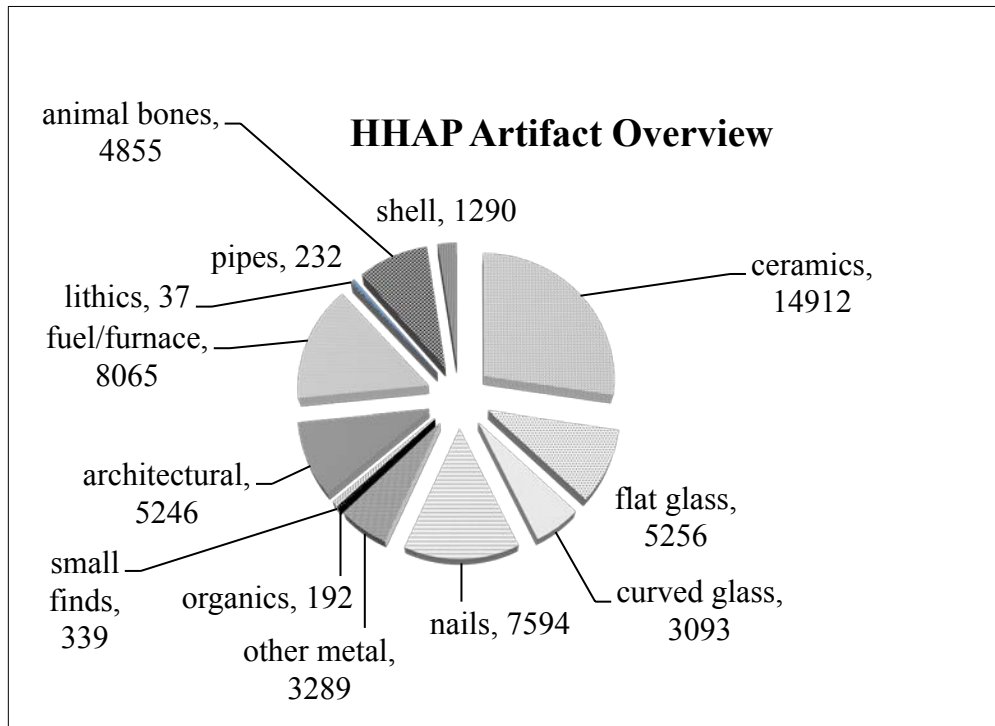
Figure 4.22. HHAP Artifact inventory overview with material category breakdown.

Small Finds, excluding tobacco pipes and lithics, accounted for 0.6% of the assemblage, or 339 objects. This original inventory count, however, included all *fragments* of objects as well as complete pieces. After analysis, the small finds count has been reduced significantly in part due to several fragments of the same object only being counted as "1" and because some amorphous metal objects have been confirmed as *not* small finds after all. After analysis, 261 individual small finds objects were identified. These broke down into the following categories: (1) clothing fragment; (47) Clothing Fasteners; (123) Personal adornment, including 88 Buttons; (5) Children; (18) Writing; (10) Furniture/Architecture; (10) Games; (3) Hygiene; (14) Kitchen, (4) Sewing; and (24) Small Finds, Other.

Pipe fragments (232 fragments) were catalogued separately from small finds, except for one exceptionally unique figural pipe of a man's face (STP7 L3a, cxt 246). The catalogue of the 232 pipe fragments from the site lists whether the fragment is a stem or a bowl, any decoration, bore diameter, and source information if available. While several decorative and note-worthy pipe bowls were recovered, the pipe analysis was not pursued further and no Minimum Number of Pipes was calculated.

The analysis of animal (4855) and shell (1290) remains was undertaken by Michael Way, a master's student at the University of Massachusetts Boston during 2008–2010. This report is available independently as Way's Master's Thesis entitled *Beef, Mutton, Pork, and Taste of Turtle: Zooarchaeology and Nineteenth-Century African American Foodways at the Boston-Higginbotham House, Nantucket, Massachusetts* (2010). During this project, way undertook an analysis of all the zooarchaeological remains, except for Excavation Unit 3, categorizing each bone and shell to the most specific taxon possible.

Paleobotanical remains recovered in small numbers (192) under the umbrella of "Other Organic." These consisted of uncharred seeds and nutshells. Flotation samples were also collected in the field. This sampling was done judgmentally and unsystematically (not all contexts were sampled and no samples from "off site" were collected). Samples were taken from contexts with very high densities of artifacts, animal remains, or in cases where original ground surfaces were believed to be encountered. Twenty-three flotation samples were taken. All were processed at UMass Boston by Michael Way, with the intention of using the results as part of the analysis of foodways as seen through the zooarchaeological remains. Processing of the samples revealed no charred food remains, however, and were therefore not analyzed further.

Minimum Vessel Count — Ceramics

Calculating the minimum number of ceramic vessels was a challenge with this highly fragmentary collection. During the detailed cataloguing of each context, one of the criteria that was recorded was the rim diameter (or base diameter) and the percent of the vessel rim/base that was represented. Attempting to take into account the fragmentary nature of the assemblage, the original procedure for calculating the MNV was to count all of the rims and bases for each 'type' (characterized by ware, decorative technique, and form) that was larger than 15%. More conservative MNV techniques will use the threshold of 20–25% so as not to double-count vessels. After these were recorded, any 'unique' types that were only represented by body sherds would be given an MNV of "1."

After a few attempts to implement this counting technique, it became evident that many vessels that were nearly-complete (such as those in EU3 and EU11) would be counted more than once and many commonly-decorated vessels that were extremely fragmentary would be missed altogether.

The second method for calculating the minimum number of ceramic vessels was based on laying out the ceramic assemblage and counting the number of vessels in each type by directly comparing their decoration and ceramic ware. During the summer of 2010, the lab space at UMass Boston served as just such an area. While it was not feasible to lay out the entire ceramic collection at once, however, the ceramics from the clean-out events in EU3 and EU11 together represent 50.4 % (7517 sherds) of the ceramic assemblage. Each vessel was given a number (CV1-CV179) and a photograph was taken of the sherds, or a portion of the sherds, which represented that vessel so that the EU3/EU11 contexts could be virtually-referenced in the completion of the MNV count. Most commonly a vessel was identified based on the unique nature of the decorative technique or vessel form rather than the percentage of the rim or base ring represented. In a few cases several vessels of the same decorative pattern and vessel shape were found (Rustic Scenery and Mother Bird & Nest transfer-prints). The initial MNV, based only on EU3 and EU11, was 124 vessels.

While the stratigraphy of EU3 and EU11 suggest that it represents a good sample of the site, we also included the ceramics from EU9 in our MNV calculations. EU9 recovered 703 sherds, or 4.7% of the ceramic assemblage. EU9 was somewhat unique, however, in that its deposits were very deep and several of the lower levels represented early-19th century midden context (EU9 L6a, L7a, L8a). In addition to this, a close look at *all* of the porcelain from the site was undertaken as the number of sherds were few and very variable. Once the porcelain sherds and the ceramics from EU9 were added, the MNV went up to 179. Just as with the EU3 and E11 vessels, each vessel was photographed for future reference.

The ceramic assemblages from the other units were visually surveyed. The vessel types in these units showed a high degree of redundancy with the vessel types already identified and most sherds could have been associated with an already-established vessel. As with EU3 and EU11, however, cases where *multiple* vessels had identical ware, shape, and decoration, were impossible to discern because of the fragmentary nature of the assemblage. While more vessels may still be represented by the sherds available in other units, especially EU5 and EU2, we believe that at 55% of the assemblage, this MNV count is representative of the high degree of variability and quantity among the ceramics that were owned by the families living at the Boston-Higginbotham House in the 18th, 19th, and early-20th centuries.

Because of the relatively-recent dramatic earthmoving events and house-clean-out efforts in the early-20th century, most contexts were not "undisturbed" 19th-century yard midden. Rather, these midden deposits were in most places mixed with later materials. In order to date materials and associated them with specific households or time periods at the site, we relied on a variety of information. The *terminus post quem,* or "date after which," dates for many of the ceramic decorative styles were helpful in narrowing down the time period when they would have been manufactured. Miller (2000)'s compilation of TPQ dates and date ranges was the basis for many estimates.

The site's depositional pattern mirrors in many ways the life-history of the building and its occupants. There is greater representation for ceramics produced in the late-18th century and the first half of the 19th-century. Built in 1774, the house was occupied by large extended families until at least the 1840s. Circa 1851, Eliza Berry would have been living at the house with only her son, although she likely had visitors from her extended family. Several years later her son Isaac would move away from the island, as would her niece Phebe Groves (later Talbot then Hogarth). In the later-19th century, Elizabeth Stevens moved to Nantucket and live in the

house after Eliza's death. Finally, Florence Higginbotham bought the house in 1919, but didn't likely move in full time until the 1930s.

The refined white earthenwares tell a similar story. Of the 179 vessels, 126 were creamware, pearlware, or low-fired whiteware, indicating the most deposits were in the early-19th century. Only eight vessels are creamware (1762–1820; Miller 2000:12), 73 are pearlware (1775-1830), and 45 low-fired whiteware (1820–present). In addition to this, wares that could be securely dated to the latter half of the 19th century or later include 25 vessels: 7 late whiteware, 2 late English porcelain, 13 ironstone, 1 Japanese porcelain, and 2 hotelware/late porcelain vessels. From these details, it appears that most of the ceramic collection was acquired in the first third of the 19th-century and individual pieces continued to be acquired and added to the household-assemblage in small numbers.

While most of the vessels from EU3 and EU11 are relatively fragmentary and represent redeposited midden, many vessels (and other artifacts) represent clean-out events of the household which took place in the 1920s. These vessels are distinguished here by there relative completeness (more than 25% of the base or rim), and orientation (horizontal in the ground), suggesting they were deposited in-situ. Among these 27 of vessels are: 11 pearlware, 4 low-fired whiteware, 2 high-fired whiteware, 6 ironstone, 2 gray stoneware, 1 redware, and 1 rockinghamware. This pattern suggests that the many pearlwares used by the early-19th-century Boston household continued to be curated through to the early-20th century and had been supplemented by sturdy ironstones and high-fired whitewares in the later-19th century.

Functional Patterns in the Ceramic Assemblage

Ceramic vessels were categorized according to vessel form and function where possible. Based on vessel form (and in some cases decoration), each vessel was designated as diningware, teaware, serving, preparation, storage, children's, commemorative, and utilitarian/other. Within these categories it was sometimes only possible to identify the shard as a "hollowware" or "flatware" object and in other cases enough of the rim or body of the vessel was present to say whether the object was a bowl, table plate, muffin plate, etc. Rim diameters and shapes were translated into specific plate types where possible: table, supper, soup, muffin, twiffler, teacups, saucers, bowls. Some standard rim diameters for 19th-century flatware are listed in Miller (1991:11). A breakdown of the vessel forms is shown in Figure 4.23.

Dining vessels represent 56% of the ceramic vessel assemblage. Within this sub-assemblage, 36 hollowware and 65 flatware vessels were identified. The decorative pattern that dominates the assemblage is shell-edged blue and green vessels in pearlwares and whitewares. Including 28 flatware and 1 serving bowl, this decorative pattern represents 28% of dining vessels, and is absent from the teaware sub-assemblage, which will be discussed below. The next most popular decorative type on pearlware and low-fired whiteware is transfer-printing in a variety of colors, with 18 vessels or 17.8% of the assemblage. Chinese or English porcelain was almost non-existent although highly vitrified whitewares and ironstone were present in small numbers (8 vessels, 8%) and would have been purchased in the second half of the 19th century or early-20th century.

Ceramic Vessels, Functional Breakdown

Dining, 101

Children, 5

Toiletry , 2

Storage, 16

Commemorative , 1

Preparation, 10

Utilitarian/ Other, 5
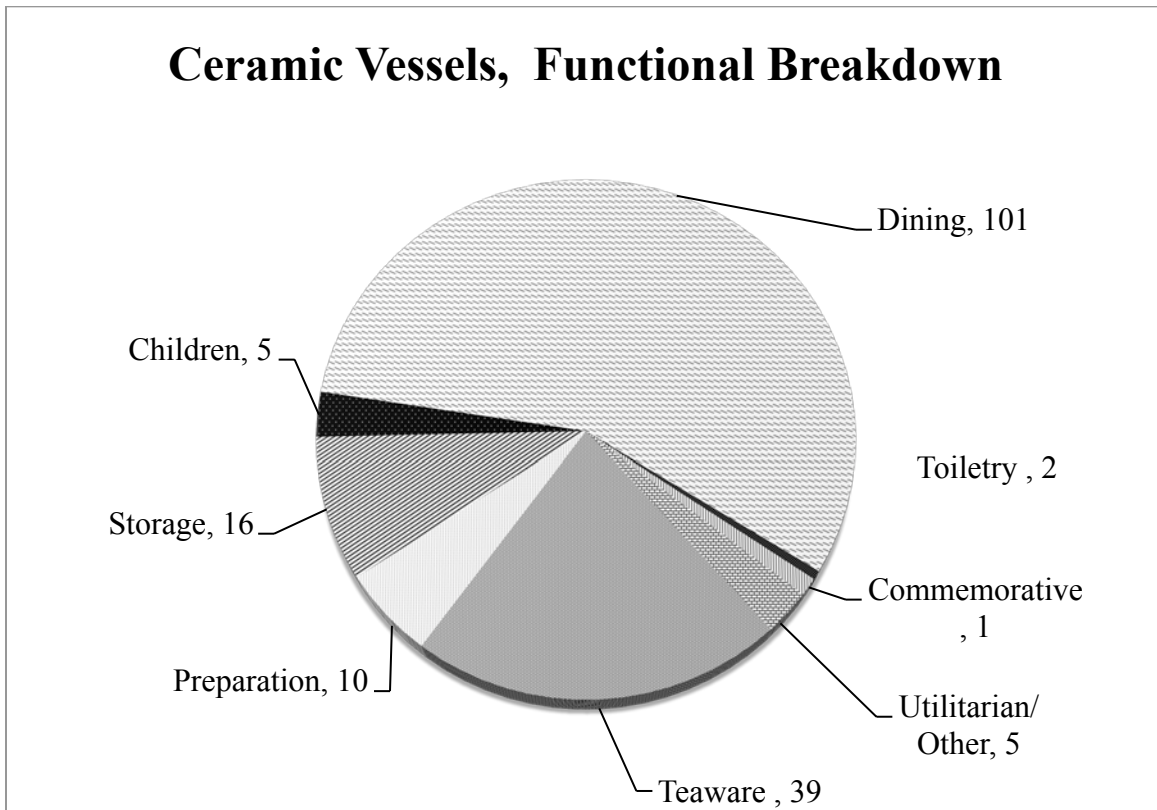
Teaware , 39

Figure 4.23. Functional Breakdown of Ceramic Vessels.

Teawares vessels represent 38.6% of the ceramic vessel assemblage. Within this sub-assemblage, 28 hollowware (mostly teacups) and 11 flatware (all saucers) were identified. The decorative patterns are almost split between hand-painted polychromes (16, 41%) and transfer-printed vessels (13, 33%). Hand-painted polychrome floral designs were popular on teacups and saucers, which were pearlwares, whitewares, English porcelain and Chinese porcelain. Transfer-printed vessels were also popular, in the early-19th century at the property, though they were recovered in fewer numbers and were found in a variety of colors (Figure 4.24). Gothic ironstone teawares were all but absent from the assemblage, despite their popularity in the second half of the 19th century. Although two ironstone Gothic-style vessels were recovered, it seems clear that either the women living at 27 York Street in the late-19th century did not prefer this decorative pattern or simply did not have a use for procuring new teawares at this time.

The remainder of the ceramic vessels include 10 preparation vessels (industrial slipware bowls and milkpans), 16 storage vessels (primarily stoneware), 5 children's vessels (1 toy dish and 4 child's dishes), 2 toiletry vessels, 1 commemorative plate, and 5 utilitarian vessels (inkwell, chamberpot, flowerpots, and unidentified).

As mentioned above, the ceramic assemblage suggests a pattern of intense acquisition in the early-19th century, when the house was occupied by large families, sometime concurrently. After the mid-1830s, when the property was divided among Freeborn Boston's children, this pattern may have changed as fewer people were living at the house. Circa 1851, when Lewis Berry left for California and Eliza Berry was usually only living there with their children, ceramic purchases may have become even less of a priority.

Figure 4.24. Sample of transfer-print patterns on whiteware from EU3 L6a (cxt 242). *From Left to Right*: Light-blue "Chinese Temples" pattern; black unidentified bucolic pattern; dark brown "Hawking" pattern; red "Puzzle" pattern on whiteware, child's toy ceramic; brown unidentified floral pattern; blue "Chinese Temples" pattern; brown unidentified pattern with horse by lake.

The ceramic choices made by the initial household appear to have favored some of the popular style of the time— with blue shell-edged dining ware as the primary ceramic set. Importantly, however, this was not a collection of matching pieces, but similarly-styled pieces with the shell motif. The teawares used in the household were primarily hand-painted floral pieces with a variety of colors and ceramic pastes that could have been used as part of a 'set' with similar designs (Figure 4.25).

While several families were living in the house in the 1820s and 1830s, there is no evidence for multiple dining sets, even as new pieces were acquired and different tastes were represented. The transfer-print diningware that is present exhibits romantic and bucolic motifs, often emphasizing images of the home, nature, and leisure activities. These were important themes in the development of the domestic realm in the 19th century and would have been essential components of a middle-class household.

Figure 4.25. Hand-painted polychrome whiteware bowl fragment decorated with green and pink stripe, black wavy lines, and blue flowers

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Finally, there is a significant portion of the assemblage that dates to the later-19th century and early-20th century. These pieces, mostly ironstones, highly-fired whitewares, and some porcelains number very few. It is possible that these may have been hand-me-downs from employers or neighbors as it does not appear that any effort was made to complete a set of even the most popular patterns (like white gothic dining wares for example). It is also possible that these were acquired, as needed, in small quantities without much regard for how they matched the already-established set that continued to be used in the house.

When the house was cleaned-out in the 1920s, and the trash pit (EU3/EU11) was created, many whole plates, bowl, and cups were discarded. The presence of many *pearlwares* within this feature suggests that there had been a significant amount of continuity in the ceramics used within the household in the 19th and early-20th centuries. Notably, the creamware, bat-printed, commemorative plate of the French King Louis Philippe (1773–1850) was found in EU3 L6a and has a TPQ date of 1830 (Figure 4.26). This might speak to a desire to keep a material continuity with one's family who has since left for other places or passed away. The interpretations touched on here will be discussed further in the interpretive chapters to follow.

Figure 4.26. Commemorative Plate showing the French King Louis-Philippe (1773–1850).

Minimum Vessel Count—Glass

Assessing the minimum number of glass vessels for the site was undertaken using a similar process as in the identification of ceramic vessels, however this process was more comprehensive, including *all* the archaeological contexts rather than only those artifacts from EU3, EU11, and EU9.

This method involved laying out the glass assemblage and counting the number of vessels in each type by directly comparing their color, manufacturing method, and decoration.

Beginning with EU11, the glass assemblage was laid out in the UC Berkeley historical archaeology lab. Each vessel was individually numbered (GV1–GV127), photographed, and electronically recorded in a Filemaker Pro 10.0 database. Once complete, the EU11 MNV was supplemented by the information about EU3 glass drawn from catalogue sheets to complete the MNV for the "trash pit" area on the west side of the house. The data for the EU3 vessels was drawn completely from the catalogue records, thus there was some room for double counting of vessels, however we assigned GV numbers for EU3 on a very conservative basis. The glass from the remainder of the excavation units was then laid out, vessels were numbered, photographed and added to the Glass Minimum Vessel Count. This process produced a MNV for the glass assemblage of 127 vessels.

Functional Patterns in the Glass Assemblage

The glass assemblage showed some different patterns than the ceramic assemblage, in part because of the different ways these materials were used, curated, and discarded in the past. While most of the ceramic vessels were dining and teawares, the bulk of the glass assemblage (73%) is made up of bottles and containers with a variety of commercial functions. Only 27% of glass MNV count (34 vessels) are tablewares (Figure 4.27).

