

D-56

Archeological Observation on the grounds of 704 Market St., Philadelphia

Two doors west of the Graff House, 700 Market

by John L. Cotter

Nov. 1972

On Nov. 7, 1972 a test was made by the writer of the excavated basement area located beneath the 4-storey store removed two doors west of the Graff House site located on the southwest corner of Market and Seventh Streets. The cement flooring of the basement area of 704 Market had been removed by demolition workers who left the loose dirt piled up from the bulldozer blade scrapings. It was under this spoil that a strip roughly 1.5 wide was shovelled to the undisturbed alluvial sand, bright yellow with lenses of tan sand and zones of gray clay.

The reason for testing was that this site could bear some relationship to the Graff House in the late 18th century because of its proximity and association with a yard area behind the Graff House. The Graff House site, occupied successively after the demolition of the house where Jefferson worked on the Declaration of Independence by a bank and the Tom Thumb hamburger stand had been cleared, together with 702 and 704 Market and the area south to the alley in order to reconstruct the Graff House and erect a library, the reconstruction to proceed under the auspices of The National Park Service as part of Independence National Historical Park.

In the cleared strip running north-south approximately in the middle of the 704 Market basement area, a shallow pit 0.8' deep and roughly egg-shaped in plan, 1.8' x 1.6' was found 9' below the level of the sidewalk and 4.5' below the arbitrary datum. The pit

B&W Scans

3/28/2005

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bottom was 5.5' below datum. The distance from the wall of the standing Stern Store at 706 Market to the juncture of sidewalk and former structure (dedicated line) on Market St. is 50.0 feet.

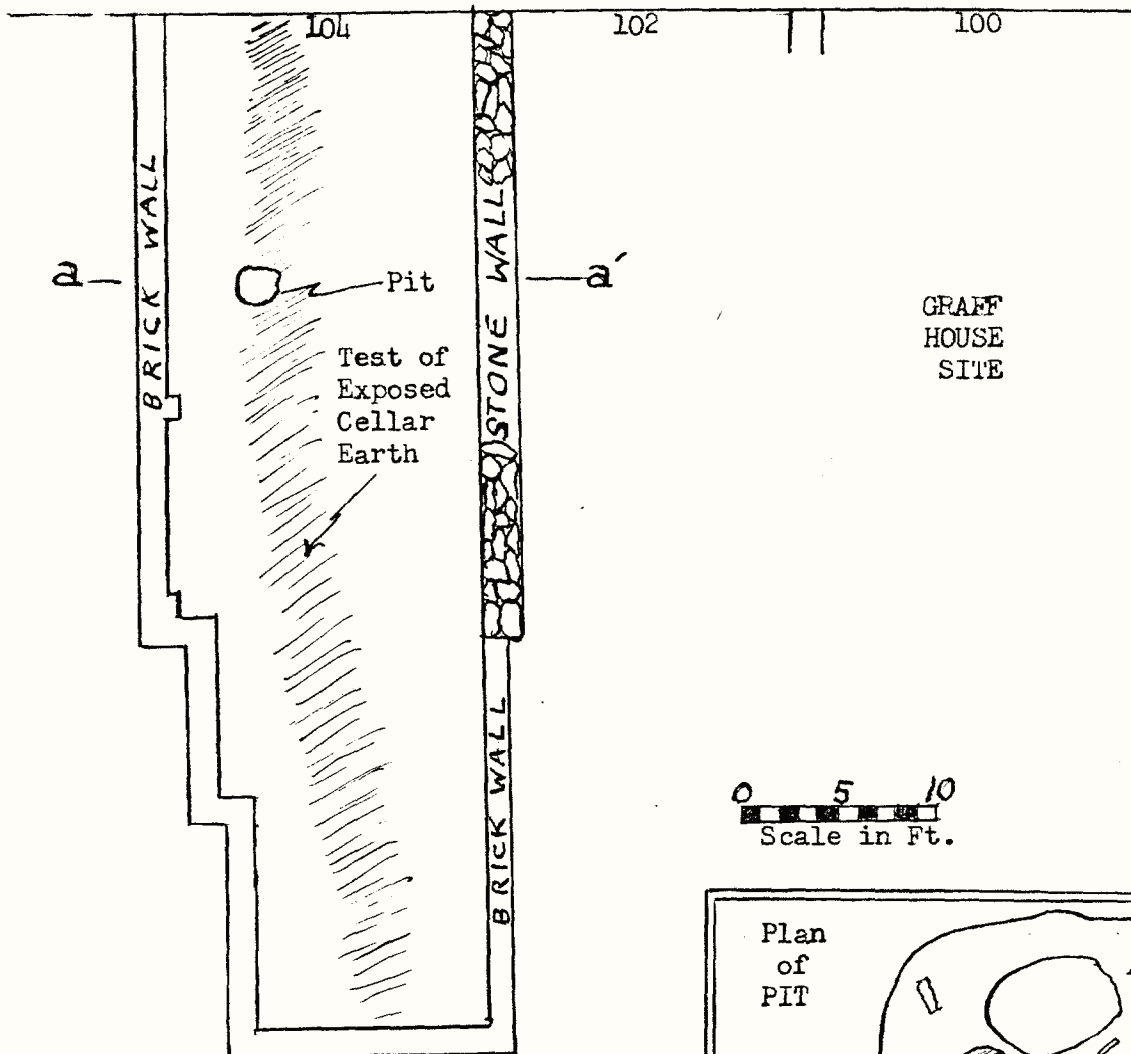
The excavated site was measured by Mrs. Betty Cosans who set up an arbitrary datum point in the north wall under the sidewalk of Market Street. This datum was 4.5' below the level of the sidewalk. The floor of the basement was estimated to have been 7.7' below the sidewalk. The edge of the pit was 11 inches above the pit bottom, measured at the lowest point.