Glass Tableware Vessel Forms

Bowl, 1 — Decanter, 2
Stopper, 1 — Tumbler, 13
Castor, 3 —
Sugardish, 1 —
Stemware, 10 — Tableware, Indeterminate, 3
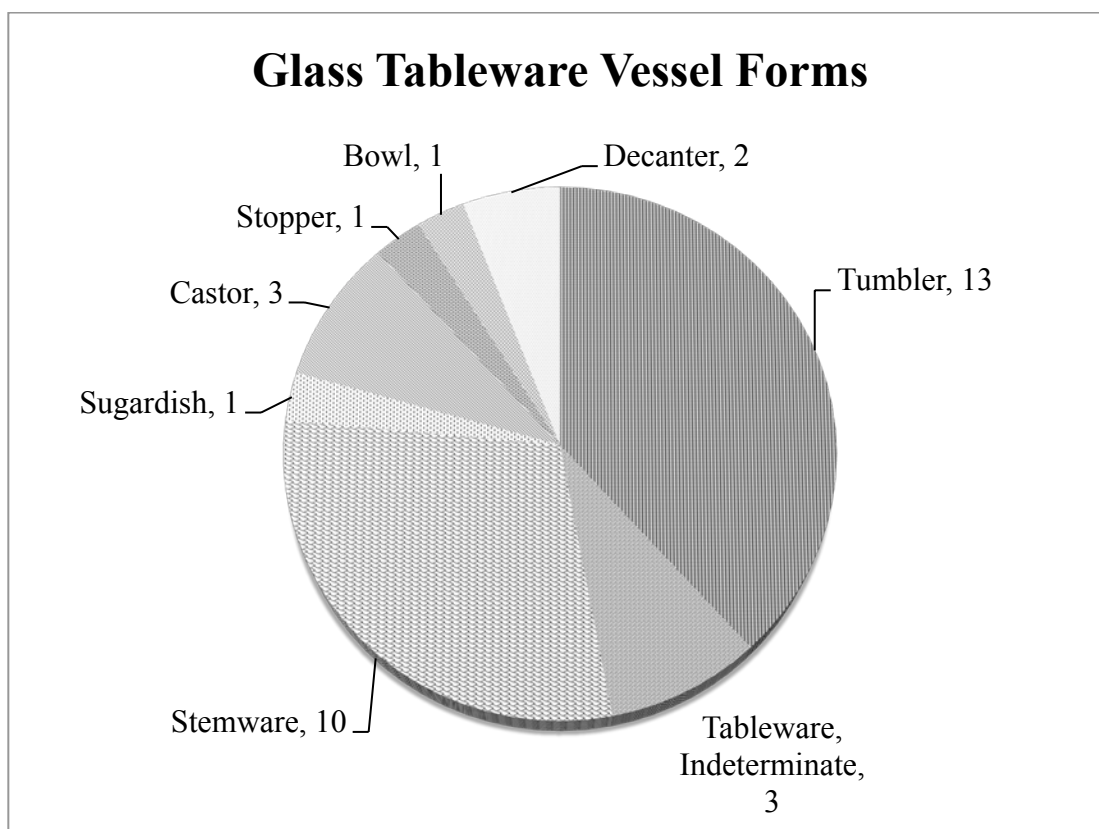
Figure 4.27. Glass Tableware Vessel Forms.

Tableware vessels were generally distinguished by their vessel form and glass color. Most tableware fragments we recovered were colorless and were produced during the early-19th century when colorless glass was relatively expensive. Vessel shapes, such as tumblers, castors,

and decanters, were estimated based on comparisons with types collected in resources such as Park's Canada Glass Glossary and Spillman's books on glass bottles and tableware (Jones and Sullivan 1989; Spillman 1982). The vessels which were identified include: 13 tumblers, 10 stemware vessels, 1 stopper, 1 sugardish, 3 castors, 1 bowl, 2 decanters (Figure 4.28), and 3 unidentified tableware vessels. Several of these were characterized by decorative pressed or pattern-molded designs, however, the counts were too low to make generalizations about preferences in decorative motifs.

Figure 4.28. Dip-molded, acid etched decanter. (GV14: EU11 L5b, cxt 289).

Bottle and container vessels, as mentioned above, made up the bulk of the glass assemblage, accounting for 93 vessels (73% of glass MNV assemblage) (Figure 4.29). These vessels were divided up into a series of functional categories, with several levels of specificity. Bottles which could confidently be given a functional category numbered 71 and fell into several categories: 26 alcohol (flask, wine, gin, beer); 6 soft drink (soda and soda water); 17 medicinal (med. bottles and vials); 4 toiletry; 1 nursing; 1 decorative vase; 12 food (jars, condiment bottles, flavorings); and 4 utilitarian (2 inkwell, 1 shoe shine, 1 other). There were also 22 bottles which could not be tightly categorized: 14 bottles or containers of indeterminate function; 8 bottles, indeterminate medicinal or chemical.
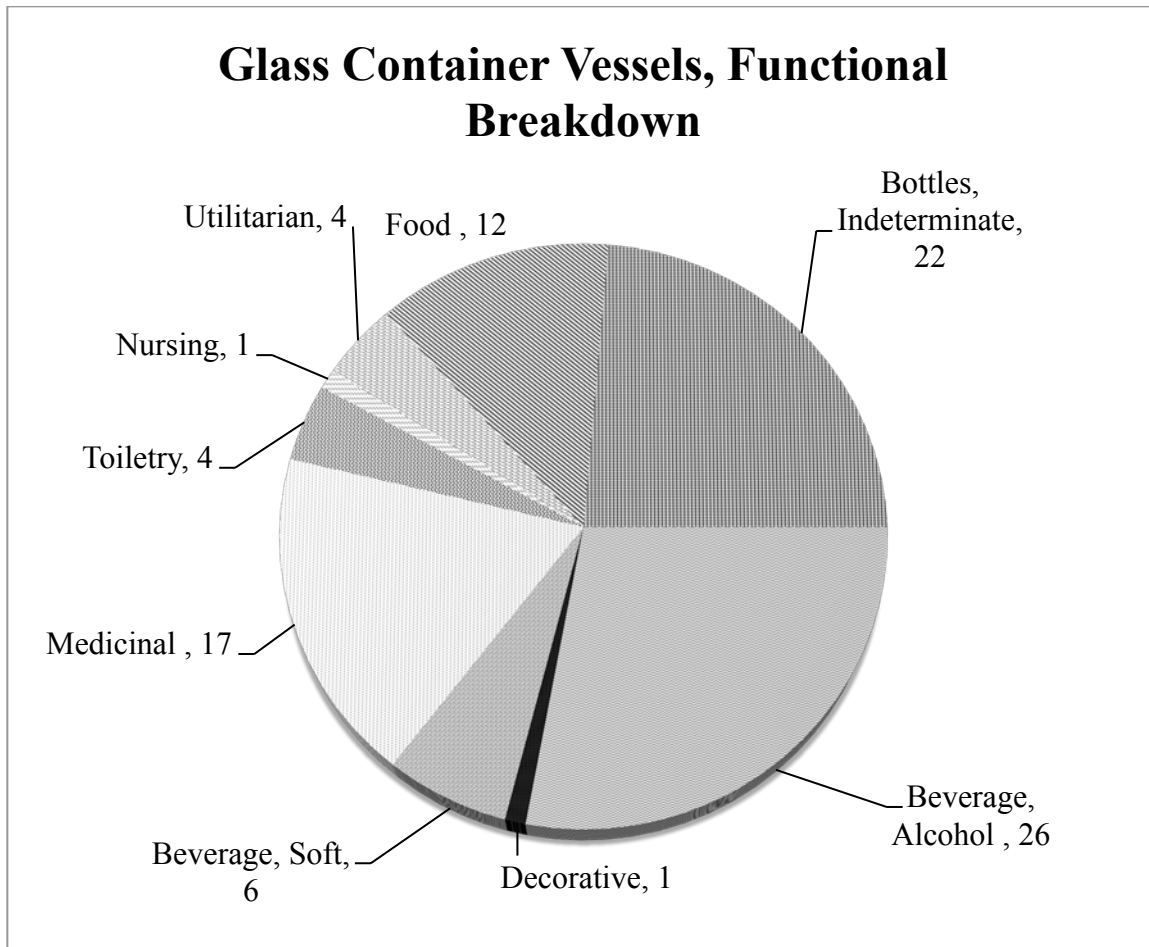
Figure 4.29. Functional Breakdown of Glass Container Vessels.

Excluding those tableware vessels that are machine-made, and therefore date to at least the early-20th century, there are 27 tableware vessels. These would have been acquired over the course of the 19th century, although it is difficult to tightly date when as the manufacturing methods represented in this tableware— press-molding, pattern molding, 2-part molds— have long time ranges. However, one significant pattern is present in that 14 of these vessels have some degree of decorative molding, etching, or cutting, suggesting that decorative glassware and serving-ware was part of the formal dining experience at the Boston-Higginbotham House in the 19th century.

The medicinal bottles and vials were identified based on distinctive bottle finishes, embossing, or vessel form. Of the 17 medicinal vessels, 7 were machine made [one was local Nantucket apothecary's bottle (GV21) and another, a Castoria bottle (GV82)]. The manufacturing methods of the medicinal vials, usually free-blown or dip-molded, dates them to the 19th century, but as with the tableware glass it is difficult to narrow our focus further. Medicine at this time seems to have been coming directly from local apothecaries, which did not at the time have embossed bottles. The presence of 6 unmarked vials (GV37, GV64, GV87, GV88, GV89, GV90), 1 12-sided medicine bottle (GV113), and 1 mold-blown pill bottle (GV62) support this interpretation. No embossed medicinal bottles date to before the 20th century.

The toiletry and utilitarian bottles suggest that embossed vessels were available on the island during this time period, however, as several of these date to the mid-19th century (Fike 2006). Included in this sub-assemblage is a bottle of Barry's Tricopherous for the Skin and Hair (GV17, 1851+), J. Cristadoro Liquid Hair Dye No.2 (GV18, 1850-1877), Everett & Barrons Shoe Dressing, Providence RI USA (GV57, late-19th century). These bottles, coupled with the French cosmetic facial soap found in the ceramic collection (CV84, 1840+) point to a different type of engagement with the beauty-care market than with the pharmaceutical market. The members of this household were buying large-scale national and international brands for these products while getting their medicine from sources close to home. In the early-20th century (among the machine- made bottles) we also find the use of vaseline (GV23) and a nursing bottle (GV1) (Figure 4.30).

Figure 4.30. Nursing bottle fragments embossed with graduated measurements, early-20th century (GV1: EU11 L5a, cxt 281; EU11 L4a, cxt 277; some fragments from EU3 not shown).

Food bottles (12, 9%) are a mixture of 19th- and early-20th century vessels. Within this subassemblage are five machine-made jars (GV92, GV93, GV94, GV97, GV98) and a lid-liner which suggest that in the early-20th century canning was one of the household food-preservation techniques being used at the site. This might have been also practiced by the 19th-century occupants as at least one mold-blown mason jar was recovered (GV95). Few specific foods are represented in the assemblage, with the notable exception of a mold-blown London Mustard bottle (GV60, early-19th century), a bottle marked "Preserves" which was likely imported (GV86), and a Harris Flavoring Bottle (GV81, late-19th-early 20th century). In addition to this, two mold-blown, wide-mouthed bottles with cap-seat finishes were recovered which may have been used for food storage (GV54, GV29).

The beverage bottles (32, 25%) represent a large proportion of the glass MNV assemblage and also deserve a closer look. Among this sub-assemblage are 9 vessels that date to the 20th century, including 2 soft-drink bottles, 2 soda water bottles, and 5 alcoholic beverage flasks and bottles. Interestingly, the soda water bottles are amethyst-tinted (1890s-1920s) colorless bottles associated with Hiram Wheaton Soda Water of New Bedford.

The 23 beverage bottles from the 19th century are made up mostly of wine bottles, of which there were 15. Wine bottles came in a range of dark-green and olive bottle glass and were

either dip-molded or mold-blown. In addition to wine bottles also present are two plate-molded sarsaparilla bottles (GV16 Sand's and GV85 Hood's). Three dark green glass bottles (GV 24, GV101, GV106) were dip-molded in square molds and these vessel forms were identified as gin bottles. Two ovoid beverage bottles were interpreted as generic flasks (GV35, GV45) while one decorative flask, similar to a "Pitkin" flask was present (GV15). The Pitkin flask is a very fragmentary, light green ovoid bottle with a diamond design pattern-molded onto it. This type of flask was only available in the late-18th and early-19th centuries.

In sum, the glass vessel assemblage that dates to the 19th-century shows a predominance of alcohol beverage bottles, a preference for apothecary-made medicines, and participation in the consumer market for national brand cosmetics. In addition to this, the 19th-century glass assemblage is suggestive for its high number of decorative tableware pieces in the form of castors, tumblers, stemware, and decanters. These findings support the interpretation that the residents at 27 York engaged in many of the spending and consumption practices available to middle-class New Englanders in the 19th century.

The glass vessel assemblage from the 20th century, which would be associated with Elizabeth Stevens, Florence Higginbotham's Boarders in the early-1920s, and Florence's own household points to several interesting trends. We continue to see an engagement with national brands, although now we see this with specific reference to mothering practices. The presence of an amethyst-tinted nursing bottle, likely associated with Florence and her son William, suggests the embrace of new mothering practices which allowed women to be less attached to their infants in the early years of their lives. Also present is a Fletcher's Castoria bottle, a mild form of castor oil used for children's stomach problems. Wilkie (2003) has suggested that emetics such as this were not traditionally part of the suite of medicinal choices made in African American households at the turn of the century. The vaseline bottle which was recovered may also be associated with mothering practices as this multi-use balm can be used to help to heal burns, diaper rash, or chapped skin. These findings point to an engagement with new discourses on health and motherhood in the early-20th century.

Pipes

The excavations recovered a total of 232 pipe fragments, including 121 bowl fragments and 111 stem fragments. The large majority of the pipes were composed of white pipe clay (214 fragments), or had a light brown appearance which may have been rust staining (16). The remainder included one terracotta pipe bowl with molded vertical lines (EU8 L3a, cxt 209) and fragment which appears to be part of a metal stem (EU11 L1, cxt 248).

Thirty-nine of the pipe bowl fragments were decorated in some way. One popular motif on the white pipe clay pipes were vertical ribs on the pipe bowl, which appeared on 21 fragments of pipe bowls. In addition to this, flowers (2), stars (3), vines (8), and dots with alternating lines (5) appeared, sometimes in combination. Still, the majority of the bowl fragments were unadorned (82 fragments).

One significant find, as noted above and in the discussion of masculinity in Chapter 6, was a figural pipe with a bowl shaped like a face (STP7 L3a, cxt 246) (Figure 6.5). The figural pipe does not match with any of the pictures in the series "The Archaeology of the Clay Tobacco Pipe". The main distinguishing features are the long, bent nose and the open mouth. The face appears to be an elderly Caucasian male, losing his hair. A few images from Gallagher (1987) are similar in design, though usually have a laurel wrapped around the head, a mustache, or do not have a bent nose. One pipe catalogued in this series has the same general facial features (with the addition of the laurel), notably, it has a strangely shaped nose (Gallagher

1987: 92; Figure 26, No. 85). This pipe is described as "Head with Laurels. PPG" (ibid.: 94). It is possible that this pipe represents a specific individual, but more likely that it was just a generalized caricature, based on the fact that the features appear sloppy.

The creation of figural face pipes is not well dated, although decorated pipes in general were being made in Glasgow at least as early at the 17th century (Gallagher 1987: 70). Their creation continued well beyond the turn of the century and could be associated with a variety of events and individuals. Gallagher (1987:72) notes that in the 19th century, it was common for custom pipes to be made for major political events and campaigns as well as celebratory occasions.

<u>Small Finds Analysis</u>

Small Finds made up a significant portion of the Boston-Higginbotham artifact assemblage. As mentioned above, objects labeled "small finds" include 260 artifacts. This excludes tobacco pipes and non-artifact lithics. The distribution of the small finds among object types can be seen in Table 4.1.

Functional Category	Quantity
Personal Adornment	123
Sewing/Clothing Fastener	52
Architectural/Furniture	10
Children	5
Games	9
Writing	18
Hygiene	3
Kitchen	15
Small Finds, Other	24
Total	261

Table 4.1. Details of Small Finds Assemblage.

Personal Adornment

A variety of personal adornment artifacts were recovered from the Boston-Higginbotham House site—many of which date securely to the early-19th century, some with broad manufacturing ranges, and others which can be dated to the 20th century occupation of the site. Significantly, 88 of the 123 personal adornment artifacts are buttons. In addition to this, several aglets (3), beads (12), a plastic charm (1), buckles (4), pendants (3), shoe fragments (3), fabric or leather fragments (5), hair or hat pins (3), and indeterminate decorative objects (2).

The button assemblage from the house is particularly interesting. More than half of the buttons were recovered from the trash pit feature. Of these 46 buttons, many were concentrated in small clusters and appear to have been deposited together, on a surface (EU3, L3a/3b and EU11 L4a). The presence of these clusters supports the conclusion that many layers in units EU3/EU11 represent a house-clean-out event. Another object that point to the cleaning out of a drawer or piece of furniture include the presence of a drawer key and two Victorian pendants along with the clustered buttons. One cluster of bone buttons, from EU11 L6a, likely dates to the early-19th century based on stratigraphic associations (Figure 4.31).

Figure 4.31. Bone button assemblage from EU11 L6a, cxt 294. Note single-holed button which were once cloth-covered.

While buttons can be used for a variety of garments, many were of diagnostic size or form to determine the type of garment they would most likely be used on. The 27 large buttons (18+ mm) from the assemblage are potentially from coats and the decoration on many of these pieces supports this conclusion (White 2005: 59) (Figure 4.32). Several of these buttons (22), however, only measuring 18mm, may have been associated with waistcoats. Waistcoat buttons are smaller buttons that ranged from 14.5-19.5 mm in diameter and were used on the coats beneath the outerwear (ibid: 59). A small subset of prosser, or opaque white ceramic, buttons can be securely associated with children's underwear. According to Sprague (2002:120) panty-waist buttons are of "a two-hole variety with a simple ventricular shape and noticeably larger holes to accommodate the cloth tape used for attachment of children's underwear." Five additional prosser buttons are very small (10 mm), have 4-holes, and were likely used as sleeve buttons.

Figure 4.32. Large shell buttons and small sleeve button from EU11 L4a, cxt 277.

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The most decorative buttons in the collection are in some ways the most interesting. At least eleven of the copper alloy buttons were gilt and would have had a shiny, brassy appearance, though several of the others could have been gilt and since lost their luster. Eight buttons were fabric-covered when excavated or have a form (one central hole) that suggests they were covered with fabric in the past (White 2005: 69). More clearly ornate buttons were also present, including two early-19th century copper alloy buttons with stamped faces; one shows an "x" symbol while the other has a filigree decoration. One shell and one bone button have decorative engraving on them, such as concentric circles. There are also two military buttons in the assemblage, one is an American Hard Rubber naval button with an anchor design which would have been associated with the WWI era (Figure 4.33). The second is a small (15mm) general service military button with an eagle stamped on the front, which may have been a civilian copy since it does not match exactly with official military button designs (Luscomb 1967:11). Finally, one 20th-century bakelite button with a molded starburst design was recovered and was likely part of a women's garment.

Figure 4.33. World War I Era Naval Coat Button, Hard Rubber, EU11 L4a, cxt 277.

In addition to the buttons, a variety of other personal adornment objects are of interest. The two Victorian pendants that were recovered from EU3 L3b, cxt 166 were likely manufacturing in the 1870s or 1880s (Figure 6.2). One of the pendants is a cut-steel pin with faceted studs, riveted to a frame, and shaped like a crown. While very rusty, this would have had a silvery appearance and been very reflective at one time. The second pendant is a V-shaped, gold-plate pin with the small stone or ivory cameo of a woman in the center. While the origin of these pendants, which were found together in the cluster of buttons described above is not securely known. These could have belonged to Eliza Berry, the sole resident at 27 York Street in the 1870s and early-1880s. However, Elizabeth Stevens was the primary resident of the house from 1883-1917 and could have potentially purchased pendants like this. While both pieces would have been shiny and could have been used in formal dress, neither was composed of rare metals or of the finest quality. This may suggest that these objects were within the grasp of Eliza or Elizabeth to purchase for herself. A third fragment of a pendant, which likely dates

to post-1920s, was recovered from the East Yard driveway area (STP4, L2a cxt 193). This small poured-glass flower, mounted on a ferrous backing, would have been part of a larger pin that formed a floral bouquet (Romero 2002: 139). This may have been part of a piece of jewelry that Florence Higginbotham or Evelyn Underhill owned.

In addition to these pendants, EU3 (L6a) recovered a cowrie shell that may have been incorporated into personal adornment, whether as part of jewelry or in the hair (Figure 4.34).

Figure 4.34. Cowrie shell from EU3 L6a, cxt 242.

A small assemblage of beads was collected, with 13 specimens that date to a variety of time period. Three (3) matching light blue glass beads with a 4 mm diameter were recovered. Four (4) hand-drawn, unfaceted beads which shows signs of the crafting process wear recovered including one colorless bead an three dark blue beads. Two (2) faceted beads, one blue and one colorless, were found and would have been common in the 19th century. One (1) molded opque white bead was found. Finally, three artifacts were labeled as beads, but were likely part of larger pieces. Two (2) opalescent glass beads, set in a cuprous metal were recovered, and were likely parts of a larger design, such as a flower. In addition to this, one (1) blue glass faux jewel was found, likely from a brooch or hair stick.

Sewing

A variety of objects associated with sewing were recovered, in addition to the buttons detailed above. These are discussed here separately as these are the artifacts of construction and maintenance of clothing, rather than those details of clothing that were meant for display. Objects in this category include sewing scissors (2 pair), a sad iron (1), straight pins (16), grommets (14), garment hooks (7), garment loops (4), safety pins, and an unadorned buckle (1).

As with many of the buttons, 27 of the sewing implement artifacts were found clustered in EU3/EU11 as though thrown away together. The artifacts from these units include the sad iron, one pair of scissors (Figure 4.35), three safety pins, twelve straight pins, two garment loops and four garment hooks, and a buckle for a clothing strap. It seems clear that Elizabeth Steven's sewing supplies, including her replacement buttons, were being discarded wholesale. The sub-assemblage of buttons and sewing implements in EU3 and EU11 might even support

the interpretation that Stevens could have been taking in seamstress work or laundry to make extra money as these objects are found in high quantities.

Figure 4.35. Pair of conserved scissors from EU3 L6a, cxt 242.

Architectural/Furniture

As mentioned above, artifacts associated with architecture (nails, screws, etc.) were generally bagged separately and did not receive further analysis. Two artifacts, however, were put into small finds analysis, one is a fragment of wood with green paint (EU8, L4a, cxt 220) on it that was likely associated with the East Addition at one time. The other is a window pulley that may have also been associated with the renovations to the house in the earlier 20th century. Similar pulleys are still present in the Cottage structure.

Artifacts associated with furniture include furniture tacks (3) and upholstery pins (2) which would have been used to attached cloth or leather to chairs and other pieces of furniture. As mentioned above, a small skeleton key was also recovered (EU3, 3b, cxt 166) which would have been appropriate for a small desk drawer. Two decorative drawer pulls were also recovered. One with a starburst design (EU5 L3b, cxt 173; conserved) and another with cross-hatched pattern on a stamped copper alloy face (EU11 L3a.3b, cxt 268).

Children

A few artifacts can be securely associated with children's activities, however, the more general category of "games" will be discussed below. Only one toy that may be associated with the 19th-century occupants was recovered, this was a small white English porcelain saucer which may have been part of a toy tea set (EU2 L2a, cxt 135 and Backdirt cxt 271). Three 20th-century toys were found which are likely associated with the Jones' and their grandchildren's use of the property. These artifacts include a child's plastic comb (EU9 L2d, cxt 217), a small

piece of plastic with a painted leaf (EU7 L1a, cxt 172), and a toy dinosaur doll foot (EU11 L1a, cxt 248).

Games & Leisure

Those artifacts associated with games include marbles, jacks, and gaming pieces. Many games were participated in by adults so we cannot assume that children are responsible for using, losing, or discarding these objects.

Five marbles were recovered, of which four are clay. Clay marbles were the first mass-produced toy in America in 1884, however, they are common finds on earlier 19th century sites and were often made by hand. One glass marble fragment was also recovered. One ferrous metal jack was recovered (this has been conserved); jacks would have been a game that both adults and children would have played.

Three gaming pieces were found. These are small (<2 cm) round objects that could have been placeholders or tokens in a variety of games and easily lost because of their size. One had been formed out of a fragment of redware ceramic, another is a glass shard shaped into a circle, and a third is a 1 cm circle formed out of rubber.

Also included in this category is a fragment of a plastic paintbrush that was recovered. The residents of the house in the 1980s and 1990s, the Jones' had a daughter, Robin Jones, who kept a painting studio in the house and this artifact is likely associated with her time on the property.

Writing Implements

Several artifacts associated with writing in both the 19th and 20th centuries were recovered (Table 4.2). The slate fragments, with incised borders, and the slate pencils would have been standard tools in the 19th-century classroom. These artifacts might be associated with the children living at the Boston-Higginbotham House going to school next door at the African Meeting House or with home use. Those pencil and pen fragments from the late-19th (post 1890) and early-20th century could be associated with Elizabeth Stevens, Florence, William, or one of the many guests or boarders that came to live at the house in the years that they were living there.

Object	Count
Pen Quill	1
Slate pencil fragments	1
Slate fragments	7
Pencil tops (20th c)	5
Pen Cap (20th c)	1
Pencil lead fragments	2
Total	17

Table 4.2. Writing Implements.

Hygiene

Four artifacts associated with hygiene were identified in the small finds analysis. The interpretation of these artifacts should be supplemented by the medicinal and toiletry items identified in the glass and ceramics analyses, as discussed above.

Hygiene artifacts include: one small porcelain perfume bottle with decorative molding (EU4 L3a, cxt 150), a wooden toothbrush head (EU3 L4a, cxt 178), a white metal cap to a baby powder canister (EU11 L3a/3b), and a black plastic comb (EU11 L5a, cxt 281). It is likely that the toothbrush is associated with one of the 19th-century occupants of the site based on its form and material, the porcelain perfume bottle could have been a 19th-century acquisition as well as it was recovered from the deepest cultural layer in EU4, which is associated with the 19th-century use of the site. The other objects would have been available early in the 20th century (1920s+) and may be associated with Florence Higginbotham living at the site.

Kitchen

A significant number of kitchen implements were recovered, including cutlery and pot fragments. In all, four ferrous forks, four ferrous knives, one enameled pot (EU1/EU6 F.2), two pot handles (EU3 L3b, cxt 166; EU5 L3b, cxt 173, conserved), one ferrous pot, one silver-plated Lashar Silver Spoon (1930s) (STP4 L2a, cxt 193), one ferrous camping spoon (EU9 L4b, cxt 237), and one cuprous spoon bowl (EU3 L5a, cxt 213) were recovered.

Several of these artifacts appear to be from the 19th century. The forks in particular, are likely associated with this time period based on their form and the context in which they were found. One two-tined fork was found in the deepest layer of EU5 (L8a, cxt 302), which is part of a 19th-centry midden. Two other fork fragments from two-tined forks were found in EU5 L6a (cxt 284) and EU3 L3b (cxt 166) which are contexts deposited in the early-20th century which include the redeposition of 19th-century midden material. Finally, one two-toned fork was found with a knife in EU11L3a/3b (cxt 268), which was part of the 20th-century "drawer clean-out" event (Figure 4.36). The four knife blades recovered were found in relatively disturbed contexts and are not easy to date stylistically (EU8 L5a, cxt 235; EU11 L5b, cxt 289; EU13 Wall Clean-up, cxt 291; EU11 L3a/3b, cxt 268). Large fragments of a bulbous metal object were recovered from EU3 L4a (cxt 148) and EU3 L7a (cxt278) and are interpreted as a cast-iron pot. These remains were extremely delicate, however, and did not keep their form as well as being too delicate to be washed and conserved. One finding that might support the conclusion that this was a pot was the recovery of a pot handle from EU3 L3b (cxt 166).

Figure 4.36. Fork and knife set, conserved, from EU11 L3a/3b, cxt 268.

Small Finds, Other

Several small finds could not be classified in any of the functional categories listed above. Among these artifacts are identified artifacts of note, as well as a few curious oddities which remain unidentified. Among the latter are a shell object that resembles a dowel (EU3 L6b, cxt 269) and fragments of metal that variously resembled keys (EU11 L3a.3b, cxt 268) or decorative metalwork (EU9 L6a, cxt 253).

The identifiable "other" small finds included seven (7) coins, dating between 1822 and 1970. The 1822 penny was found in EU11 L6a (cxt 294) and supports the interpretation that this level may date to the early-mid 19th century. Other interesting small finds include one non-ferrous metal clasp (STP2 L1b, cxt 108) which was embossed with a wheat design and has not been clearly identified as personal adornment or a tag for bulk goods (Figure 4.37). In addition to this, a thumb-sized oval tab embossed with the word "Patent" which may be part of a sewing machine or some other household machine as it seems to have been broken off during use (EU11 L5a, cxt 281). Also recovered were a lead net weight (EU8 L5a, cxt 235), a glass oil lamp (EU11 L5a, cxt 281), three lithic debitage fragments that were likely collected by the Jones family in the 1980s from other areas of Nantucket (personal communication Robin Jones 2008).

Figure 4.37. Metal clasp with bounded wheat design from STP2 L1b, cxt 108. Scale in centimeters

Conclusion

This Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham archaeological project is the centerpiece of this dissertation and involved the cultivation of community relationships, the undertaking of archaeological excavations, and the processing of artifacts in a laboratory setting. Each component of this project has seen challenges and successes. Overall, the project has created excitement and interest about the archaeological and historical records associated with the

Boston-Higginbotham House among the residential community on Nantucket as well as artifact databases and collections that will be both conserved and navigable for future researchers.

Archaeological and Laboratory Research

      As described in the description of excavations and the laboratory analysis, many of the artifacts recovered were in secondary context. Therefore, for much of the collection, a fine-grained analysis is not possible. What is possible for these artifacts, the one's found in the redeposited basement fill or the trash pit, is an analysis on the scale of the long-term occupation of the house. Because we know the time of deposit for the trash pit within a few years, we are able to identify those artifacts in the trash pit and associated contexts with the occupation of the Bostons and their descendants, before circa 1926.

      While many of the layers were disturbed, some were not and could be identified as a 19th-century yard midden. As seen both in the depositional sequence of the site and the analysis of the ceramics, glass, and small finds, the site's material record is somewhat bi-modal. There were many acquisitions in the early-19th century, some vessels which could date to the early or late-19th century (e.g. transfer-print whitewares), and other vessels which can securely be dated to the late-19th or early-20th centuries. These observations will be incorporated into the analysis in Chapter 6.

      In order to address the more dramatic changes in the household after the death of Mary Boston Douglass in 1834, I turn to the documentary record. Deeds, probates, and censuses show that several families were in the house not only in the 1830s, but into the 1840s. At some point in the 1840s the Berrys moved to a new neighborhood, but kept their stake in the house (they appear in a new location in 1850). Within a few years, they were back at 27 York Street, likely when the Groves family moved off-island. The materiality of the house itself suggest that the households in the 1830s and 1840s would likely not have had distinct material possessions in the realm of food preparation and dining even as they owned independently specific rooms of the building. The house was passed down through generations— father to son to daughter-in-law and so on. While the character of the household changed somewhat over time — sometimes several generations and family branches sharing the space, sometimes with a single occupant— this was a *family home* and in a sense was always a shared space between relatives, consanguine or affinial.

      Chapter Five will delve into the lives of the Boston-Micah households in the early years at the site. The historical and archaeological data show the ways that this family was engaged in discourses on citizenship which formed part of the foundation for collective political identities in the 19th-century in the Nantucket community of color. It was through the use of house and yard spaces and household objects that familial bonds were created. These family bonds would expand throughout the island as the black community grew. Where stratigraphic context was well preserved, as in the case of EU9, we can make some interpretations as to what the Boston's dinner tables in the early-19th century may have looked like. This sub-assemblage, coupled with the 19th-century midden deposit throughout the backyard and the early-20th century trash pit that concealed many of the house's wares almost-intact, show us how some of the tastes of the household may have generally changed over time, and, conversely, how the materiality of their everyday lives created continuity.

      At the same time the archaeological and documentary record points to the variability of experiences within this family over the generations. Throughout the lifetime of the house there were many occupants with different degrees of visibility in the documentary record. Perhaps most famous is Absalom Boston, who was born in 1785, grew up at 27 York Street, and went

on to become Nantucket's first black whaling ship captain in the early-1830s, sailing with an all-black crew on the ship *The Industry*.

Less prominent in the narratives of Nantucket history are the many other members of the household. William Boston, who ran a small store and sold abolitionist newspapers; Eliza Berry, who mothered four children; Lewis Berry, who was an abolitionist before moving to San Francisco where he became a beloved member of the African Methodist Episcopal Church there; Phebe (Groves Talbot) Hogarth, who left the island in her teens and became a teacher during Reconstruction; as well as many others. While these individuals are documented to a certain extent in various records— censuses, newspapers, Freedman's Bureau documents — a consideration of the ways the material world may have had an impact on their sense of themselves and their social worlds fleshes-out their stories. It is to these stories that Chapter Six will turn. Many artifacts that can be dated to a relatively narrow window— personal adornment artifacts that were only popular for certain periods of time or glassware which has a relatively short life before breakage— which can shed light on the experiences of individuals at certain time periods. My hope is that these artifacts and the stories I tell about them might shed some light on the individual experiences of some of the people who lived at the Boston-Higginbotham House and how these experiences intersected with and enhanced community goals.

Chapter 5: Finding Common Ground: 18th-century Nantucket and the Boston-Micah Household

The archaeological and historical records from the early occupation at the Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham House, the Boston-Micah household, demonstrate ways the occupants were engaged with contemporary discourses on citizenship, race, and gender identities. Thankful Micah, a Wampanoag woman, and Seneca Boston, an African American man, actively pursued their own value systems in their social and civic lives but also through their material worlds. At the same time, they were aware of those value systems and gender ideologies imposed from white society and adeptly negotiated these realms on their own terms. It was families such as the Boston-Micah family on Nantucket in the late-18th and early-19th centuries that would establish the values that came to be central to communities of color in the Northeast in the 19th-century. The priority that this family placed on the celebration of diversity, the value of exercising citizenship, and the importance of family ties over other modes of affiliation were drawn from both Native American and African American traditions. It was these values that formed the foundation of shared values in the subcultures of 19th-century communities of color, many of which would later come to identify as African American and as part of the African Diaspora.

New England's unique racial and cultural politics created a context where Thankful and Seneca sought out each other for companionship. For each member of this union, however, their marriage, settlement on Nantucket, and building of a family likely meant something somewhat different. The historical and archaeological record suggests that citizenship, and the attendant barriers to this identity, may have been a defining aspect of Seneca's experience as an African American man. His occupations, his relationships with community members, and his material world were deployed as part of the daily assertion of manhood, respectability, and equality.

In Thankful Micah we see a parallel, but very different life experience. While her citizenship was not in question in the legal sense and she was not at significant risk for enslavement, white racism cast her in a similarly servile and child-like role as her husband because of her status as a Native American woman. The historical and archaeological records suggest that her life was also shaped by her family ties, the changing social landscape of her home, and her own goals to improve the status and quality of life of her family. Her cultural background, relationships with family members, and material world were active components of her performance of womanhood and cultural identity.

This, then, is the story of a family united by common purpose and many shared values. Wampanoag and African American residents on Nantucket were marginalized and the uniting of these populations was a strategy for the creation of prosperity, a mode to resist racism, and a way for Native Americans to gain ties outside their communities *and* for African Americans to gain new social ties as well as rights and privileges. How these unions played out in terms of united identities might have been very fluid as people practiced strategic essentialism, wherein groups that might otherwise have conflicting interests or perspectives nonetheless unite in order to accomplish a political or social goal (Spivak 1988). In the Boston-Micah family, this type of active embrace of a united, if reductionist, identity may have been deployed when it was seen as beneficial.

The Making of a Family: Seneca Boston and Thankful Micah in the 18th century

Seneca Boston and Thankful Micah were married on January 4th 1770. Their union was recorded in the Nantucket town records and would be the first and only marriage for both of

them. They would be married for 39 years until, in 1809, Seneca passed away. As an African American-Native American couple, they were not alone, as such couples were increasingly common in New England. Intimate relationships among African Americans, Native Americans, and Europeans were at once counter to the white ideal of a pure American race, and an effective mechanism for navigating the restrictive and often oppressive racialized social landscape of 18th-century New England for African American and Native people alike (Sweet 2003). It was in the context of complex tribal politics, an emerging class of emancipated African Americans, and revolutionary ideologies within the white community that Seneca Boston and Thankful Micah chose to start a family. While Seneca and Thankful came to form a united family, their contrasting subjectivities also made them experience the social landscape of Nantucket differently. Before considering where their values and priorities overlapped, this chapter will discuss the historical and archaeological evidence for the experience of Seneca and Thankful as individuals.

Race, Gender, and Citizenship: Manhood in cultural context

Citizenship and civil rights are aspects of identity and personhood that need to be seized and defended. Freedom and manhood were intertwined ideas in late-18th century as the American Revolution brought with it ideals about the natural rights of men and the responsibilities of citizens to defend their civil rights. While these ideals were cast as specifically "white" masculine ideals—meant to be attainable by only Euro-American males, anyone could theoretically embody them.

The historical record suggests that Seneca Boston was well aware of how discourses on citizenship were intertwined with notions of manhood. Seneca's sense of personhood was likely shaped by his social and political goals, his cultural background, and his experiences with the cultural traditions of Wampanoag people on the island in the maritime industry.

Seneca's Story

Freedom, citizenship, and cultural heritage were defining features of Seneca Boston's adult life and he recognized the need to perform these in his everyday encounters with people he met through his occupations, people who shared a desire to build a community, as well as people who did not see him as a social equal. As a child he had been enslaved under William Swain, who in 1760, when Seneca was 16 years old, wrote a deed of emancipation to set Seneca, his parents, as well as his brothers and sisters, free (NRD 1760: DB 6: 264).

While Seneca Boston was to gain his freedom in 1772 according to the deed, he was two years short of his emancipation date when he married Thankful in 1770. In light of his tenuous legal status, it is significant that he married Thankful, as marriage to a Native American woman enabled him to secure the freedom of future generations (Mandell 1998: 469; Sweet 2003:174). This is specifically relevant for his first and second sons, Freeborn (b. 1770) and Reuben (b. 1771), who were born prior to Seneca's official manumission.

In 1773, a year after Seneca had officially gained his freedom, he saw his brother Prince win his wages in a court case between his employer and his owner. Prince was serving on a whaling ship; when he returned, Captain Elisha Folger gave him his wages despite his status as a slave. Prince's owner sued to recover the wages and lost the suit (Nantucket Court Records, Nantucket, Massachusetts [NCR] 1773: Court Book [CB] 1: 297–298). After this, Prince was ostensibly able to pursue further occupations as a free man. While this is the first recorded court case in Massachusetts where a slave won his freedom through the court system (Karttunen 2002: 81), Prince may have drawn some of his inspiration to claim his wages from his elder brother.

Seneca had by 1773 already gotten married, started a family, and was saving money to buy land the following year — all several years before officially earning his freedom. This suggests that Seneca was taking a variety of actions to seize his rights and did not acknowledge the rights of the Swains over his person or wages.

The paper trail associated with Seneca suggests a similar sense of independence and self-sufficiency. Several documents from the 1790s point to his relationships with community businesses. A 1790 receipt from Mary Coffin's shop lists a variety of food and dry goods (Nantucket Historical Association, Nantucket, Massachusetts [NHA] 1790: Collection 150, Folder 51). The list includes tea, pepper and sugar as well as well as 10 yards of broad Holland [linen], ½ yard serge [light denim-like fabric], thread, and a ½ quire [unit of 25 sheets] of paper. While the handwriting makes it difficult to decipher some of the items, Seneca may also have bought a waistcoat (spelled phonetically "wescoat") for 10 shillings (Figure 5.1). This bill shows that Seneca and his family were buying some of the more expensive items of the day, as evidenced by the spices and tea. Some home manufacture of sheets and clothing is suggested by the broad Holland cloth, the serge cloth, and thread listed in the bill. Finally, the purchase of 12 sheets of paper may suggest that Seneca was literate, although we cannot be sure if this is the case, we do know his brother Essex and his son Absalom were literate (Karttunen 2006).

Figure 5.1. 1790 Bill to Seneca Boston from Mary Coffin for food and other provisions. Nantucket Historical Association, Coffin Family Papers, Collection 150, Folder 51. *Courtesy of the Nantucket Historical Association.*

In addition to his account with Mary Coffin, Seneca Boston had an account with at least one other white business owner. A white butcher named Henry Clark died in 1796 with accounts due from Seneca Boston as well as a variety of other free people of color, including Essex Boston, Tobias Simons, Joseph Harris, Paul Cuff, and Rueben Perry (NPC 1796: PB 4: 184–185). While we don't have details of what types of meat he was purchasing, the zooarchaeological remains from the site later occupied by Seneca and Thankful suggest that a variety of pig, cow, and sheep cuts were consumed (Way 2010).

These documents provide a glimpse into the types of relationships Seneca had established outside of the Newtown neighborhood. One document from the town records speaks to the personality of Seneca himself, as a free person willing to defend his rights. In 1799 a number of people were fined for having dogs on the island, a nuisance that had plagued the island for years and was the subject of several city ordinances. An elaborate system of fences criss-crossed the island, one of the mechanisms by which the grazing cattle and sheep were managed. Another was the regulation of potentially-harmful species like dogs. Seneca Boston was among those fined for dog ownership and was charged $2. The issue did not end there, as the Town Records state "Seneca Boston complains that he was taxed Two Dollars for a dog, which he killed as he was acquainted with the law respecting Dogs" (Nantucket Town Records, Nantucket, Massachusetts [NTR] 1799: October Term). Seneca was actively exercising his right to represent himself and argue for his case.

The dog story suggests that the animals that were apparently kept on Seneca's property, and perhaps the property itself, were seen as something of a nuisance to the town. The need to assert ownership rights might be seen in the archaeological evidence for staking of boundaries with fences (Feature 4, Excavation Unit 2). There seems to have been such a fence around the house, one which overlaps with the division of the property in 1812, but may have been associated with earlier demarcations of the yardspace by Seneca and Thankful. While this fence would not have represented the bounds of the entire Boston-Micah property, it would have been a means for the protection of the home and a further assertion that this was occupied and monitored land.

Seneca's desire to be treated as an equal in the Nantucket community is further suggested by his choices of occupation. In several documents (NRD 1774: DB 10: 390; NRD 1807: DB 20: 13) his occupation is given as "weaver," however, he was also listed in some deeds as a mariner (NRD 1802: DB 17: 18). While not his primary occupation, Seneca's involvement in the maritime industry may have been partially fueled by the social and economic equality and sense of manhood that could be experienced onboard these vessels, regardless of one's skin color.

Maritime work, in addition to being an important source of income, was a profession wherein people of color could experience a degree of equality and respect that was not possible in land-based occupations in the late-18th century (Bolster 1997, 1999). The maritime industry routinely employed Euro-Americans, Native Americans and African Americans on ships as needed in the 18th century, although by the 1840s, this pattern had shifted dramatically toward favoring Euro-American workers, including Irish immigrants. In the late-18th and early-19th century, however, the Atlantic maritime industry had developed its own subculture, which Bolster (1999:358) suggests had "strong 'egalitarian impulses' [that]…frequently confounded shoreside racial etiquette." This subculture carried over 13th-century maritime traditions that emphasized a distinct order on ships to protect the rights of shipowners, regardless of the individuals who filled the roles on the ship. Within this context, "racial boundaries certainly existed, but they were often secondary to those established by the institution of the ship" (Bolster 1999: 359). A travel narrative written by James Kelly in the 1820s and 1830s detailed the relationships between white sailors and African Americans on these ships as an amicable relationship, where "in the presence of the sailor the Negro feels a man" (Kelly 1838; quoted in Bolster 1999: 363).