Only this disturbed area in the clean sand was excavated at the northern end of the basement, 6 feet from the east wall and approximately that distance from the north wall of the basement. The disturbance was the bottom of a detritus-filled pit which extended 11 inches below the floor level into the yellow sand. The ovoid pit fill contained much charcoal in large flecks and small chunks in dark soil which did not appear to be privy spoil. In the fill were many ceramic artifacts, notably portions of one 13½-inch diameter shallow bowl of slip decorated redware with scalloped edge, major fragments of a large slip decorated redware trencher which had been over 15 inches long, a stoneware small jug with handles at spout, a case bottle of green glass, 17 white clay tobacco pipe stem fragments of late 18th - early 19th century type, a bone handle to a table knife or fork in excellent preservation, and a 3 lb. solid iron shot. The pit was completely excavated to its full depth and all artifacts retrieved.

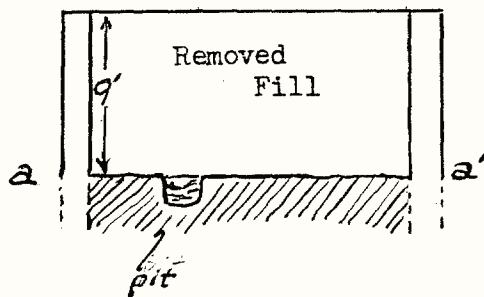
The Graff House was built after 1770, according to Historian Martin Yoelson of Independence National Historical Park, and the

property next to the east, followed by the third, or 704 Market, the basement in which the pit was found, were subsequently built upon. The inference is that the pit site was open at the time of Graff House was occupied in 1775, and pit could be contemporaneous with that date. The redware and other objects could easily come from the 1700-1820 range. No further explanation of the pit and its contents is warranted at this time.