Seneca's involvement in the maritime industry is mentioned in an 1802 deed where he is listed as a mariner and an 1804 account book for the whaler *The Alligator* [NHA 1804: Account Books Collection 10, AB60 (Shelf A1); NRD 1802: DB 17:18]. While his work on *The Alligator*

was temporary, only 7.5 days, and land-based, the meritocracy of the whaling ship may have attracted him to work on the wharves to begin with.

While the types of positions on whaling ships and at the wharves that were available to people of color were not highly skilled, as a weaver Seneca *was* a skilled craftsman, a position which most likely was associated with status in the emerging free community of color in the Northeast. Practicing a trade that was skilled was associated with higher status in 19th-century black communities such as Boston (Horton and Horton 1999). Seneca's occupation put him in a more skilled position than spinners, who were also usually women (Ulrich 2001), and would have allowed him to work consistently as long as wool was being produced on the island and there was a demand for such. This may have been supplemented by working as a mariner and at the docks.

While not well documented, in the 18th century one of the industries on Nantucket was sail-making. This was a small industry compared to the larger work of acquiring and processing whales, though it complemented the whaling industry and was fueled by the wool produced by the thousands of sheep on the island. Sheep herding was the industry that preceded whaling and continued to be a small-scale industry well into the 19th century. An early mention of the processing of wool was made by St. John de Crevecoeur in 1782, during his visit to Nantucket. He writes that "Quayes is a small but valuable track (sic)…Adjoining to it on the west side there is a small stream, in which they have erected a fulling mill…These mills prepare all the cloth which is made here" (Crosby 1946:48). A 1793 letter, reprinted in the Nantucket Historical Association's journal, reads "We have now a sail cloth manufactory, which employs 50 or 60 hands, all girls except the Weavers, and turn off about 400 yards of cloth a week, equal to any imported" (Coffin 1793).

Seneca Boston's occupation as a weaver suggests that he could have worked at one of these mills in Quaise, an area on the shores of Nantucket Harbor near where the UMass Boston Nantucket Field Station stands today, which was a little more than a mile west of downtown Nantucket.

An important material connection between Seneca's occupation as a weaver and his home in Newtown is suggested by the presence of resin-coated canvas on both the original roof of Seneca and Thankful's house and as a lining under the basement floorboards. The Historic Structure Report describes this material on the roof as follows:

> The original late eighteenth-century gable roof remains in place along the south slope, and is partially intact north of the original ridge. It is formed of widely spaced rafters (a total of six for the entire roof), and wide vertically laid planks that are self-supporting. The planks vary in width; some are at least 1'-6" wide.
>
> Surviving evidence for the fragmentary north slope of the original root reveals a covering of resin coated canvas on the top exposed surface. Wood, shingle-like battens with nails appear to have held down the canvas, and perhaps covered the seams between the boards. (JGWAA 2005:175).

In the basement section of the report, they suggest that the canvas could have been laid as a sheet, or in strips over the seams between boards. In the book *Early Nantucket and Its Whale Houses*, one Nantucket roof structure is described as "board and shingle" (Foreman 1966: 101).

The book illustrates a number of early roof-types from Siasconset where shingles are used to cover the seams between vertical roofing boards in order to create a water-tight surface.

It is possible that Seneca's choice to use resin-covered canvas *in addition to* shingles over the seams in his roofboards was an innovation born out of his familiarity with both the qualities of canvas through his work as a weaver and methods of waterproofing through his work as a mariner. While we cannot say with certainty that Seneca was responsible for the choice to use this building material, the fact that it was integrated as part of the original fabric of the house is suggestive.

Culture, Family, and Gender: Womanhood in cultural context

Thankful Micah's experience in late-18th century Nantucket was shaped at once by her familial relationships with other Native people, her new connections with the African American population, and her long-term negotiation of dominant white race and gender ideologies and the mechanisms through which they were imposed. This section will discuss the intersection of these experiences in an attempt to understand how Thankful may have used the material world to perform/demonstrate her values and how these values were counter to or resonant with those of the people around her.

As discussed in Chapter Three, among the New England white population in the late-18th century, standards of womanhood were underwritten by both the economic as well as moralistic contributions of women. As members of a household, women controlled much of the daily work of making a household function, such as food preparation, cloth production, and child-rearing. Revolutionary ideologies had also imbued women's actions as mothers with a moral responsibility to the nation itself.

The notion of "Republican Womanhood" was one born out of the need to maintain patriarchy when the divine authority of the king, and men within the household, was challenged (Coontz 1988: 154). By naturalizing women as associated with domesticity, in contrast to men, this hierarchy was maintained (Coontz 1988: 154). Womanhood came to be seen as a role wherein mothers taught their children the bounds of individual rights (how to be citizens) and these activities were separate from the public world of men. Women were not limited to childrearing and menial household upkeep, they were implicitly engaged in the economic world through participation in household industries and the political world through the raising of patriotic children (Coontz 1988: 155). Here home became a retreat—not into a realm of women and children, but *away from* "aristocratic corruption" (Coontz 1988: 161). It is important to remember that these ideals continued to be those of the white middle-class and didn't necessarily reflect the ideals of lower-class individuals as many aspects of Republican Womanhood were impossible to maintain in poor families.

The dominant ideals of womanhood in the late-18th century were neither representative of African American nor Native Wampanoag experiences. In the late-18th century, gender roles for Native American women in southern New England were defined according to domestic and agricultural responsibilities, as well as responsibilities connected to the control and use of land itself. Wampanoag women traditionally worked in and around the home (Bragdon 2009: 143). In 1809 a visitor to Mashpee "remarked that the houses and outdoor spaces of wigwam compounds seemed to be occupied exclusively by women and girls" (Citing Kendall 1809: 179-80, 182; Bragdon 2009: 143). Women's work was "domestic, and their work revolved around the gathering and processing of foods, especially shellfish, wild plants, berries, and nuts, and the maintenance and harvesting of corn" (Bragdon 2009: 143). In some southern New England tribes, such as the Narragansett, women's power over land rights led to the institution of

marriage restrictions, whereby African American men were excluded as potential partners in order to maintain cultural cohesion (Plane 2000:170).

Similarly, African American notions of womanhood were not necessarily defined with reference to Republican Motherhood, as minority women were excluded from this ideal to begin with. That being said, the underlying values of responsible citizenship *would have* resonated in this community, if only because of the rights that this status carried with it. As most African Americans in the late-18th century were enslaved, they did not have the freedom to practice gender roles in ways that were seen as culturally or socially appropriate to them. Coontz (1988: 91) has pointed out that slaves created a variety of mechanisms for dealing with the instability of their familial ties— fictive kinship, large kin networks, and "ritual co-parenting and godparenting," putting less emphasis on the nuclear family. In the context of this instability, womanhood would ideally be focused on the family, but this was not necessarily one's biological family. It is within this context that we start to think about how Thankful Micah may have experienced the expectations of the Nantucket community, her new husband, and her natal community as she began to raise her family on Nantucket in the late-18th century.

Thankful's Story

The marriage of Thankful Micah to Seneca Boston carried with it opportunities and challenges. Thankful Micah was a Wampanoag Indian likely from Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard or Cape Cod. While Thankful and Seneca were from contrasting cultural backgrounds, they shared the experience of racism that was growing in New England as non-white residents were increasingly marginalized. On Nantucket specifically, Native and African Americans were both cast in servile roles by the dominant white population of the island. For example, many Wampanoag men and women were serving in English households from the time they were children (Bragdon 2009: 161). The debts accrued through petty lawsuits and dishonest contracts on the part of the English put Wampanoag parents were in a position where they had to pay in part through the labor of their children. While there is no record of Thankful serving in an English home, she would have been familiar with the practice and would have been subject to the attitudes of racial difference that rationalized the system.

Thankful's experience was not simply that of a Wampanoag woman as she had married an African American and was living at a time when Native, English, and African cultures were intermingling. Looking to the material culture that was in the homes of other Native people at the time might give some perspective on what objects, practices, and perhaps gender roles she might have been familiar with. The collections of European-made and Native-made objects are not indicative of cultural meanings, but rather offer a starting point for thinking about how objects are or are not tightly bound to cultural meanings, how objects get repurposed, and how cultures change and persist.

The 1764 probate inventory of Jonathan Micah, a Wampanoag man, was written the same year that an epidemic among the Native population on Nantucket ended, shows some of the mixing of material worlds between the English and Native Wampanoag and is suggestive as to what may have been familiar to Thankful when she was growing up. While we cannot confirm the exact relation between Thankful Micah and Jonathan Micah of Nantucket, it is likely that they were related by blood or marriage. The 1764 probate record for Jonathan Micah shows that he was relatively wealthy. It included a dwelling house as well as a wide variety of English-produced clothing, kitchen wares, furniture, and farming equipment. At the same time, several groups of objects were related to Native foodways, economic activities, and personal adornment,

such as stone pestles and mortars, 65 lbs of feathers, and moccasins as well as potentially the baskets, boxes and bag listed (Little 1980: 89-90; NCR 1764: CB 3: 35).

The types of work Thankful may have done are not recorded in any documents associated with her. Nonetheless, making an analogy with well-recorded Native contexts based on the work of Bragdon (2009) and Plane (2000) give us an idea of the roles she likely played within her household and community, and the archaeology from her home can potentially shed light on how this may have been evident in her material world.

When Thankful married Seneca at age 16, she took on what would have been a primarily domestic role, an occupation that would have been consistent with traditional Wampanoag women's roles as well as ideal English and African American womanhood. The specific duties associated with the domestic sphere varied between these cultural traditions. For example, Wampanoag women might be expected to gather shellfish or create basketry, while European women might be expected to produce homespun cloth. The archaeological data for activities that involved perishable materials is limited. Our excavations did not recover basketry, tools associated with weaving, nor any tools associated with the processing of animals (whether these be metal or stone), and we did not recover botanical remains. The zooarchaeological remains and ceramic assemblage, however, are suggestive of the types of foodways practiced in the Boston-Micah household and what this might say about the experience of class and the intersection of Native, African, and English culture on Nantucket.

Food remains were examined by Mike Way (2010) in his master's research on the faunal material from the Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham House Archaeology Project. While the flotation samples taken recovered no charred plant remains, the faunal assemblage sheds light on the various choices of animals, cuts of meat, animal husbandry practices, and yard maintenance that the Bostons made over the years. The zooarchaeological remains from Excavation Unit 9 (EU9), one of the only units with clearly-identified late-18th to early-19th-century deposits, is most closely associated with the earliest occupation at the site.

Most of the faunal remains recovered from the depths of Excavation Unit 9 are associated with medium–large mammals such as cows, sheep, or pigs with many specimens only identifiable to the level of class (mammalia) and size (MD–LG). In addition to this, however, ten shellfish fragments were recovered from these layers and several unidentified bird bones. Way (2010:115) notes that even though shell was recovered in small numbers across the site, this part of the assemblage is significant when compared with other contemporary sites in New England. Specifically looking at the assemblages from the African Meeting House and 44 Joy Street Privy sites in Boston and the Narbonne House in Salem Massachusetts, Way points out that no shell was recovered from these sites at all (2010: 115). While it is not surprising that shellfish would have been a part of the diet of individuals in a town so reliant on maritime industries such as Nantucket, it is important to contrast these remains with the above sites as they also had coastal access to marine resources as well. Thus, the small numbers of shellfish recovered *may* represent a higher reliance on these resources.

There are several possible interpretations of the shellfish that were recovered from the lower levels of Excavation Unit 9. Shellfish could simply be a dietary preference that was met at the local Nantucket market and was relatively affordable. Shellfish could have also been gathered by Thankful and her children, which was a common activity for Native New England women living in coastal areas (Bragdon 2009). Shellfish are also present in later deposits, in similar percentages, suggesting that this continued to be a part of the diet, however small. The presence of shellfish in the diet of the Boston-Micah household suggests that they included in

their diet foods that were typical of any Nantucketer. However, it should be recognized that this family could have obtained this food through a number of avenues.

In contrast to the shellfish remains, there is a preponderance of mammal remains from the 18th-century and early-19th century levels of Excavation Unit 9. In fact, most of the faunal remains associated with diet were from medium–large mammals such as cows, pigs, and sheep (Way 2010). The elements that were recovered include several long bones (femur, humeri, radius), several vertebrae and teeth, and many unidentified elements (Way 2010). These animals would have been familiar to both Seneca and Thankful, as they were part of English cuisine and Seneca was raised within an English household and Thankful likely interacted with English people frequently, assuming her experience was similar to other Wampanoag men and women on Nantucket in the 18th century.

The household's acquisition of meat was likely through a local market or butcher, as suggested by the 1796 account Seneca had with the butcher Henry Clark, although it is possible that some animals were home-raised (Way 2010). Significantly, no one living at the residence was identified as a yeoman or farmer, and a "barn" was not identified on the property until 1812 [it was described in the deed of 1802 as a shop (NPC 1812: PB 5: 274; NRD 1802: DB 17: 18)]. On the other hand, the presence of fences in both archaeological and documentary records could be interpreted as a means to protect or control livestock. While multiple interpretations of the cuts of meat may have been possible with a larger sample size, an interpretation based only on the presence/absence data for different taxa being eaten at the Boston-Micah household suggests that these foods would not have set them apart from other middling families on the island.

The ceramic assemblage that dates to the late-18th century from the Boston-Higginbotham House collection includes a wide variety of wares; some vessels are from deep Excavation Unit 9 levels and others have been dated by the *terminus post quem* or manufacturing range to the late-18th and very early-19th century. The assemblage includes a collection of pearlware shell-edged decorated plates and a few hand-painted pearlware teacups and saucers. The family also had slip-decorated redware kitchen vessels and multi-functional industrial-slipware pearlware bowls (Table 5.1). Among their transfer-printed vessels were a few choice Willow-pattern plates, saucers, and teacups, though we do not have evidence for a complete teaware set (Figure 5.2). In general, it would seem from the ceramic assemblage that these materials could be associated with any middle-class household in the late-18th to early-19th century. Perhaps, as the dominant narrative of Nantucket's past proclaims, there *was* no sense of "difference" associated with the families in the New Guinea neighborhood.

A closer look at the ceramic assemblage suggests otherwise. Markedly absent from the ceramic assemblage are plainwares. Only eight pearlware or creamware plain vessels were identified. The Boston-Micah household chose shell-edged flatwares, and other decorative wares, to adorn their dinner table (Figure 5.3). Miller (1980) argues that because of the low amount of skill involved in making these, they were not expensive to produce and would fall into the second 'tier' of ceramics, with the first tier being wares that were completely plain. Choosing shell-edged wares may have been an economical choice — these were inexpensive dishes which were easy to supplement with additions should some break. At the same time the lack of plainwares suggests that there was a decision to distance themselves from the *most* inexpensive wares. The choice to avoid plainwares may have been based on a desire to embody some aspects of middle-class identity by showing that the family's means, however modest, enabled the family to avoid poverty. The expense involved in the acquisition of these wares would have been significant with respect to their class identity.

Functional Category/Decoration	Count		Functional Category/Decoration	Count
Dining			Food Preparation	
Hand-painted, earthtones	8		English slip-decorated (RW)	3
Hand-painted, blue	5		Industrial slipware	3
Transfer-printed, blue (1 Porc)	9		Undecorated (CW)	2
Shell-edged, blue or green	16			
Industrial slipware (2 CW)	4		Children's	
Undecorated (CW)	4		Hand-painted polychrome	1
			Transfer-printed, blue	1
Teaware				
Hand-painted earthtones	4		Decorative	
Hand-painted blue	3		Transfer-printed black (CW)	1
Transfer-printed blue	6		Plain (Porc)	1
White salt-glazed	1			
			Toiletry	
			Undecorated (CW)	2

Table 5.1. Functional distribution and decorative techniques of early period vessels. Pearlware (unmarked), creamware (CW), early redware vessels (RW), early porcelain (Porc)

Figure 5.2. "Shorthose Willow" transfer-printed pearlware plate (CV155). 1795–1823 manufacturing range (Coysh and Henrywood 1982:337).

Figure 5.3. Fragments of shell-edged blue pearlware plates from EU9.

Class identity and ceramics in this case need to be put into the context of emerging ideas about respectability. The presence of teawares in the assemblage, for example, would have been an important detail of the parlor scene in the late-18th century for both Thankful and her husband Seneca. The tea and sugar detailed in Seneca's 1790 store receipt reinforce the importance of the teawares that were recovered from the archaeological contexts at the site. While the tablewares from the Boston-Micah household were largely shell-edged plates and saucers, the teawares (n=13) were predominantly hand-painted polychrome or blue (n=7) vessels with simple floral designs, transfer-printed blue (n=6) with the significant addition of a white-salt-glazed stoneware sugar dish. These data reflect the growing importance of the tea ritual, especially as coupled with sugaring one's tea, was gaining in the defining of respectability in the colonies in the 18th century (Mintz 1985). The meaning of this ritual was inextricably linked to the perception of the physically beneficial effects of sugar and tea together, in conjunction with the status symbol of the tea ritual itself in affording one respectability (Smith 1992: 270). When used in this way, sugar became a part of a large-scale realization that a person could define himself or herself by what they consumed.

This acquaintance with English-produced goods, foods, and spaces does not reflect a sense of "Englishness" any more than the English "became" Native people through economic and social interactions with them. Some dissonance is suggested by Thankful's potential rejection of aspects of 18th-century white womanhood associated with cloth production and the location of her home in the liminal space between the Native and English areas of 18th-century Nantucket.

One realm where Thankful may have intended to set herself apart from other middle-class women on the island is in the realm of household textile production. Textile production for English families was a large part of the social and economic lives of women. In the 18th century, it was in sewing circles, but also in exchanges of work that social relationships were made and maintained (Ulrich 2001; Beaudry 2006: 5). While we recognize that much of Thankful's material world included European-produced textiles, ceramics, and buildings, it is not clear to what degree she may have been involved in similar socio-economic activities such as the exchange of piece-work. As weaving was one crucial step in the production of homespun fabric,

it may have actually been the case that Seneca, rather than Thankful, was more imbricated with these neighborhood social and economic exchanges. Early documents, such as Seneca's 1802 deed of the property to his son Freeborn, indicate that there was a "Shop" on the property. So, in addition to likely working at a mill on the island, Seneca did enough weaving at home to warrant constructing an outbuilding.

Marriage to Seneca would have afforded Thankful access to small-scale economic and social networks while also not being beholden to such exchanges. This would have allowed her to shift some of the household production away from her hands and potentially given her time to prioritize her children and relationships with other Native Wampanoag people on the island. The importance of family ties, both on the part of Thankful and Seneca, is further suggested by the location of the homesite itself. As will be discussed below, the house is located in between the English settlement of Nantucket proper and the Native village of Miacomet, the largest Native village on the island after the epidemic of 1763–1764. As will be discussed in the next section, the values of both Seneca and Thankful came together to define their home. These values were primarily aligned with family ties and defending one's civil rights. The priority they gave to these values set the groundwork for the values that their family, and other families in the Newtown village, would continue into the mid- and late-19th century.

<u>Shared Senses of Family, Respectability, and Belonging: Setting the roots of collective values.</u>

Thankful and Seneca continued cultural traditions and maintained family ties in a white-dominated society through settlement location and the institution of marriage. Within the white worldview citizenship was performed in specific ways — through civil recognition of marriage, the purchasing of land, and the exercising of legal rights. The symbolism of these actions was not lost on Seneca and Thankful and, in the forming of a family together, they took action to work within the dominant system while also prioritizing their own values.

The intersection of a sense of united family identity and divergent racial and gender social identities will be explored through a discussion of the Boston-Micah family home itself — its placement on the landscape, design, and boundaries.

<u>Marriage</u>

Beyond the emotional and social import of marriage for the individual, this institution would have held specific significance as it was outside the rights of enslaved men and women. The civic recognition of Seneca Boston's marriage to Thankful Micah put him among a small number of African Americans in the country who could enjoy the legal rights of inheritance, familial responsibility, and other rights that came with the civic recognition of this bond (Adams and Pleck 2010).

The traditions of marriage within Native groups of southeastern New England included a variety of relationships, which were to different degrees formal or informal unions (Plane 2000). Many Native people in the 17th and 18th century did not marry in the formal English sense. In the case of inter-cultural marriages, "Indians and Africans pursued a full range of marital customs, but — whether because of poverty, condition of servitude, or culturally encouraged preferences — informal or customary unions seem to have become quite frequent, if not the norm" (Plane 2000: 136).

Significantly, Thankful and Seneca did not follow this path. Rather than being married according to custom, where all they would need was mutual consent, they chose to have their marriage recognized by the town of Nantucket. This choice may have been underwritten by Seneca's concern about the legal status of his children or the desire of him or Thankful to

exercise their rights as Nantucket citizens. Plane (2000:136) suggests that formalized unions were especially important in communities of color as people "were anxious to claim marriages that had been conducted by a minister or colonial official," likely because of the legal implications for their children. In the context of the variability of marriage practices, the choice made by Seneca Boston and Thankful Micah show a strategy for declaring social standing and using the institutions of the dominant community to secure one's rights, regardless of whether Seneca and Thankful embraced the wider ideologies of the white community.

Settling in West Monomoy: Home and Family Connections

Familial and social ties on the island as well as the racialized social landscape of the island motivated Seneca and Thankful to build their home in the West Monomoy Lots of Nantucket in 1774. The unique meaning that Seneca and Thankful placed on this plot of land stands in contrast to the value that was likely placed on this remote space in the eyes of white islanders. This contrast draws attention to the multi-locality of place, wherein "places" are actively created by the people experiencing them (Rodman 1992). As Rodman (1992: 643) argues, "for each inhabitant, a place has a unique reality, one in which meaning is shared with other people and places. The links in these chains of experienced places are forged of culture and history."

Settling in West Monomoy, on the southeast part of town, Seneca and Thankful's homestead was in some ways beyond the pale. This area was about a mile from the wharves, and on the southern side of a natural east-west, linear valley, created by the retreating ice sheet of 10,000 years ago. Seneca Boston bought the land in 1774, when there was little development in the area. This area was not yet considered "Newtown," as it would come to be called in later deeds, nor "New Guinea" as the intersection at Five Corners would later be nicknamed by some. This was not yet a neighborhood, no less a Black neighborhood, which made the Boston-Micah family pioneers in a certain sense, as they would set the physical and social foundation for later communities to come. By 1799, a list of streets was compiled that did label this area as "Newtown" and listed it along with another neighborhood where free people of color were clustered, "Allentown", which was to the West of Newtown on the other side of the windmill (NRD 1799: DB 24: 131–142). Seneca and Thankful were on the northern boarder of this neighborhood, closest to downtown.

While this may have been one of the only areas made available to African Americans looking for property, the choice of this location is also highly significant because of its proximity to the Native village of Miacomet. The Native population on Nantucket in the mid-18th century was settled in four communities, with Miacomet as the largest and closest to English settlement of Sherburne (now Nantucket downtown) (Bragdon 2009: 155). Whereas Nantucket had avoided many of the New World epidemics in the 16th and 17th centuries, the winter of 1763-1764 brought a sickness that decimated the Native population, killing 222 individuals. We don't know the fates of many of the survivors. However, we do know that only a few members of the Wampanoag Micah family were left on the island, specifically Jonathan and Peter Micah, and they were concentrated in Miacomet in the late 18th century.

It was likely these family ties that drew Thankful to settle on the island in the first place. Thankful is not listed in among the survivors or the victims of the 1763-1764 epidemic, so she was likely not living on Nantucket Island at the time. Based on Thankful's surname, and young age at the time of marriage, she was likely born on one of the islands, such as Martha's Vineyard, or on Cape Cod. As Bragdon (2009: 205) has noted, membership in communities was fluid in this region, itinerancy was vital to Native intra-region relationships (ibid. 2009: 214–

215), and movement between Nantucket and Mashpee is especially evident in marriage records. (Karttunen 2002: 117–118).

The location of the York Street plot between the English and Native towns on the island reflects the Boston-Micah family's social ties with respect to both groups. What may have been considered an undesirable area, being apart from the centralized town, was likely preferable for Thankful. Settling in this area provided a link between the English town and the town of her family and ancestors, located approximately a mile away to the southwest. In the years to come, Boston-Micah familial ties to the land in this part of town would only grow stronger as the African American community expanded and many Boston descendants settled nearby.

The structural organization of the house that came to be built on the York Street plot suggests that many of the conventions of dominant middle-class material life on the island were also a part of the Boston-Micah domestic experience. As Deetz (1996) and Glassie (1975) have argued, we need to carefully consider just how closely the very materiality of houses was tied to the cultural and social positions of the people who lived inside them. The original layout of the house was either a hall and parlor house with a kitchen lean-to on the north side (backyard) and a central chimney (JGWAA 2005), or simply a hall-and-parlor house, without the lean-to (Hylton 2011: Personal communication, August 8, 2011). Morris Hylton, at the University of Florida's Design Construction and Planning Department, which has a branch on Nantucke, took on the Boston-Higginbotham House as a case study with his students in 2011 and concluded that the original structure was a simply hall-and-parlor house, with a central chimney without the kitchen attachment (ibid.). Later, the hall-and-parlor style house was changed to a "saltbox with a kitchen off the back" (ibid.). By the end of the 17th century, Native villages on Nantucket contained a mixture of framed and wigwam houses (Bragdon 2009: 155). For Thankful, it is likely that the 27 York St House could have been a place for continuation of her sense of Native identity, as it was outside the landscape of English control, but still in a familiar space. Living in the hall-and-parlor house with a central chimney was likely a familiar domestic setting for Thankful. Similarly, Seneca would have been familiar with such layouts as he grew up in an English household with his family.

The hall-and-parlor house was a common and simple layout for homes on Nantucket, as it was throughout colonial New England. The organization of this type of house was based on multi-functional spaces, with the parlor as the more public of the two ground-floor rooms. In the Boston-Micah household, this would have been the eastern room on the first floor, as the original decorative paneling in this space suggests (JGWAA 2004: 123). The organization of space was also underwritten by the gender hierarchies of the 18th century, when patriarchal English, Christian families were normative. Shamir (2006) has argued that hall-and-parlor houses of colonial times, and up through the 18th century, were a material manifestation of an egalitarian social arrangement on the scale of the nation and a patriarchal organization to the household. The ubiquity of the style among relatively wealthy and the poor was suggestive of equality among people (as suggested by contemporary observers such as St. John de Crevecoeur (Crosby 1946)). The layout of the hall-and-parlor house, on the other hand, was characterized by spaces with "enmeshed activities" which "disallowed spaces of individual privacy" which reinforced the authority of the head of household (Shamir 2006: 30).

In Shamir's (2006) view, the house style is one material means of reinforcing patriarchy. This interpretation assumes, however, that a value was placed on privacy within a family unit in the first place and that there was only one way to experience these

spaces. Perhaps this lack of privacy was one way that the hall-and-parlor house was similar to the multifunctional wigwam spaces that had once been familiar to Native Wampanoag in the area. Similarly, the privacy from the outside world, rather than from other members of one's family, may have been the priority most valued by Seneca, who had grown up in a context where he could exercise no rights to privacy.

The dimensions of the house conform to the English incremental style as the front of the house was approximately 32 feet wide (English increments, according to Deetz 1996:202 were 16') and the north-south measurement would have been 14.5 feet on the interior. Additionally, the paneling in the best (east) room is significant because "almost identical paneled arrangements exist in other Nantucket houses" (JGWAA 2005: 123). This paneling and the bolection [moulding] treatment around the fireplace was specifically Nantucket in style, as it had already passed out of fashion on the mainland (JGWAA 2005: 123).

The layout and decorative techniques used in the original house, then, speak to a sense of middle-class Nantucket identity, which seems to be most closely tied with the desire of the inhabitants to conform to the dominant island culture, as well as continuing those architectural forms that they were likely familiar with in their youth.

For both Seneca and Thankful, the land itself held strong significance, if for different reasons. Seneca, as a formerly enslaved man, was making a declaration of permanence and citizenship. Thankful, who already enjoyed, at least on paper, many of the rights to citizenship, would have valued the land itself in part because land was such a contentious issue for the relations between the English and the Native people of southern New England (Plane 2000: 170). After many years of being disenfranchised from their land and their rights to land use, the maintenance of control over a few acres within a family would have been highly important. This may have been heightened in Thankful's perspective by the fact that in the traditions of southern New England tribes, the control of land was generally associated with female roles. Thankful didn't have rights to the land, but Seneca worked within the law to secure her future. He made sure that whomever inherited the house would do so with the stipulation that they care for Thankful and in so doing, Seneca embodied patriarchal responsibility by protecting Thankful and in a way allowing her to have rights the law would not.

Building a Sense of Collective Purpose

In the complicated cultural and social landscape of late-18th-century New England, Native Americans and African Americans often found common ground built upon a variety of factors, from common political and social goals to shared experiences of poverty and marginalization (Mandell 1998, 2008; Plane 2000; Sweet 2003). During this time period dozens of intermarriages between African and Native American individuals are recorded, as well as many marriages between people on Nantucket Island and the mainland Native town of Mashpee (Karttunen 2002: 117-118). These marriages cast light on the diversity that is woven into all African Diasporic communities (and Native groups in the Northeast), and the significance of these communities in uniting around shared experiences and political goals in moments of strategic essentialism (Spivak 1987). In communities such as the one on Nantucket, they came together as 'people of color' at once because of processes of racialization initiated by Euro-Americans and because a united social identity at times served political and social needs.

Mandell (1998) argues that for many multi-racial individuals, choosing a social identity was subject to the tension between differing worldviews in the 19th century. He points

specifically to the development of a sense of racial consciousness, "African American-ness," which had cultural precedents in African traditions but which also embraced capitalism, industry, and individualism (Mandell 1998: 289-290). These values, on the other hand, were not embraced in the same ways by some Native communities and made the two identities of "Indian" and "African American" mutually exclusive. In some cases, Native people joined African American communities because they "offered people of mixed descent certain clear advantages of the same sort that Africans sought in Indian enclaves and villages, including mutual aid, employment opportunities, and marriage partners" (Mandell 2008:65). While in some communities it would seem that a sense of Native American identity held precedence, on Nantucket, the community came together as "people of color" in their efforts to build a neighborhood, open a school, organize a church, and seize their children's rights to a public education.

The motivations for Native and African communities coming together during the late-18th and early-19th centuries and the nuances of the experiences of the individuals in them has the potential to shed light on the common values and goals that would become the precedent for a collective sense of black identity in later decades. Although these marriages were entered into for diverse reasons and the people in them did not all ascribe to a shared identity, in cases such as that on Nantucket, where a "people of color" political identity seems to have been the more public face of these communities, both African and Native people were involved in setting the groundwork for what the values were behind these politics, both in terms of cultural traditions and social norms.

Conclusion: Family, Middle-Class Respectability, and Diversity

In the late-18th century, the community of color on Nantucket was in its infancy. The values of freedom and equality which would become part of what united this community toward common goals were already apparent. The actions of individuals to seize their individual rights despite inhospitable social environments, if not overt racism, underscored common values. Seneca Boston and Thankful Micah were two individuals making strides to demand equal citizenship status and the rights and responsibilities attendant to this status. The historical and archaeological records of the Boston-Micah household provide evidence for the prioritization of family ties over other group membership and a desire to negotiate the system of dominant white middle-class ideals in order to gain fundamental human rights and equal treatment.

In addition to shared values, Seneca and Thankful passed down a respect for and embrace of cultural diversity in the face of common social goals and experiences of marginalization. It is difficult to discern distinct evidence for the continuation or modification of African or Native American traditions, though both Seneca Boston and Thankful Micah came from families where they would have been raised with these traditions. This archaeological analysis did not illuminate strong evidence for how cultural heritage was tied to material traces. This lacuna is perhaps less important than the fact that we know that there was an enduring recognition and respect for the multiple cultural roots of this family, and others like it, years after Boston and Micah started their family. When Essex Boston, Peter Boston, and Jeffrey Summons identified that "there are among the coloured people of this place remains of the Nantucket Indians" the diversity of this heritage is reiterated (PLPEM 1899, SPG, Box 1, Folder 8: 3).

. This choice of words points to the complexity of identity as the complex cultural roots of the community were acknowledged while also asserting that they represented *one unified* group. African Americans on Nantucket repeatedly referred to themselves as people of color,

rather than "African," pointing also to the need for a broader term to encompass all who shared common needs and goals due to discrimination.

Seneca Boston and Thankful Micah were part of the pioneering group of families who staked out a physical and social space on the island for themselves despite being treated as secondary citizens. As one of the first to build a house in what would become the "Newtown" community, they literally set the foundation for a community that would find ways to embody the crucial values of equality and citizenship through the performance of respectability and black middle-class gender roles in the 19th century. The following chapter explores the material and historical evidence for the embodiment of these gender roles at the Boston-Higginbotham House in the 19th century.

Chapter 6: Collective Values and Individual Experiences in Nantucket's 19th-century Community of Color

Introduction

An ideology of binary racial difference, nurtured by white communities, was beginning to concretize in the early-19th century, and by mid-century the concept of "race" and the inequalities and stereotypes that underwrote it, had become naturalized. On Nantucket, as in other urban areas, in the early-19th century, communities of color were consolidating into neighborhoods, organizing community institutions, and defining a sense of collective identity based on ideals of mutual aid and respectability, with the goal of racial uplift in both civic and social realms. Bethel (1997:55) describes the values promoted by leaders of these communities as based on common social and political goals as well as a common sense of morality and respectability. Black women adhered to a model of respectability that required a dual commitment to family and community while black manhood was based on respectability, underwritten by citizenship, patriarchy, and engagement in work outside home. The participation in and embodiment of community gender ideals was a means to forge a collective identity. Importantly, however, the ideals of the community do not always translate to the experiences of a particular household or individual.

Beginning in the late-1820s, black newspapers such as *Freedom's Journal* and orators such as Maria Stewart promoted middle-class black gender roles that were alternatives to racially exclusive white ideals. These alternative notions of black personhood emphasized respectability as a value that could be embraced regardless of the economic realities of everyday life while also contributing to the social and political goals of the community. These ideals were the foundation for the well-documented early-20th century voices of black women's groups adhering to a "politics of respectability," which acknowledged the importance of public embodiment of respectable identity, regardless of class status, in the improvement of an individual's status and the status of all African Americans (Higginbotham 1993: 186–188). The virtues and values that underwrote this discourse would represent a central strategy of the black middle-class to claim American citizenship and equality. The black community defined a notion of respectable womanhood that at once promoted the responsibility of a woman to her family and home while also embracing a responsibility toward the free people of color more generally. Thus, the performance of black womanhood was at once centered in the home and in one's connection with the community. At the same time, Black manhood became associated with practices and public roles that emphasized normative respectability, such as military service or being a patriarchal figure in one's home and community.

Understanding the ways that these gender roles were interpreted and experienced by individuals requires looking at the scale of everyday life. Men and women of color did not accept or reject these ideals whole cloth but sought to realize them in historical and social settings. This chapter addresses these discourses on race and gender in the context of early-19th-century Nantucket, Massachusetts. The white population of this island actively embraced 18th- and 19th-century Revolutionary republican ideals while also creating a social landscape that was hostile to the Native American, African American, and other people of color on the island. Within the community of Newtown, which was made up families of African, Native American, Cape Verdean, and other origins, this racist landscape was resisted in everyday life. People of color spoke up for their citizenship rights in courts and town meetings, argued for equal

opportunities in education, participated in anti-slavery societies and established community institutions that advanced the well-being of the community of color there.

The gender ideologies projected in the regional black media were also embodied in the lives of the men and women of Newtown. The archaeology and history of the prominent Boston family on the island is used to address how dominant gender ideologies were most likely embodied or reinterpreted through the material world on the scale of the home.

Archaeological research that addresses the historicity and intersection of race and gender ideologies has begun to produce a wide range of scholarship (Battle-Baptiste 2007, 2011; Edwards-Ingram 2001; Galle and Young 2004; Teague and Davidson 2011; Wilkie 2003). This chapter takes an historical and archaeological look at womanhood, manhood, and the ways that these gender roles were performed in the domestic realm within the black community of Newtown, Nantucket. Archaeology at the homesite of the Boston-Micah family, and their descendants, represents an opportunity to look at the material correlates for performances of womanhood and community within the domestic sphere.

The women and men at the center of the Boston family at 27 York Street in the early to mid-19th century are the focus of this chapter. The lives of Mary Boston Douglass and her daughter, Eliza Boston Berry, show they took on multiple roles as mother, caregiver, and breadwinner within their families from 1804 to 1883. The material record suggests that the performance of these roles at times overlapped with the ideals set out in the regional middle-class black media. Mary was also connected to the wider community of color through her work taking in boarders and indirectly through her relationships with well-documented Boston family members involved in social movements on the island in the 1830s and 1840s. Eliza was married to an activist, worked as a domestic servant, and single-handedly held onto the family home through an economic depression. While there are records of husbands, uncles, and sons being involved in community activism, both Eliza and Mary's legacy remains largely associated with their homes and families. At the same time, however, their efforts within these families had an impact on the success and survival of the community itself.

The social and cultural world of Nantucket that Eliza Berry experienced in her later years overlapped with the experiences of her nieces, Elizabeth Groves Stevens and Phebe Groves Talbot Hogarth. These women lived on the island at different points in their lives — Phebe spent most of her time there when she was very young; Elizabeth was there while young and then again at the end of her life. Nonetheless they embraced similar social goals of achieving individual and community respectability while critiquing and rejecting the hostile racial climate of the late-19th century.

In the post-civil-war North, women's participation in community organization and improvement efforts, whether under the framework of church organizations such as Baptist women's groups or as part of the club women's movement as with the National Association of Club Women, became vital to the uplift of African American communities and came to define middle class black womanhood in many ways. This dual commitment has been explored by scholars such as Stephanie Shaw, who focuses specifically on the 1880–1920s time period to address how a sense of African American womanhood was built around a sense of racial consciousness, rather than class consciousness, and attention to individual responsibility and improvement, which she terms "socially responsible individualism" (Shaw 1996: 7).

For Phebe and Elizabeth, as with Eliza and Mary before them, a sense of responsibility to oneself as well as one's community was an important social value they were encouraged to embrace. We see the different ways that this notion of a dual commitment to family and

community, and commitment to constructing a sense of black respectability, intersected with their life-experiences as we look closer at their stories.

The men who once lived at the Boston-Higginbotham House also demonstrated an active engagement with community ideals of masculinity, which focused on the embodiment of a sense of patriarchal role within the home as well as within the community. Absalom Boston and Lewis Berry were both involved in the social and civil movements in Nantucket's black community and beyond. Absalom has left a powerful historical legacy as he was a very public figure in the Nantucket black community in the mid-19th century. As an central participant in the equal education fight of the 1840s, he not only signed petitions and spoke out about school integration, he also sued the town on behalf of his daughter so that she would have access to education beyond the basic levels offered by the African School. In addition to this clear commitment to both his family and his community, Absalom was also a successful businessman and whaling captain, which brought employment opportunities to the black community.

One of the people Absalom Boston remained close with was Lewis Berry, who married his niece, Eliza Boston. Lewis moved to the island around 1830, when he became a boarder at the Boston house at 27 York Street. Lewis would be involved with the abolitionist movement on Nantucket, while raising a family and working as a whitewasher. He later moved to San Francisco, where he became a vital part of the African American community there in the 1860s and 1870s. He cultivated a respectable, masculine, identity both through his honest labor and through his patriarchal role in his community as a leader in the AME church community. The values important to both Lewis Berry and Absalom Boston are demonstrated through the responsibilities they took on in both the domestic sphere and in the community.

Ordinary men and women cultivated a sense of shared values and identity in the African American communities of Nantucket and other Northern cities through the everyday embodiment and redefinition of gender ideals. Both within their homes and in the public spaces of churches, workplaces, and courtrooms, men and women worked to seize their social and civil rights. For many men and women, this process involved the embodiment and revision of the ideals of manhood and womanhood that the mainstream middle-class black media defined. The archaeology and history of men and women who lived at the Boston-Higginbotham House in the 19th century show some of the ways that individuals represented these ideals.

Early-Mid 19th century: Mary Boston Douglass & Eliza Berry

In the early-19th century, womanhood in black communities in the Northeast came to be defined as at once requiring embodying domestic ideals and performing within the semi-public space of the community, in churches, temperance groups, and mutual aid organizations. Throughout the 19th century we see this image of womanhood strengthen as women embodied multiple roles in both their homes, as nurturers and breadwinners, and in their communities, as activists, religious women, and educators. When we consider the projected gender ideals of any community it is important to also consider the ways that these ideals were shaped both in discourse and practice.

The history and archaeology of the Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham House is a means to address the scale of a multigenerational home site, where families developed and changed over the course of the 19th century. The lives of Mary Boston Douglass and Eliza Boston Berry reflect the ways that class, race, and gender intersected in different ways for different individuals. For both women, we see that the personal, micro-scale context guided everyday choices in ways that may have little to do with collective community goals.

Mary Boston Douglass

The early-19th century story of Mary Boston Douglass shows the way her lifecourse was shaped by life events as well as the social influences of community gender ideals. The women in the Newtown community of Nantucket would have been well aware of dominant gender discourses. Mary Boston, among the first generation of children born free in the African American community, would have likely been aware of these ideals growing up as the adults around her dealt with asserting their rights as citizens and equals in the midst of the Revolutionary War. Mary was the daughter of Tobias Boston, a freed slave, and Falla, a woman of unknown ancestry. Her father had earned his freedom in the early-1760s through gradual emancipation. The rights of Mary's aunts and uncles, including Seneca Boston, had been won in similar ways in the late-18th century, before slavery became illegal in Massachusetts in 1783.

As with many women in New England, marriage, children, and work within the home were central aspects of her adult life. She married three times over the course of her lifetime. It was her second marriage that brought her to 27 York Street, when she wed the first son of Seneca Boston and Thankful Micah, Freeborn Boston, in 1804. Mary and Freeborn had three children: William, Eliza, and Charlotte. Based on the documentary record, it is around this second family that her life came to revolve. Even when she married her third husband Michael Douglass, a Cape Verdean man, she had no additional children and lived on her second-husband's property until her death in 1834 (JGWAA 2005).