SIDEWALK

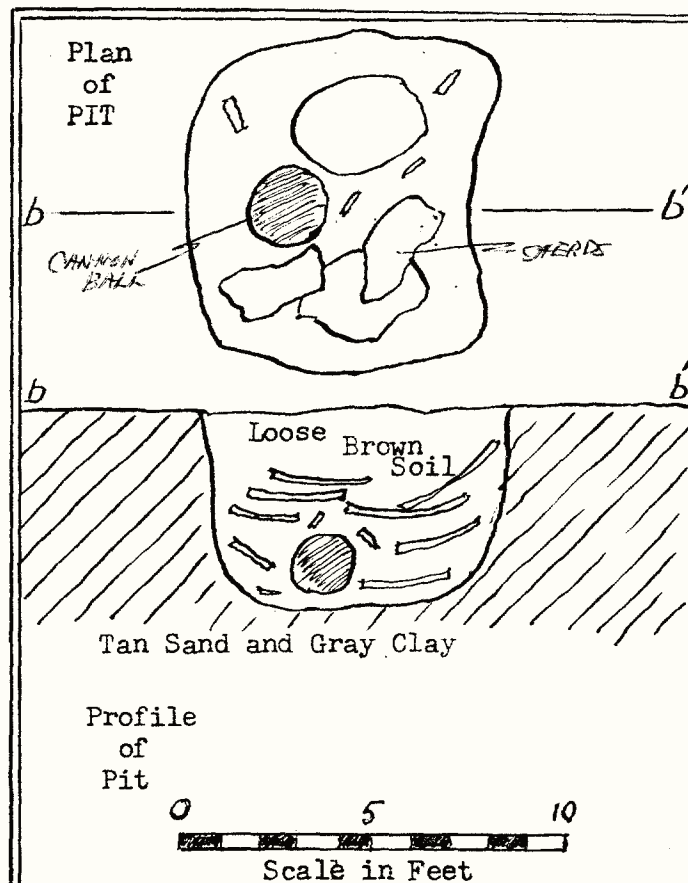


Sidewalk Level



REFUSE PIT EXPOSED BELOW
REMOVED CELLAR FLOOR OF
704 MARKET STREET, PHILA.

Nov. 17, 1972



ARTIFACTS FROM FEATURE 1, A SHALLOW SUB-BASEMENT FLOOR PIT AT 704 MARKET ST.

	ARTIFACT	DESCRIPTION
<u>CERAMICS:</u>	<u>Earthenware</u>	
	Trencher, partly reconstructed	Slip-decorated redware: 2 major, 6 minor fragments, scalloped edges, over 14 inches long. Combed slip.
	Shallow bowl, partly reconstructed	Slip-decorated redware, combed slip. Reconstructed with available fragments, except 7 minor pieces. Scalloped edge, 13½ inches diameter.
	17 kaolin clay pipe stem fragments	White kaolin, stem hole diameters 4/64 and 5/64 in., non-diagnostic for age, other than late 18th to early 19th century.
	Pearlware	Two sherds, small, probably late 18th-early 19th century.
	<u>Stoneware</u>	
	Bottle, reconstructed	Handle at spout, light brown, salt glaze, 1 quart
<u>GLASS:</u>	Case bottle fragments	Green glass, 3 inches square, thin walled
	Case bottle, mouth and shoulder fragments	Light green glass 1½ inch square, thin walled
	43 Miscellaneous sherds	Green glass, mostly case bottles, thin
<u>METAL:</u>	Solid cannon ball	Three-pound shot
<u>SHELL:</u>	5 large oyster shells	Unworked, garbage
<u>BONE:</u>	Knife handle	In long, undecorated, table knife type
	Garbage: 5 chicken	
	3 beef: 1 rib fragment	
	1 pelvis fragment	
	1 tooth fragment, indet.	
	12 indeterminate, mammal	
<u>STONE:</u>	Marble fragment	1 fragment, dressed white marble, 1 inch thick



Plate 1. Slip decorated red earthenware shallow bowl, $13\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, with scalloped edge. This is an example of combed slip decoration. The vessel was reconstructed from all but 7 minor fragments found in the fill of the shallow pit in the sub-basement earth test of 704 Market.