Mary established a sense of long-term stability for the Boston family within the community of color and on the island more generally. Mary and Freeborn were first cousins and this close relationship would have re-inscribed the home as a "Boston" home. The practice of passing down the property, primarily through the women of the Boston family, would continue for another 100 years. After her husband Freeborn's sudden death five years into their marriage, Mary's story came to revolve around her children William, Eliza, and Charlotte and her mother-in-law, Thankful. She took on the roles of head-of-household, mother, and caretaker on her own after she was widowed in 1809. The economic resilience and independence that became a priority for many black women in the second half of the 19th century in the wake of Reconstruction (Landry 2000) was a reality for Mary a half century before.

Between 1809 and 1811, when she remarried, Mary likely leaned on her family support network on the island as her brothers-in-law Thomas Boston and Joseph Boston are listed as living at 27 York Street on the 1810 census. She did not sell off her property even as she had this right, if she needed to, to support her mother-in-law. It would seem that for the Boston family at 27 York Street, kin networks were a physical reality of life on a small island and a necessity. The roles that Mary took on within her extended family demonstrate that she embodied a form of womanhood that was not simply focused on the nuclear family.

An awareness of and engagement with community ideals of womanhood is suggested by some of the material in the archaeological record. As education, morality, and Christianity were values that underwrote raising respectable children, it is significant that artifacts explicitly associated with these values emerge. A blue-transfer-printed pearlware child's cup with a religious poem on it was found in the excavations that date to the very early-19th century, when Mary was raising her three children (CV71). This type of cup would have been given to a child as a present for good behavior, achievements in study, or a milestone of some kind. Although our excavation only recovered a few fragments, the poem would have read in full (Riley 1991: 228-229):

EARLY PIETY
What bless'd examples do I find
Writ in the word of truth'
Of children that began to mind
Religion in their youth.
Jesus, who reigns above the sky
And keeps the world in awe
Was once a child as young as I
And kept his father's law.

This gift, while not expensive, would have nonetheless been an added expense for a mother who may have been already stretching the assets she had. With this object, we see the desire to have a material representation of Christian faith as a factor in proper child rearing. We also see a relationship between a mother and child. This cup was part of defining the child as a good child, and the mother as a good mother. In the contested space of gender and race identities in the early-19th century, this object would have been meaningful as part of a black child's possessions, and reflected positively on the family more broadly.

Other artifacts also reflect themes that are common in both middle-class black and white discourse on womanhood and domesticity. Choices in transfer-print patterns on ceramics are suggestive, including a series of dark-blue transfer-print pearlwares with an image of a mother bird guarding her nest (Figure 6.1). This image was found on both teacups (two vessels) and dining bowls (two vessels) and was common throughout the North Yard excavation contexts. In addition, at least five other dining and teaware vessels with images of children in gardens, families by lakes, and bucolic scenery, were present among the transfer-printed pearlwares. The four remaining transfer-printed pearlwares, dating to the late-18th and very-early-19th century, had Chinoserie patterns. The whiteware ceramic collection that Mary accumulated included a variety of wares. However, the transfer-prints in her collection are consistent with the themes of domesticity and motherhood emphasized by both dominant white and middle-class black media.

The importance of these artifacts is obscured by their seeming coincidence with the dominant notion of womanhood. However, this was not a matter of emulating white womanhood, but of asserting respectability and belying the stereotypes that would otherwise exclude black women. Mary's experience of womanhood, as a mother, wife, daughter-in-law, and sister-in-law, was not, of course, simply dictated by the dominant discourses in either of these communities. Her particular intersection with black womanhood came to stress the importance of family and the home, which for her left precious little time for community affairs.

When Mary wed Michael Douglass in 1811, it was a tumultuous time in the family. Soon after, Thankful Micah passed away in March 1812, and the estate was redistributed among Seneca Boston's heirs with Mary and her children inheriting the house and a small area of land. Between 1812 and 1836, significant additions were made to the north side of the house, creating two or three extra rooms (JGWAA 2005:100–102, 147). These physical changes reflected the needs of the expanding nuclear family and the community itself. Extra rooms provided spaces not only for Mary's children to begin their married lives, but also for boarders to be taken into the house. Boarders came with the boom in the whaling industry on Nantucket, but many of them stayed on the island and became a part of the growing community of color.

Figure 6.1. Mother-Bird-and-Nest transfer-printed pearlware bowl.

Horton and Horton (1999) argue that boarding visitors was a central feature of the 19th-century black community in Boston, as hosts provided temporary stability for people looking for and social connections within an established community network. Documents show that boarders were significant to the Boston-Douglass family and in the island's history itself. In 1830, the Federal Census lists eleven people living at the York Street home. Mary, Michael, their son William, and a boarder named Lewis Berry were living as one household, with a second household being made up of Mary's second daughter Charlotte, husband, two-year-old daughter, and four persons who were likely boarders (U.S. Federal Census 1830). While Lewis had come to the island with his brother Wesley only a few years prior, they would become important members of the community, with both brothers being involved in the abolitionist movement and Wesley particularly active in the school integration debates of the 1840s (Karttunen 2005:116; *The Elevator* 1874). Both brothers married into the black families on the island, with Lewis marrying Eliza Boston in July of 1830.

The economic challenges that Mary faced while raising her children, maintaining, and expanding her home suggest that most of her efforts were directed toward her family, so it is difficult to imagine how a public sense of womanhood was also fostered in her life. Even as the Newtown community around her was expanding, and she found her extended family actively involved in the establishment of the school and church next door, it is perhaps important to acknowledge that her work within her home had benefits primarily for her immediate family. Her labor in taking in boarders would have indirectly contributed to the community, an economic and social contribution that was not readily acknowledged in newspapers and speeches. In her work as a mother and a homemaker, Mary personified and helped to redefine

what it meant to be a woman in Nantucket's black community. While her efforts have gone largely unacknowledged, they had far-reaching social implications within the community. In a similar vein, the efforts of her daughter, Eliza, would be fundamental to the survival of the community, if little acknowledged. After her marriage to Lewis Berry, she too would move back into the 27 York Street house and be a central female figure there until her death in 1883.

Eliza Berry

Eliza Berry witnessed many of the same social and political changes happening on Nantucket during her mother's lifetime. However, her later life at the 27 York Street property came to be defined by different economic and social circumstances. While the black community on Nantucket prospered when she was young, by the 1840s Nantucket as a whole fell into an economic depression with the decline of the whaling industry and many members of the extended Boston family itself left the island for economic and political pursuits. In her youth the rhetoric of respectability was playing out in black newspapers in the North, while individuals in her community were demonstrating through their activism and volunteerism what this meant for individual lives.

Eliza Berry, as a child growing up in the house at 27 York Street in the 1810s and 1820s, became familiar with the social values and economic realities that her mother strove for and struggled with. Eliza was the middle-child, born in 1806, between her older brother William and younger sister Charlotte. She knew her grandfather Seneca and her father Freeborn for only a short time before they died in 1809. Her mother Mary, grandmother Thankful, stepfather Michael, and perhaps a range of wider kin would have been involved in her upbringing. Eliza grew up at an exciting time on Nantucket, as the people of color in Newtown began to organize and build community institutions.

In 1822, when Eliza was 16, a coalition of community leaders, including her great-uncles Essex and Peter Boston, were working to establish a school for black children and get funding for a building (PLPEM 1822: SPG Box 1, Folder 8, p.3). Their efforts would lead to the building of the first school and church in the Newtown community, today known as the African Meeting House, as well as later debates on segregated versus integrated public education in the 1840s. While she was likely too old to go when the school opened, at least one of Eliza's children, Lewis Jr., attended school, benefitting from the debates on public education that his extended family had initiated and fought for (U.S. Federal Census 1850).

In 1830, Eliza married Lewis Berry, a man who had been boarding at her mother's house and had recently moved to Nantucket from Maryland. Eliza and Lewis Berry had four children: Lewis Jr. (b. 1837), Isaac (b.1841), Mary (b.1843), and Sarah Ann (b.1848). Eliza's marriage to Lewis Berry brought her closer to the social movements of the black community on Nantucket. Lewis was involved in the abolitionist movement on the island and while the focus is often on the well-documented men in these movements, we might do well to consider how the change that these men brought about was built upon a support system within their families and their communities. For example, an anti-slavery convention that took place in 1842 on Nantucket, and endured anti-black mob violence, is remembered mostly through the lens of the male speakers at the convention and the newspaper coverage of the event (Peters 2006: 121). In the 1840s, when these heated debates over education and civil rights were being waged on Nantucket, Eliza was raising their two sons Lewis Jr. and Isaac, and perhaps helping to raise her sister's small children who were also living at 27 York Street (Karttunen 2005: 116). It was women like Eliza Berry that maintained familial stability while social change was underway.

The communal use of dining space, kitchen space, and ceramic sets would have worked to establish continuity and stability within Eliza and her sister Charlotte's families when they were living together at 27 York Street in the 1830s and 1840s. These two families were allotted ownership of specific rooms and chambers in the house, but according to an 1836 deed, the north side of the house, as well as the privies, woodpiles, and paths, were communally shared (NRD 1836: DB 35: 423). In addition, the ceramic assemblage from this time period suggests a sense of continuity with past generations at the house and a continuation of certain consumption choices.

The continued purchase of blue shell-edged flatwares into at least the 1840s would have supplemented the large collection of shell-edged wares that had been begun by Thankful Micah. In total there are 30 shell-edge decorated pearlware and whiteware flatwares from the site, accounting for 32% of the dining vessel assemblage (96 vessels). The evenly scalloped blue shell-edged whitewares, available from the 1840s through 1860s (Miller 1980: 3–4), may have been purchased by Charlotte or Eliza, but were likely used by both. Eliza's attachment to this pattern is further suggested by the purchase of a circular serving bowl with a blue shell-edge, manufactured between 1865-1885 (CV103), when she was the only occupant of the house. The practicality of sharing storage space and meals would have distributed the labor involved in running the household and raising the children as their husbands pursued their occupations outside the home. Lewis as a whitewasher and Charles as a mariner.

Eliza Berry's role in her family and on the island saw a dramatic shift in the 1850s as the island's whaling industry collapsed and many members of the community of color dispersed. Eliza's sister Charlotte died in 1851, leaving her husband Charles with two young children to care for, with his oldest already working on her own. He soon returned to his native Brooklyn with his two youngest children and Eliza's husband Lewis moved to California. Eliza Berry then lived at 27 York Street with her two sons and later became the only person to occupy the house as she worked to keep it within the family during a severe economic depression on Nantucket from the 1860s to the 1880s.

Eliza Berry's occupation as a domestic, according to the 1830, 1860, and 1870 censuses represents a common pursuit for African American women, especially in the later-19th century in the wake of the Civil War. Economic opportunities for black women were limited and in many cases domestic service was one of the only available options. This choice of occupation was not necessarily an easy one, though. Domestic workers at once formed intimate relationships with white employers, which exposed themselves to a job that had few benefits and could actually put them at risk to sexual harassment (Collins 2000: 184–185). At the same time, choosing to take on such an occupation in order to keep one's home in the family, as Eliza seems to have done, was an act of defiance and pride, rather than selflessness and submission.

This sense of self-determination is further suggested by details from Eliza's census records and her probate inventory. In the 1860 federal census Eliza is listed as living at 27 York Street, with vacancies in the houses on either side of hers, and she worked as a domestic (Federal Census 1860). With most of her family off-island, this work may have represented a way to keep herself busy on an island that was losing residents quickly. This may have also been a necessity, as her 19-year-old son Isaac and 16-year-old niece Phebe were also working on the island in other families' homes. In 1870 she is listed as a servant living in the home of white clergyman William H. Star, with his wife and two young children (U.S. Federal Census 1870). It was perhaps Eliza's choice to work for a religious family and may have represented one way of keeping ties with a religious community on the island, with her husband, who had

been actively involved in the AME Zion on-island and in California, being so far away (Karttunen 2005:116). Working for a religious family may also have also reduced the risk of being subjected to unwanted advances from her employer, enabling Eliza to maintain a respectable and middle-class identity regardless of her occupation.

The material record from Eliza's later years at 27 York Street suggests she was aware of the standards of respectability that continued to be developed and expanded upon in the post-Civil War era. Her occupation did not bar her from performing a type of womanhood that reinforced her own self-worth. Several artifacts associated with grooming and personal appearance date to the time period when Eliza was living at 27 York Street alone. A bottle of hair tonic, Barry's Tricopherous for the Skin and Hair, was recovered, as well as a bottle of J. Cristadoro Liquid Hair Dye. The former was manufactured after 1851 while the latter was manufactured between 1850 and 1870 (Fike 2006: 122). Notably, aside from these hair-care products, no 19th-century medicine or personal care products were identified, suggesting that personal appearance was one need that Eliza felt deserved extra expenditure for national brands.

Hair care in black communities in the later-19th century, especially with reference to hair straightening and the dominant hair aesthetics within the White community, was a politicized topic (Mullins 1999; Wilkie 2003). Barry's Tricopherous was a stimulant for growing hair and could possibly be related to hair-loss associated with hair straightening. Regardless, these products highlight what was likely an increased awareness among African-American women in the later-19th century Northeast of the ways that difference and inequality were being defined by phenotypic characteristics. Eliza, as a representative of the dwindling black community on Nantucket and the public face of the white households she was working for, may have paid special attention to the care and color of her hair in order to reaffirm her respectable appearance within the black and white communities alike.

Eliza's appearance would have been complimented by her articles of personal adornment, which were at least in some respects in-line with dominant ideas about Victorian womanhood. Two brooches, produced in the 1870s or 1880s, were likely part of Eliza's collection as she was the only female living at the house until at least 1883 (Figure 6.2). How these objects came into Eliza's life is difficult to determine. These brooches could have been a personal purchase, a gift from a distant husband, or even a gift from a friend or employer. Regardless of their origin, it seems likely that these held some sentimental value because they were curated by her family until they were deposited after the house changed hands out of the family in 1917. They would have been worn high on the neck, at the collar, and reiterated a sense of modesty and respectability advocated in both black and white gender ideologies.

Figure 6.2. 1870s brooches recovered from house-clean-out layers of EU3.

While the ceramic assemblage from the site suggests that most pieces were acquired in the first half of the 19th century, when the most people were living at the house concurrently, it is equally important to look at what Eliza chose to bring into her home when she was living alone.

Eliza Berry's ceramic purchases are interesting for a few reasons. In the 1840s when Eliza and/or Charlotte Groves were making purchase, many of the transfer-prints reiterate the themes of previous households, including black, brown, and green transfer-printed whitewares with Romantic or Chinoserie scenery (Samford 1997). Even more interesting is that Eliza's choices in the 1850s, based on the manufacture of ceramics available 1850 and beyond, stayed consistent with these themes even as new ceramic styles became popular. The 1850s and 1860s saw the preference of white 'granite' wares to adorn Victorian tables in middle-class white households (Fitts 1999). These white faceted dining and tea sets are often associated with the symbolic reiteration of the purity of the domestic realm, an interpretation that has been commonly associated with white middle-class domestic life (Wall 1991).

The assemblage from the Boston-Higginbotham House site only included two white, faceted granite-wares and four plain white granite plates and 2 kitchen bowls. We find that Eliza is still buying or otherwise acquiring ceramics occasionally, but choosing not to buy these most popular styles. The absence of these wares is likely associated with a combination of factors, including the lack of a need for such wares as Eliza lived alone. However, this may also reflect an alternate decorative aesthetic other than that of middle-class white households.

We can see that Eliza Berry was at once embodying some aspects of the ideals promoted in black media with respect to womanhood and redefining womanhood. She did not let her choice of occupation outside the home impede her performance of respectability; rather, she likely used this space to negotiate a personal identity that not only allowed her to control her fate, but also to project a sense of pride in her community. Her choice to stay on the island, and keep her ancestral home in the family, is important to understanding these other choices. She made the maintenance of the homeplace of central importance, even as the economy around her collapsed, and her family was scattered across the country. After her husband died in 1874, she drew up her will in 1877. Her estate would be divided among her nieces and nephew, her own sons having died, and would stay within the family when her niece came to the island to live after Eliza's death in 1883.

Late-19th century: Phebe Groves Talbot Hogarth & Elizabeth Groves Brown Stevens

The stories of Phebe Groves Talbot Hogarth and Elizabeth Groves Brown Stevens offer contrasting life stories to those of Mary Boston Douglass and Eliza Boston Berry. These women were born when the black community on Nantucket was already established, Elizabeth in 1828 and Phebe in 1844. In addition, they spent large portions of their lives living off-island, as the crash of the Nantucket economy, family tragedy, as well as social ties to places like Brooklyn, New York drew them away from the island. It is likely that Elizabeth and Phebe were worldlier than their Aunt Eliza or Great-Aunt Mary had been. The historical and archaeological records demonstrate some of the ways they engaged with the changing world of the United States in the post-Civil War era and how they likely embraced or refigured some of the discourses on respectability of the era.

Phebe Groves Talbot Hogarth

Phebe Groves was born in 1844 at 27 York Street, the second daughter of Charles Groves and Charlotte Boston Groves. Her older sister, Elizabeth, was sixteen years her senior.

Her brothers Charles and William were within five years of her, older and younger respectively. The Groves family was growing during the twilight of the whaling boom in Nantucket. By 1851, when Charlotte Groves, the matriarch of the family, passed away suddenly, there was little economic incentive for Charles and his four children to continue to try to make their way on the island. Soon after her death, the Groves family moved to Brooklyn, New York, where Charles had his family roots (*Smith's Brooklyn Directory* 1855–1856, 1856–1857). As they left, many others were leaving Nantucket for greener pastures as close as New Bedford, Connecticut and as far as California, on the heels of the Gold Rush. As will be discussed below, Lewis Berry was one of the men drawn to California for work and ended up living out his life there. This was also a time of considerable tension in race relations throughout the nation, as the decades leading up to the Civil War were characterized by increased concretization of notions of racial difference and inequality in the North and South alike (Melish 1998).

The documentary evidence for Phebe's life is fragmentary but suggestive. After moving to Brooklyn with her father following her mother's death, Phebe stayed only a short while. A new step-mother, Caroline, came into her life in 1856, only a few months before her father was murdered on board a ship he was working on as a cook (*Brooklyn Eagle* 1857). After this, Caroline became the sole caretaker for William, Charles Jr., and Phebe, whom she may have been barely acquainted with. In 1860, Phebe was again living on Nantucket, working as a domestic in the household of Freeman Parkes, a white cooper (U.S. Federal Census, 1860). Her aunt Eliza Berry was also on the island, and was likely a touchstone for her.

While we see considerable instability in her youth, with key members of her family passing away, after the end of the Civil War in 1865, her life regains direction. Phebe may have become involved in the Freedman's Aid Movement in the 1860s as she moved to Washington DC and became a teacher in the 1860s. Her step-mother and uncle seem to have enabled her to participate in this cause. In March of 1868 Phebe was living in Washington D.C. and opened an account with the Freedman's Savings and Trust Company. The record notes that "this deposit, $5, was made by Mrs. C.W. Groves." Thus, it was the financial support of her stepmother, Caroline W. Groves, which had allowed her to open the account (Freedman's Bank Records 1868). Her involvement with the bank may have also been encouraged by her cousin, Thomas Boston, who worked there as an assistant cashier (Karttunen 2002).

Congress established the Freedman's Savings and Trust Company on the same day in 1865 as the Freedman's Bureau—both were part of the federal government's reconstruction efforts. While they remained separate institutions, they had a close affiliation (Bentley 1974: 146). The Freedman's Bureau endorsed the Savings and Trust Bank and encouraged veterans of the Civil War to use the bank. Phebe's decision to open an account with this bank, and her occupation as a teacher, suggest that she may have been involved in community-based Reconstruction efforts, as many middle-class African American women were.

Historian Carol Faulkner (2004) has argued that the experiences of free northern African American women in joining the freedman's aid movement were based on the recognition of a common social position with freedmen, in turn based on a sense of mutual interest in the prosperity of freedmen. Faulkner suggests that:

> Their class position, religious background, and educational level set them apart from freedpeople, but free blacks recognized the ties that bound them to former slaves. As Northern blacks argued for education,

suffrage, equality, and civil rights for freedpeople, they also demanded
these things for themselves (Faulkner 2004: 7).

Evelyn Higginbotham (1993:97) has similarly pointed out that black women involved in the freedmen's aid movement were amongst the "talented tenth" and at once embraced dominant white middle-class values and worked to alleviate the oppression that they saw African Americans as subject to.

This document suggests that Phebe had moved south to Washington D.C., unmarried, with the specific purpose of being a teacher. Involvement in education in the African American community suggests that Phebe was acting on a sense of community responsibility. Her family connections had both encouraged and enabled her to take on an active role in Reconstruction efforts and as sense of responsibility to her family translated easily into a sense of responsibility for her community.

Records of Phebe Groves' later life are more difficult to reconstruct. She moved back to Brooklyn and married twice; first to an unidentified man named Talbot and then to a George Hogarth. She had a daughter, Caroline B. Talbot, whom she apparently named after her step-mother. While Caroline Groves had only been married to Phebe's father a short time, she had apparently become an indispensible figure in the life of her step-daughter. In 1888, Phebe had a son with her second husband and name him George Groves Hogarth, after his father. Phebe died soon after George's birth, likely from wounds sustained during childbirth.

The details of her later years, when she was fulfilling a more normative feminine role as wife and mother, speak to the importance of family ties, both in her choices of names for her children and in her choice to live in Brooklyn, where her paternal family had roots. This did not mean that she had cut ties with family in other places. Significantly, it was her sister, Elizabeth Stevens, who came from Nantucket to be by her side when she gave birth and was recorded as a witness on her will in 1888 (Brooklyn Surrogates Court, Brooklyn, New York [BSC] 1888; Will of Phebe Hogarth). It is to Elizabeth's story that I now turn. Elizabeth's travels were tightly connected to the needs of her extended family members and her eventual settlement on Nantucket shows how family and community obligations continued to be interconnected for her.

Elizabeth Groves Brown Stevens

Eliza Berry left the 27 York Street homestead to her four nieces and nephews, with Elizabeth Stevens as the eldest of the group and the only individual that moved back to Nantucket. Elizabeth had lived out her youth on Nantucket and married her first husband Oliver Brown there in 1850. Elizabeth then lived a good deal of her life in Brooklyn, married her second husband there, and returned to Nantucket in 1883 to care for her Aunt Eliza (NPC 1883: p.118). Elizabeth was a 55-year-old widow, without children of her own, when she arrived on Nantucket in 1883 and she seems to have decided to make the island her primary residence.

Elizabeth's life on the island was not a solitary one, despite the diaspora of her family to New York, California, and other locales. She was an active member of the Baptist church community, may have entertained family visitors to the island as the tourist appeal of the location grew at the end of the 19th century, and at one point even shared her home with a white widow named Anne Turner. Elizabeth owned the property "free and clear" and both she and Turner are living there as heads-of-household in 1900 (Federal Census 1900). Elizabeth was apparently close with her sister, Phebe Groves, as she traveled to Brooklyn for the birth of Phebe's son and left her estate to Phebe's children.

The material record of Elizabeth's life at the Boston-Higginbotham House is based largely on *terminus post quem* dates from artifacts excavated from EU3 and EU11, the trash pit on the west side of the house. The artifacts in these excavation units were deposited in the early 20th century, when the property changed hands after Elizabeth's death. Many objects date to before her time at the house and suggest either curation, in the case of large intact pieces, or redeposition from the backyard trash midden, in the case of highly fragmentary objects.

Many of the household items recovered are clearly from Elizabeth Steven's long tenure at the house. For example, EU3 Level 3 and EU11 Levels 3 and 4 represent a very high concentration of buttons and other small finds, such as a key, the two brooches discussed above, and several clothing fasteners (Table 6.1). These artifacts were likely deposited all at once, and the presence of a drawer-key suggests this could have been from upturning a small desk drawer. In addition to this deposit, there are a number of ceramic pieces that stylistically date to the late-19th century. The artifacts from the drawer, as well as the dishes and cups that would have adorned her table or mantle, illustrate some of the nuances of late-19th century femininity as experienced by a widowed, middle-class, African American woman.

Two major themes assert themselves in examining the material that can be associated with Elizabeth. The first is the curation of materials from past generations and the second is the way she chose to engage with the aesthetic movements of the late-19th century. Together, these reflect on Elizabeth's strong sense of family and middle-class womanhood. The former shows the importance of continuity, both material and social, with past generations, and the latter shows that even a widow in an outpost such as Nantucket was adorning her home with objects that referenced contemporary notions of respectability and femininity.

The curation of materials is suggested by the nearly-complete state of early- and mid-19th century ceramics that were recovered from this early 20th-century deposit. For example, the "Mother Bird and Nest" patterned tea bowls and teacup that were discussed above, were found in this deposit, with one bowl clearly deposited in-situ and almost completely recovered. Each vessel was composed of the refined white earthenware known as pearlware, suggesting a manufacture date in the early-19th century, before whiteware became ubiquitous in the 1840s. While Thankful Micah or Mary Boston Douglass likely first purchased the set, it is significant that it was kept in the family, used and reused by successive generations. Similarly a whiteware serving or preparation bowl with industrial slip decoration (CV6), an English slip-decorated redware bowl (CV51), two hand-painted pearlware dining bowls (CV26, CV24), and at least one hand-painted whiteware dining bowl (CV15) had been deposited intact.

Where the ceramics point to the decision on Elizabeth's part to retain and curate the material heritage of her family, her continued residence at the 27 York Street property reiterates this point even more strongly. Elizabeth, though a widow when she moved to Nantucket, had a stronger social network off-island and chose to settle on the island anyway. As far at the census record indicates, Elizabeth had no close relatives on the island. Her sister, Phebe, lived in Brooklyn, New York and her brothers Charles Jr. and William have not been traced. Aunts and uncles had moved away since her youth there. While it was perhaps Eliza Berry who truly set the precedent for taking a stand and staying despite hard economic times on the island, Elizabeth had to choose a relatively solitary life there, away from family, and yet materially connected to the generations that had come before her.

Small Finds: Drawer Contents EU3 L3; EU11 L3, L4		
Personal Adornment, Button		18
Prosser Buttons	4	
Hard-Rubber (Anchor-Design)	1	
Ferrous w/cloth	1	
Wooden	1	
Shell	11	
Personal Adornment, Brooch		2
V-shaped w/cameo	1	
Crown-shaped, cut steel	1	
Clothing Fasteners & Fabric		8
Garment hook	1	
Grommet	2	
Safety pin	1	
Snap Button	2	
Buckle, Ferrous	1	
Fabric, Fragment	1	
Writing implements		5
pen quill	1	
pencil lead	2	
pencil top	1	
Book Clasp, Non-Ferrous	1	
Furniture implements		4
Skeleton Key, Drawer	1	
Drawer pull	1	
Upholstery pin	2	
Kitchen Implements		3
Fork	1	
Knife	1	
Pot fragment, handle	1	
Hygiene, Powder Can Cap, White Metal		1
Newspaper fragments		1
Unidentified Objects		4
Shell object, dowel shaped	1	
Metal Tag, unidentified	1	
Misc Metal Hardware	2	
Total Small Finds from Drawer Deposit		**46**

Table 6.1. Small Finds from Drawer Deposit in EU3/EU11 house-clean-out layers.

Material continuity between generations is something that would have been profoundly important. This is highlighted especially by the contrast between the rights available to enslaved Africans and African Americans in the early-19th century, and those that could be practiced by later generations. Having the right to own property— both real and personal estate— and pass it down from generation to generation was something that was highly valued in a way that was different from the experiences of Euro-American families due to the fact that the rights of those families had never been threatened (Adams and Pleck 2010).

In addition to her family commitments, Elizabeth Stevens was invested in the public sphere of black community life. Her involvement in the Baptist Church was likely very important to her social network on the island in addition to her understanding of herself as a moral, middle-class, Christian woman. She belonged to the Pleasant Street Baptist Church, which had been reorganized several times over the years since its formation as the African Baptist Society in 1820s (Karttunen 2002: 37). In 1825 it made its home next door to the Boston-Higginbotham house at 29 York Street.

Higginbotham (1993) traces the late-19th and early-20th century involvement of women in the development of community-improvement programs and organizations through the Baptist Church. The church itself became for the black community the public sphere itself through which the tension between individuals and the broader racist society was mediated (Higginbotham 1993:9-10). The work of church women in particular was crucial to this mediating role as they actively organized fund-raising activities to allow the church to serve the community through creating jobs, recreational opportunities, and social services (ibid: 9).

Elizabeth's life seems to have been intimately tied up with that of the church, even as it suffered from dwindling membership in the late-19th century. The Pleasant Street Church was inaugurated in 1848 with the Reverend James Crawford. In a report on the 1875 anniversary celebration, the *Island Review* noted that although festive and well attended, this anniversary marked a time in the church's life when membership had dropped from 57 to 6 persons (*Island Review* 1875). Despite these numbers the Pleasant Street Baptist Church remained active and didn't hold its last service until 1910 (Karttunen 2002: 122). The fact that this institution endured the long economic downturn suggests that this was a coveted place to the remaining black residents on Nantucket.

Elizabeth Stevens was one of the parishioners at the Pleasant Street Baptist Church during its last years. More than simply a member, Elizabeth became one of the people who signed the deed transfer when the Baptist Church's building was sold in 1910, suggesting her role was central to the church (NRD 1910: DB 95: 54).

After the church was sold, Elizabeth seems to have taken responsibility for the curation of the church's bible, a wide array of religious books and the personal bibles of members, and an organ. These artifacts have become a part of the Higginbotham estate and are still on the property today. When Florence Higginbotham's belongings were relocated from the main house to the cottage, likely when the house became a rental property in the 1970s, the religious materials, as well as Florence's library, many pieces of furniture, and a sizable number of personal affects became intermingled in the Cottage space. It was Elizabeth that initially took responsibility for preserving these artifacts associated with the church as the building was sold 10 years before Florence Higginbotham moved to Nantucket.

As an active participant in the Baptist Church, Stevens was part of a broader trend demonstrating the contributions of black women to their communities in the late-19th century as uplift efforts were often taken on by middle-class women's groups in an effort to alleviate the

problems faced by lower class black men and women. The black women involved in this movement were amongst the "talented tenth" and at once embraced middle-class values and worked to alleviate the oppression of their people (Higginbotham 1993: 97). One of the goals of the women's activism was to create a sense of identity and respectability throughout the black community. Higginbotham suggests that "home missions and other self-help activities of black women served to inculcate within the masses of poor and uneducated blacks psychological allegiance to certain mainstream values and behavior" (1993:96). While Elizabeth did not have a family on Nantucket to raise as good, respectable citizens, her domestic life nonetheless reflected middle-class values. The assemblage of artifacts that date to the later-19th century and early-20th century suggests the performance of respectable womanhood in her home.

Among the ceramic assemblage, many of the designs on dishes obtained by Elizabeth adhere to certain Victorian aesthetics (Table 6.2). Arrangements of flowers, leaves, scroll patterns, and butterflies became popular in the last decades of the 19th century with the influence of Japanese aesthetics (Samford 1997: 19). Samford writes that "Japanese-inspired designs formed one component of the aesthetic movements, where decorative emphasis was on asymmetry, and imagery that combined birds and butterflies with exotic flowering plants" (1997: 19).

Late-19th / Early-20th century Transfer-print and Decal Ceramics			
CV85	dining, plate, table	black, floral, asymmetric 'Princess'	1910+
CV86	teaware, cup	green, floral, scroll, TR Boote	1850+
CV87	dining, plate, muffin	black, floral, TR Boote 'Tournay'	1885+
CV158	dining, plate, sup	dark green, floral, similar to 'Princess'	early 20th
CV161	dining, flatware	Blue/black floral	early 20th
CV160	teaware, saucer	green, floral TR Boote 'Laurel'	early 20th
CV76	dining, plate, muffin	light brown Japan 'Summertime'	1890+
CV157	dining, plate, twiffler	decal pink, green floral, roses	1890+
CV35	dining, bowl, shallow	decal pink, green floral, daisies	1890+

Table 6.2. Late-19th-century and early-20th-Century transfer-printed and decal ceramics.

There does not appear to be an attempt to construct a matching set of diningware during Elizabeth's tenure at the house. While the same manufacturer, T.R. Boote, makes several of the pieces there are no matching sets except for a teacup (CV86) and saucer (CV160) set, though even this is not a perfect match. Each ironstone transfer-printed piece appears to stand on its own as a piece of artwork. One plate (CV76, Figure 6.3) remained unbroken and several broke in place when they were deposited in the house-clean out event of the early-19th century. Perhaps Elizabeth chose to collect these ceramics individually for their aesthetic value. These pieces, alternatively, may have been gifts from an employer. From census records in the late-19th and early-20th centuries, we know that Elizabeth Stevens was working at different homes on the island with some regularity (U.S. Federal Census 1900, 1910). In either scenario, these dishes could have been incorporated into a Victorian parlor or dining room to reflect a respectable interest in the arts and an awareness of middle-class home decorative trends.
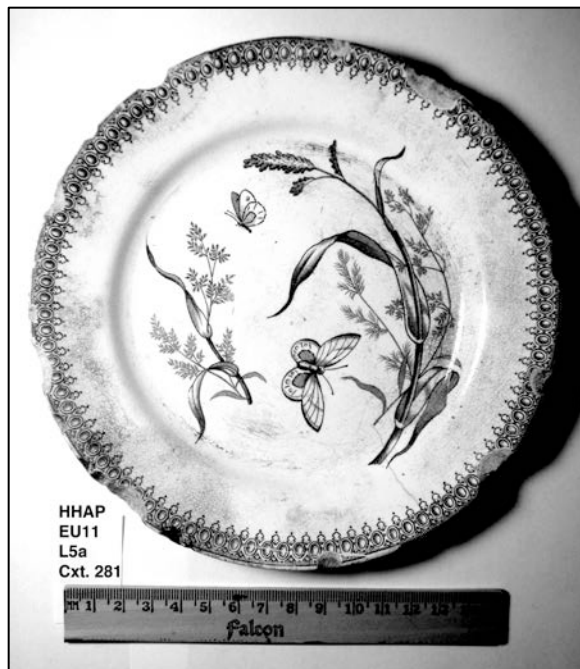
Figure 6.3. "Summertime" pattern transfer-printed whiteware plate. Circa 1890+.

Elizabeth's adherence to Victorian womanhood might be suggested by a scrapbook that was recovered from the Cottage. The book itself is a "Waste" book from the 1820s, the type of book used to keep initial records of financial transactions and other notes thar would later be formally copied into another book. Hunt (2006: 78) has noted that the repurposing of books, rather than the purchasing of bound books specifically for scrapbooking, was common. While the book may have belonged to Eliza Berry, or even Florence Higginbotham, scrapbooking rose to the height of popularity in the last two decades of the 19th century, during the time when Elizabeth was living at the house and for the purpose of this discussion the book is associated with her (Hunt 2006:74–75).

The pages of the Waste Book have been covered with images from *Gleason's Pictorial Drawing Room Companion* from the 1850s (1854a, 1854b). All the text, except for some picture captions, was removed. Most of the images are of exotic places or people, which may be an artifact of the type of publication Gleason's was (Figure 6.4). Still, it is tempting to see this book as a means of satisfying her curiosity to travel, at a time in her life when she simply could not.

Scrapbooking was a means of engaging in the sentimental preoccupation with personal mementoes that was popular during the Victorian era (Hunt 2006: 79). While writing and accounts of personal mementoes was common (Hunt 2006: 79), the scrapbook from the Boston-Higginbotham cottage has no writing, and seems to focus rather on *only* images from *Gleason's Pictorial Drawing Room Companion*.

Some artifacts from the archaeological assemblage suggest that Elizabeth Stevens was taking on employment that would have reinforced her respectability as a middle-class woman. The deposits from the early-20th-century household clean-out (EU3 & EU11) and the trash deposit from Feature 2 (EU1) suggest that she may have taken in laundry and sewing work to make money. Lamp stoves like the one recovered from Feature 2 (Figure 4.6) were also

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Figure 6.4. Page from Scrapbook found in Higginbotham Cottage. Images from *Gleason's Pictorial Drawing Room Companion* (1854a 1854b).

commonly used for heating up sad irons. The three-wick stove, as discussed in Chapter 4, has a *terminus post quem* date of 1876. Although this date is within Eliza Berry's tenure at the house, the stove was produced for many years after this date. Elizabeth Stevens may have purchased it for laundry work, an interpretation strengthened by the recovery of a late-19th century sad iron from EU11 Level 5a, a deposit associated with the cleaning-out of her home. In addition to these two late-19th century objects related to ironing, there are also 46 buttons (18 of which were from the drawer-clean-out) as well as a pair of sewing scissors (EU3 L6a) that were recovered from the house clean-out units (EU3 & EU11).

Laundry-work and sewing were among the few occupations for black women in the late-19th century that enabled them to control their surroundings, their hours, and their exposure to potential harassment from male employers. As Collins (2000) has pointed out, and as has been also suggested by Wilkie (2003), these were among the types of work that were empowering for women as this work limited the amount of time that a mother or wife had to be away from her family. While Elizabeth was a child-less widow, living alone for most of her time on Nantucket, she would have still had reason to seek an occupation that at once gave her control of her domestic and work life. Nantucket was floundering economically in the late-19th century and taking in laundry and/or sewing would have been a way to make money when steady work may not have been readily available.

Looking at the lives of Mary Douglass, Eliza Berry, Phebe Hogarth, and Elizabeth Stevens, as they lived at 27 York Street, we see complicated experiences of womanhood in the 19th and early-20th century. Much of their material culture reflected an embrace of dominant black ideals of respectability, but at the same time, they exercised a focus and determination to

keep their own priorities as primary. The stability of their families and the maintenance of the homeplace were made possible by taking on jobs outside the home. The balancing of community ideals with economic realities enabled these women to be at once understood as respectable women within their communities through their household objects and dress, while also meeting their family's needs and goals for the future by taking on boarders or seeking work outside the home. As we try to imagine the experiences of women in these contexts, taking into account the realities of everyday life helps us to humanize their stories and denaturalize the gender and race ideologies they were living within.

Respectability, Industry, and Manhood at 27 York Street

The lives of the men at 27 York Street were shaped by the prevailing gender ideals and stereotypes of the 18th and 19th centuries. Dominant gender ideals, as discussed in Chapter 3, were strongly racialized and excluded African American men. In order to navigate these negative stereotypes, as well as the broader policies and customs of discrimination that they are symptoms of, the African American community defined for itself notions of masculinity which were derived from a sense of respectability. The broad nature of virtues such as "freedom," which were inherently masculinized, made them accessible through a variety of means — public defense of civil rights, military service, and a respectable, patriarchal, persona in everyday life.

The social climate of the 18th century, as discussed in Chapter 5, was characterized by non-discursive assumptions of a servile status for African Americans on the one hand and a higher degree of flexibility and civil freedom, at least on paper, for those African Americans who were free. Seneca Boston experienced both the positive and negative aspects of this time on the island as he found relative freedom and a sense of equality during his work as a mariner, and occupation where he was treated with respect. On the other hand, he was also constantly navigating the racism within the white community that prevailed on the island. As more and more people were gaining their freedom, manhood was not only reflected in one's free status, but the exercising of rights that were otherwise denied the enslaved— especially in the practice of patriarchy itself, in owning property, and in supporting community institutions actively.

As the 19th century progressed, racial divisions became entrenched. For example, the positions on whaling vessels that were once available to black or white mariners based on merit were increasingly racially segregated by the 1840s (Bolster 1997). As discussed in Chapter 3, an alternate model of manhood was constructed within the African American community. This model of manhood put precedence on the maintenance of patriarchal control within the household and a respectable identity within the community.

The men living at the Boston-Higginbotham House from the 1820s through the 1850s engaged with these community ideals and expectations in a variety of ways. I will focus here on the archaeological and historical stories of Absalom Boston and Lewis Berry.

Absalom Boston

The story of Absalom Boston takes on something of a mythical character in Nantucket history and in the history of the Boston-Higginbotham House. Absalom Boston was born in 1785 to Thankful Micah and Seneca Boston. He grew up in the 27 York Street house, became a successful businessman, and one of New England's only black whaling captains. As a young child at the house, he may have been given a cup like the "Early Piety" cup discussed above. He may have used a cup like this at the dinner table or on special occasions, or even played with it in the yard where it would eventually be recovered in pieces.

After Absalom's childhood, he did not live at the house, so tying the archaeological remains from the excavation to his experiences is difficult. Nonetheless, his story is important to understanding 19th century notions of black manhood and the documentary and pictorial record of his life reveal some aspects of his engagement with community ideals as well as his own sense of self.

A portrait of Absalom Boston hangs at the Nantucket Historical Association's Whaling Museum and is suggestive of the ways that Absalom hoped to portray himself as a middle-class individual and whaling captain in contrast to the prevalent racial stereotypes of black men's appearance at the time (Figure 6.5). The portrait shows Absalom dressed in a black three-piece suit, with his hair neatly arranged, a short beard, and two gold hoop earrings. As Trautman (2011: 47) points out in her analysis of 19th-century whaling dress and portraits, "whaling captains are almost always shown in the attire of genteel, middle-class men" and Absalom's portrait is no exception. These portraits also usually include some gesture toward their occupation, whether a ship in the background or an instrument such as a telescope. In the case of Absalom Boston, his earrings are likely one of these symbols. Gold earrings are prevalent in folklore related to sailors, variously thought to improve eyesight, indicate that one had sailed south of the equator, or served as payment for burial if they were to wash up on shore (DeMello 2007). While the meaning of these earrings to Absalom is not known, wearing this article of personal adornment did mark him as a seafarer rather than a man primarily employed on land.

Absalom's portrait stands in marked contrast to the mocking representations of well-off blacks created by white Americans in the early-19th century. One example is Edward Clay's *Life in Philadelphia* and *Life in New York* series that was published in the 1820s (White and White 1998: 95, 99). These representations showed out-of-proportion articles of clothing such as extra-large collars and ties and coats with extremely long tails worn by men while women had giant hats and dresses with exaggerated poofy sleeves and over-done embroidery and lace. These representations showed men and women ostensibly trying to emulate whites' dress and behavior, with little success. Such illustrations were popular and were a precursor to minstrel shows of the 19th century — which at once expressed extreme interest and extreme revulsion toward African Americans (White And White 1998: 117). These types of representations were underwritten by a discomfort white Americans felt as a black middle-class was becoming successful and freed blacks were making their own decisions with respect to their movements through public space and their appearance. In contrast, Absalom's portrait shows him as neat, composed, and respectable, which reflected his position as an important figure in the economic and political community on Nantucket.