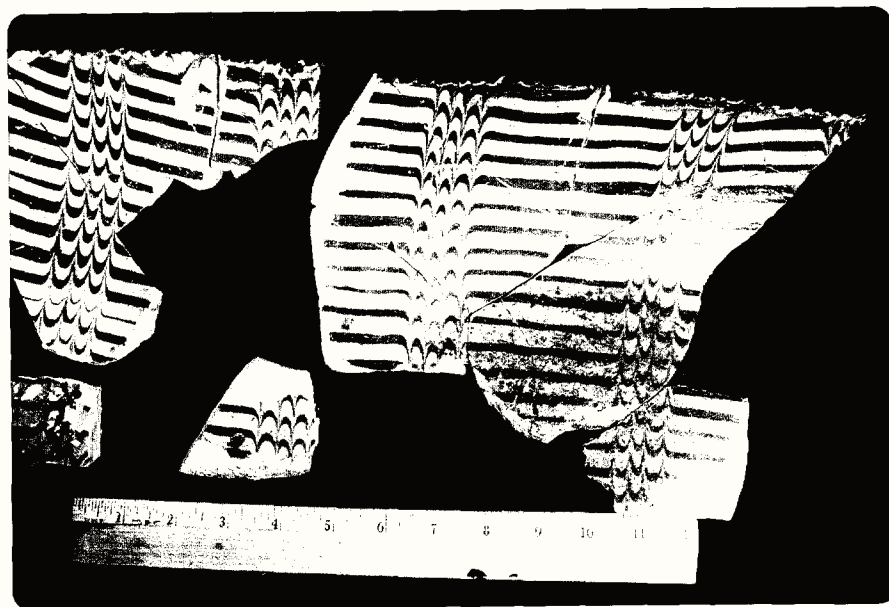


Plate 2. Slip decorated by combing on a trencher of red earthenware represented by 2 major and 6 minor fragments, with scalloped edges. The original length of the trencher was over 11 inches long.

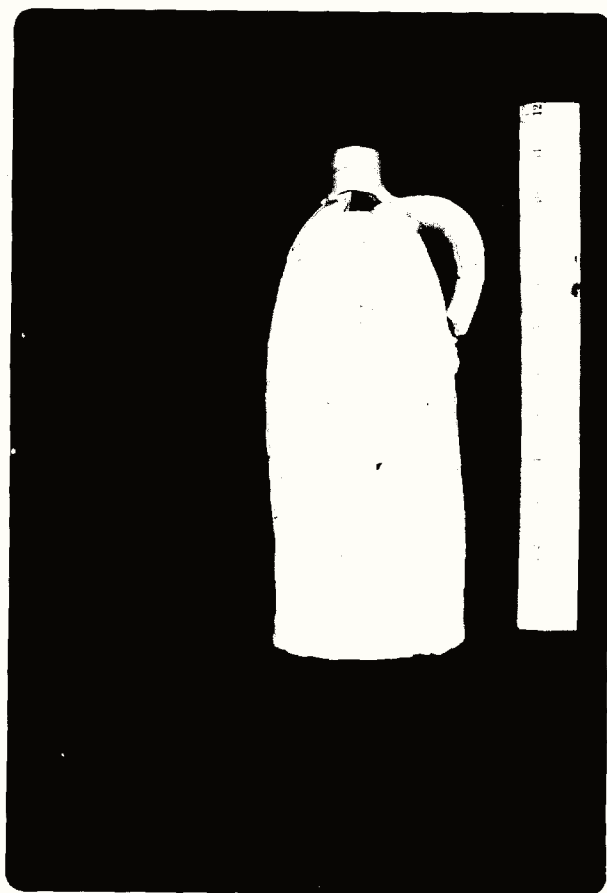


Plate 3. Stoneware bottle, salt glazed, light brown, 1 quart,
with single loop handle. Assembled from fragments
found in sub-basement pit beneath 70½ Market St.



Plate 4. Miscellaneous objects from 104 Market St. sub-basement floor pit: Vertical rows, left to right: Slip-decorated redware, top, 2 pearlware sherds, bottom. Bone knife handle, top, small molded bottle bottom and wine bottle mouth. Case bottle fragments, green glass. 17 kaolin tobacco pipe stem fragments and 1 bowl fragment.