Absalom's success made him a target for mockery in the historical representations we do have from white observers. Roland Folger Coffin (1878) recorded a series of folk tales, "sea yarns," about various events and personalities associated with the maritime industry in the 19th century. In his chapter on Absalom Boston, he focuses solely on his appearance at great length, and describes him as "the homeliest man that ever draw'd the breath of life" (Coffin 1878: 55). Coffin describes Absalom as blacker than charcoal, with a face missing a nose and one eye, and with one wooden leg. While Coffin mentions that he was at one time "a first-rate sailor-man," he focuses on Absalom's appearance and anecdotes in which people were shocked, or even killed by the sight of him (Coffin 1878: 55). The descriptive hyperbole of the chapter render it barely worth serious consideration. However, the choices the author made do underline the type of racist stereotypes that African American men were subject to in 19th-century America.

Putting such great emphasis on his supposedly revolting appearance reinforced white aesthetics as normative, with black men and women outside of, indeed the opposite of, beauty itself.
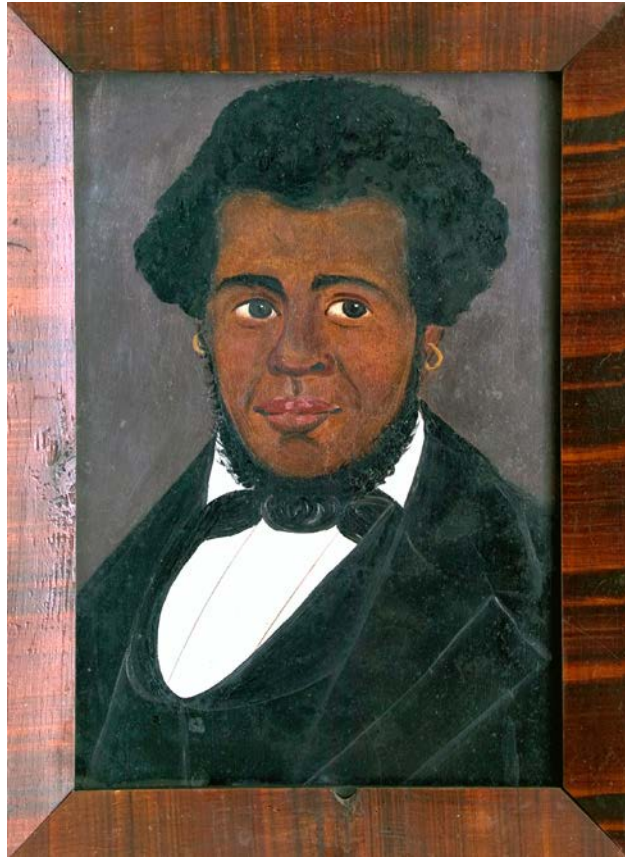
Figure 6.5. Portrait of Captain Absalom F. Boston, Unknown Artist, Prior-Hamlin Style, Circa 1835–45. *Courtesy of the Nantucket Historical Association.*

Not only is Absalom described as ugly, but he is also represented as a cook and a fiddler with a meteoric temper. Many black men were employed in the service industries of catering, food preparation, and entertainment. However, considering Absalom's success in whaling, as a shop owner, and in a running boarding house, representing him in the service industry is an attempt to relegate him to a lower social status than he deserved. Additionally, representing him as having a short temper draws on negative stereotypes of black men as needlessly and uncontrollably aggressive.

Despite this negative representation in Coffin's book of tall tales, Absalom Boston's legacy largely points to a reputation for respectability and an awareness of the ideals of black masculinity. After being born as the fifth of six children, Absalom went to be a successful whaling captain who sailed on the ship *Industry* with an all-black crew in 1822. The pursuit of economic success in this case also created economic opportunities for other black men in his community. Similarly, the shop and boarding house he ran later in his life created social opportunities for mariners, many of whom were black, to make connections with others and find their way on the island. These actions were modes of community uplift inasmuch as they improved the economic status of black Nantucketers.

Absalom Boston's involvement in the community is also evident in his frequent service as a witness on wills, deeds, and probates. He was one of the individuals to actively exchange real estate within the black community, another practice that would have reinforced his social connections with individuals in the neighborhood.

While the creation of a close-knit community was in some ways in itself a political action, overt social activism was also an important aspect of Absalom's identity and a way that he embodied black manhood. He played a vital role in the completion of the African Meeting House in the late-1820s, writing letters to representatives of the Society for Propogating the Gospel reporting on the progress being made in the construction and outfitting of the building and asking for funds to complete it (Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston Massachusetts [MHS] 1827: Society for Propagating the Gospel Collection [SPG], Ms. N-176, Box 3). His children attended the school at the African Meeting House, which would have been roughly equivalent to elementary school today. After completing this level of study, however, black students did not have the option to attend higher grades. Absalom Boston fought for the right to public education for black children in the 1840s when he petitioned for the admittance of his daughter, Phebe Ann, to the public high school and eventually sued the town in order for her to attend.

Absalom Boston's choice in the representation of himself and in his actions on behalf of his family and his community demonstrate the importance of community self-help work and the building of an image of respectability. These priorities stand in contrast with the negative stereotypes that whites chose to draw on to represent black men. Absalom's story on Nantucket and in the whaling industry is one example of the ways that black men embodied the ideals of middle-class black masculinity to serve their own needs and goals.

Lewis Berry

Lewis Berry's life on Nantucket, and later in California, reflects a dual commitment to family and community. His service to the black community was in both the realms of civil rights activism and religious leadership. He moved to Nantucket in the late-1820s with his brother, Wesley Berry, and is listed on the 1830 census as a boarder in the Boston household at 27 York Street. He married Eliza Boston later that year. After 20 years on the island, he moved to San Francisco and lived there until his death in 1874.

Beyond Lewis' marriage to Eliza and his occupation as a whitewasher, his life on Nantucket is not well documented in the newspapers and other records there. It was only when his son Isaac tragically killed him in San Francisco in 1874 that his name comes up in newspapers again. Many accounts of the crime in white newspapers focus on the drama and horror of the incident. In the San Francisco black newspaper *The Elevator,* Berry's legacy is drawn with less attention to the salacious details of his murder and more attention to his vital role within the African Methodist Episcopal Church there. At Lewis Berry's memorial service in San Francisco in 1874, he was described as having been involved in the abolitionist movement while living on Nantucket, with William Powell specifically mentioning his role in the Underground Railroad (*The Elevator* 1874: 2).

Lewis built on this early activist role in the black community when he moved to California in the early 1850s. While he worked in unskilled labor occupations — as a whitewasher and as a 'jobber'— he also took on a leadership role in this second community. Lewis was the sexton for the African Methodist Episcopal Church in San Francisco, served on the board of trustees for that church from the 1850s through the 1870s, and helped to fund the church's relocation (*Daily Alta California* 1856: 4). A list of resolutions was adopted during a

memorial service at the AME church, including a call that "this church be draped in mourning for the space of six months." (*The Elevator* 1874: 2). The resolutions also detailed his many accomplishments over the years. In addition to his serving on the board of trustees since at least 1856, Berry had been a founder of the Young Men's Union Beneficial Society, paid the bills of the church when it had been left without a pastor for a period of time, and contributed a large sum to pay the mortgage of the new church purchased in 1864. His philanthropy also included donating $50 to the Freedman's Union Commission in 1866, an organization that worked toward "the relief, education, and elevation of the Freedmen of the United States" (*Daily Alta California* 1866). It is these deeds through "which he being dead yet speaketh" (*The Elevator* 1874: 2).

While Lewis Berry became an important part of the San Francisco black community, his initial move there was likely rooted in a sense of responsibility to his family. In the late-1840s and 1850s, the economy on Nantucket suffered as the whaling industry shifted toward New Bedford. Like so many other men on Nantucket, Lewis likely went to California in the wake of the discovery of gold. He left in 1852, but lest we think that his wife Eliza was made a California widow, it is important to note that he returned several times to Nantucket. In 1853 he appeared as a witness on Absalom Boston's will, in 1855 he is counted in the local census, and in 1858 a local map still marked his house "L. Berry" (NPC 1853: PB 19: 122–127, 446–449; NHA 1855: Census Collection, Book 35; NHA 1858: Walling Map). No documentary record of movements back and forth exists after the 1850s and it is possible he simply stayed in California until his death in 1874. His responsibilities to his family continued, however, as sometime after 1860 his son Isaac moved to California and Lewis gave him a place to stay and used his connections to find him a job as a cook, even as Isaac would later show signs of mental health issues and eventually commit parricide. (*Daily Alta California* 1874: 1; *Sacramento Daily Union* 1874: 1).

The fact remains that Lewis left his family on Nantucket, even as he made a positive impact on the San Francisco community. This dedication perhaps suggests that Lewis saw his role in this community as paramount over his role as father and husband. More questions than answers remain about his relationship with his wife, his son Isaac, and the fate of his daughters and first son Lewis Jr. What does seem clear is that at a time of heightened social and political change in the United States in the mid-19th century, Lewis was taking on an active role in the improvement of the African American communities in which he lived. These actions served to reinforce community ideals of manhood and masculinity as he demonstrated through his actions the values of respectability and responsibility to one's community. His beloved status in the community was couched in the language of patriarchy as he was referred to as "our revered father in Israel," a term usually reserved for pastors and reverends, during his memorial service (*The Elevator* 1874: 2). Where his family was largely missing in California, the San Francisco African American community became his family.

The men of 27 York Street

The other men who lived at the Boston-Higginbotham House over the years deserve some mention, even as the archaeological and documentary records reveal little about their lives. We know little of the experiences of Freeborn Boston, Seneca and Thankful's first son, his son William Boston, or Charles Groves, who married Freeborn's daughter Charlotte. What we do know gives us hints of the same types of family values and sense of community responsibility seen in the stories of Absalom Boston and Lewis Berry. Freeborn made efforts to expand the family's land holdings (NRD 1802: DB 17:30; NRD 1802: DB 17: 36), William ran

a shop and subscribed to the *National Anti-Slavery Standard* (NPC 1842: PB 16: 50–53, 194), and Charles left Nantucket when economic and family strains surfaced in the early-1850s, returning to his natal Brooklyn (Smith's Brooklyn Directory 1855–1856; 1856–1857).

While the importance of the bonds created through shared experiences has been explored above with reference to the women living at 27 York Street, the relationships between the men in the household and their understanding and interpretation of community gender ideals were also important to shaping the domestic sphere and the material culture associated with this social and physical space. The same sets of dishes and children's toys that defined the Boston women as good wives and mothers would have also reflected upon the men living in the household. The care they took to support their families in a middle-class lifestyle would have been underwritten by a sense of patriarchy and masculinity in their everyday lives.

The historical details we have for the Boston men show us the struggle that they encountered in their lives as middle-class African American men. On the one hand, they were dealing with what all middle-class individuals faced — the unstable nature of respectability itself, which defined middle-class status. At the same time, the deck was stacked against them. The racial climate at the time restricted the opportunities and modes of achieving all but the most tenuous stability. The occupations that enabled them to achieve middle-class status were limited, any failures became sensationalized, and success was seldom acknowledged unless also marked by tragedy.

One artifact from the Boston-Higginbotham House excavations that illuminates the performance of respectability and masculinity is container of imported "Ed Pinaud" French soap, which would have been an expensive luxury (Figure 6.6). This particular product was an almond shaving cream (*Crème cosmétique de savon d'Amandes Amères//Pour la barbe et la toilette*). The address printed on the face was the original location of Ed Pinaud's perfumery in Paris, and gives the object a *terminus post quem* of 1841. Pinaud soaps became popular in the 1840s, and they continued to be popular throughout the 19th century. This shaving soap, meant for the beard, could have belonged to Lewis Berry, his son Isaac, Lewis Jr., or Charles Groves.

Figure 6.6. Mid–Late-19th-Century French Ed. Pinaud Almond Shaving Soap.

As discussed above, African American men were caricatured and mocked for their dress and personal presentation in the early–mid-19th century. They were portrayed as involved in an absurd dance of failed imitation, and therefore failed middle-class status and laughable attempts at respectability (White and White 1998). This shaving cream pot recovered from the yard represents a standard of personal appearance and hygiene that is counter to the negative representations of African American men in the mid-19th century and could speak to the desire these men felt to assert their respectability, and more broadly, their manhood.

Figure 6.7. Mid-19th Century figural face pipe bowl.

The importance, or perhaps appeal, of the shaving cream pot itself is suggested by the recovery of nearly the entire lid of the pot, but no fragments of a base that it could have fit on. This ointment pot lid was recovered from the house clean-out and renovation layers of EU3 & EU11. In light of this, it seems clear that the lid was curated for some reason and thrown away only when the house was cleared out with an unsentimental eye. Whether Eliza Berry or Elizabeth Stevens curated the object for aesthetic reasons or sentimental attachment to an object associated with a distant family member, or a time when they were better off financially, this ointment pot lid seems to have held value for the occupants of the house.

A few other artifacts also suggest how the ideals of masculinity may have been shaped in the mid–late 19th century for the men at 27 York Street. A pipe bowl representing a white man's face suggest a counterpoint to the types of negative stereotypes of black men promoted by white media (Figure 6.7). This unflattering depiction of an old Caucasian man features a long, bent nose, open mouth, and thinning hair. This pipe is significant in light of the popularity of "Sambo" pipes, which featured caricatured African American male faces on their bowls. While not easily dated, figural pipes were popular throughout the 19th century. The object is important less for a specific individual it might be linked with than for the broader message of racialized humor that sets the Caucasian male up as the model for the grotesque rather than the African American male.

Conclusion

Discourses on gender were an important aspect of the ways that white and black communities defined themselves in the 19th century. Dominant white gender ideologies outlined models of behavior that excluded lower class and minority individuals from the

respectability and sense of personhood that was afforded to white women and men. Gender ideals, even in cases where they were ignored or only partially accepted, were important aspects of defining group identity.

Within the media that defined middle-class black discourse, many of the same values of gendered behavior were promoted but took on different meanings in the context of African American life. For women, embodying modesty or Christian womanhood took on an added importance in light of the negative stereotypes used to characterize black women as "naturally" hyper-sexualized and immoral. For men, heading a patriarchal family and being in a leadership position in one's home and one's community countered all the negative male stereotypes of the alternately aggressive or submissive enslaved man.

The experiences of the men and women at the Boston-Higginbotham House in the 19th century were not simply illustrations of black community ideals, but were shaped by real life relationships, economic realities, and the pull of commitments to others. We see the women and men here defined their sense of personhood for themselves, with a focus on those values and virtues that were most useful to the maintenance of *their* families and *their* communities.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Political relevance and social action are important components of archaeological research as the research questions, methodologies, and products of our research are intimately involved in contemporary discourses on ownership of the past. African Diaspora archaeologists and black feminist theorists have discussed the need to be aware that our research is not and cannot be "objective" nor "neutral" and we should therefore state the political standpoint and social goals of our research (Franklin and McKee 2004; Mullins 2008).

As discussed in the introduction, my goals as a researcher have been to revisit dominant narratives of race and gender in American history as the structures of racial and gender inequality that find roots in these history affect all of our lives.

The research questions presented in this dissertation are directed squarely at deconstructing popular conceptions of New England history and African American history which have a hand in perpetuating inequality and racism in this region. The popular histories of New England focus on liberal values, the anti-slavery movement, and this region's relatively early abolition of slavery. These narratives have served to overshadow the complex history of racism and discrimination in this region. As historians have explored, racial inequality was written into the culture of this region even as slavery fell away (Litwack 1961; Melish 1998; Roediger 1991). This racism took the form of institutional inequality, segregation, and customary discrimination based on skin color rather than one's status as free or enslaved. The region at once chose to actively "forget" slavery while alienating the black residents in the region (Melish 1998). Telling the stories of the African American communities, and the families which were a part of them, adds to our understanding of what types of institutional racism black families and communities were up against and what they were able to accomplish in spite of these barriers.

An interpretive framework which builds on African diaspora theory and theories of performativity draws attention to the processes of identity-making as contingent and flexible as well as rooted in history and cultural tradition. Race ideologies are constantly in flux and being redefined through both discourse and our material worlds. This analysis of the lives of the African American men and women in 19th-century Nantucket has shown some of the ways that everyday choices in one's home and collective action in one's community contribute to the process of rejecting systems of racial inequality. The Museum of African American History recognizes the need to look to the household scale to address these questions and has suggested research on the Seneca Boston-Florence Higginbotham House would be an ideal context to investigate "black life and domesticity" in the African American community of purpose that resided on Nantucket (Gibbs 2005).

The microhistories of the people that once lived at 27 York Street draw attention to the ways individuals there engaged in dominant discourses on community identity and projects of racial uplift while also recognizing the historically specific realities of their lives. I hope I have made these men and women more familiar and relatable than census records and marriage certificates can. As I have argued elsewhere, using personal narratives in our representations of the past can create moments of resonance in the present for modern day museum visitors and others who seek out knowledge about the past outside of academic realms (Bulger 2011). I hope these personal narratives render the Bostons and their descendants more vivid, their experiences more relatable, and the problems they faced more recognizable.

The stories of Seneca Boston and Thankful Micah point to the cultural diversity of the African Diaspora and the long-standing history of community struggles for freedom and

equality. This couple's choices to stay on Nantucket after being married, establish a homestead located between the English and Wampanoag settlements on the island, and creating a domestic sphere which echoed middle-class identity and cultural sensibilities, are interpreted here as political actions. The everyday assertion of personhood became a way of life in a social context where the dominant society had decided to deny people of color access to civil and social equality. The Boston-Micah domestic space, as seen through the artifacts and the layout of their land, and their community lives, as seen through town documents, both point to a desire for equality which they shared with other people of color on the island. These values would serve as the foundation for a sense of community in the 19th century.

The 19th- and early-20th century histories of the Bostons and their descendants tell the story of the growth, fluorescence, and difficult times of one New England African American community. This community's early growth was fueled by common goals and the establishment of community values of racial uplift based on standards of respectable black womanhood and manhood. The experiences of Mary Boston, Eliza Berry, Elizabeth Stevens, Phebe Groves, Absalom Boston, Lewis Berry, and Charles Groves were intertwined with the ideals of the black community and the realities of the needs and goals of their families. Some aspects of their material worlds, including their decorative ceramics, their personal care products, and their articles of personal adornment, speak to the embodiment of respectable gender roles. At the same time, the hardships and social circumstances of each person were different and they refigured dominant ideals to create their own sense of personhood which spoke to their needs. In the case of the women at the Boston-Higginbotham house we often see the demands of the family and the work needed to maintain the homestead as taking precedent over activism in the public sphere.

The stories of the men and women at the Boston-Higginbotham House and in this community during the early–mid-19th century show the types of challenges and successes which political efforts such as abolitionism and education rights brought to individual families and to the broader black community. The stories of the later-19th-century at the house demonstrate the work and dedication needed to keep a household together, a community vibrant, and a sense of social respectability intact when economic or social crises hit. Elizabeth Stevens' work within and outside her home to keep the property within the family required a focused dedication. Her material world speaks to the active curation of objects from her ancestors, including ceramic pieces and jewelry. Similarly, she curated the black community itself and its memory on the island as she remained active in the Pleasant Street Baptist Church and took in the materials from the church into her home. Elizabeth kept the Boston family's foothold on the island for many years through a deep economic depression and the resurgence of the island as tourism became popular. When she passed the homestead down to her niece and nephew, however, the property soon passed out of the family as their lives had become rooted in other places.

The stories of all these individuals demonstrate how race and gender continue to have an emergent quality in our everyday lives. The documentary record is rich with information on the dominant ideals of Euro-American and African American society. The material record, and a close reading of archival data, bring to life the stories of how individuals were involved in community making, defying negative stereotypes, and choosing their priorities for themselves.

Final Thoughts

This project represents an historical archaeological attempt to deconstruct race and gender stereotypes, create a research project that serves the needs of the descendent community, and offer a means of making the products of the research available and accessible to interested stakeholders. This dissertation presents alternate narratives of New England history that

challenge the idyllic myths of equality, abolitionism, and republican values, which continue to dominate the historical memory of this region. At the same time, this dissertation specifically targets those gender stereotypes that continue to play significant parts in the ways that racial inequality is perpetuated in our society.

Race and gender continue to intersect to create significant and pernicious stereotypes. One example is the persistent specter of the Angry Black Man, which has played a role in the ways that President Barack Obama has been represented in the conservative media over the last five years (Coates 2012). Similarly, black women are stereotyped in the form of images of "welfare mothers" and "hoochie mamas" (Collins 2000). These images continue to be used to demonize black women and rationalize their treatment as second-class citizens. As Martin (2011:77), argues, "the real issue…is white supremacy and the material and structural inequalities that create and sustain it." It is white supremacy that underwrites modern practices of "colorblind racism," which deny the role of race itself in shaping our nation's social systems (Bonilla-Silva 2003).

Undermining racial stereotypes and the white supremacy that makes them possible, is hopefully one effect of the re-telling of 19th-century American history presented here. In light of continuing issues of racism and racial inequality, research on the everyday lives of men and women like the Bostons, the Berrys and the Groves remain important. Just as important is bringing the stories to broad audiences, in Museum and popular culture contexts, and making them commonplace representations of the past rather than radical retellings.

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