

# Samuel Fuller Homesite Report Series

## Volume 2 of 7

### Architectural Analysis

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#### ABSTRACT

Site examination testing was conducted at the Samuel Fuller Homesite prior to residential subdivision development in Kingston, Massachusetts. The site is one of three contemporaneously occupied homesites dating to the middle to late nineteenth century and situated within the proposed subdivision development area that were identified during and Intensive Survey of the area. The intensive survey was conducted in the undisturbed sections of the project area by MAP personnel under permit No. 2865 issued by the State Archaeologist. As a result of the survey, 153 test pits (142 test pits placed in six transects, seven judgmental test pits and four array test pits) were excavated, 1,018 artifacts (24 prehistoric and 995 historic) were recovered, and two prehistoric and six historic sites were identified. Three historic cellar holes associated with the Fuller brothers (Samuel, Smith and Daniel) were identified as being potentially eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places and were recommended for site-examination testing. Two of the cellar holes, those of Smith and Daniel, were determined to be located in areas that could be protected from further development and were thus preserved in situ. The cellar hole associated with the Samuel Fuller family, could not be avoided by the proposed development and was subjected to site-examination testing. Surface vegetation consists of developing hardwood scrub and forest with little underbrush. The Samuel Fuller Homesite is situated on a small rise overlooking a historic road and in close proximity to present day cranberry bogs.

The testing strategies employed for the site examination consisted of the excavation of a series of 50 cm square shovel excavated test pits placed in a grid pattern, followed by the excavation of three trenches (two in a cross-shaped pattern within the cellar hole and one across the width of a depression situated on the edge of the site boundary), and six one-meter-square excavation units. Excavation was carried out to a minimum of 50 cm, well into the B2 subsoil. The site size, based on the presence of test pits with and without cultural material, was determined to be 25 meters east to west by 45 meters north to south. The western edge was defined by the cranberry bog road; the northern edge was defined by a low area of possible soil removal activities and sterile test pits, while the south and east boundaries were defined by two sterile test pits. The overall distribution of material appears to be in a roughly oval shape oriented north to south.

Prehistoric cultural material was recovered from several contexts, all believed to have come from one site with scattered material. The prehistoric site was determined to be a low density lithic scatter likely resulting from short term occupation, possibly during the Middle Archaic period. The location of the site was determined to roughly parallel that of the historic site with prehistoric materials occurring in a more random and scattered fashion.

Historic cultural material consisted of an appreciable assemblage of ceramics, faunal remains and household architectural material. No outbuildings were identified. Site examination testing found that the site possessed definite boundaries, with a yard scatter, subsurface features, and overall good integrity in the sense that the site has not been disturbed by subsequent post-occupation activities, and a high research potential. The high research potential was due to the observed spatial patterning of subsurface artifacts and features across the site. The site was found to possess definite boundaries, good integrity in the sense that the site has not been disturbed by subsequent post-occupation activities, and high research potential. While it was difficult to attribute various deposits to time periods, there appears to be spatial patterning of subsurface artifacts and features across the site. Archaeological investigations identified deposits dating to the occupation of the site by the Fullers, as well as occupation of the site immediately after, possibly by Kingston's famed hermit, Daniel Fuller.

Extensive background research was conducted, principally focusing on census and tax records, in order to place the Fullers within a larger community context. It is felt that further investigations at the site have the potential to yield significant information regarding the lives of individuals living at a low economic level throughout much of the nineteenth century. The site was found to possess definite boundaries, good integrity in the sense that the site has not been disturbed by subsequent post-occupation activities, and high research potential. While it was difficult to attribute various deposits to time periods, there appears to be spatial patterning of subsurface artifacts and features across the site. Archaeological investigations identified deposits dating to the occupation of the site by the Fullers as well as occupation of the site immediately after, possibly by Kingston's famed hermit, Daniel Fuller. The Trench 1 and North Yard Midden deposits are terminal deposits of materials cleaned out of the house following Samuel's death. As a result, they represent the artifacts that were present in the house at the time of his death, and that were determined by the cleaners to be worthless and disposable. It is unknown what material may have been removed from the site by those who were cleaning out the house. While the deposit in these contexts seems to show an occupation by someone who saved old bottles and ate off of old plates, it may be a case of these being the artifacts that were not wanted by those who cleaned out the house. In fact, they may have originally made up only a small portion of the actual material-culture assemblage. The Fullers may have had fine china and gold, but these materials could have been removed by the cleaners and thus did not present themselves archaeologically. However, by coupling the archaeological findings with extensive background research, it was determined that the Fullers were of a lower economic station

and thus unlikely to own fine china. The disposal of their possessions in an associated pit and a yard midden, indicates that they may not have had much that was worth anything at the time of Samuel's death and thus many of their possessions were subsequently disposed of on-site. Further excavations could help clarify this issue. As a result, the site is considered eligible for listing on the National Register and avoidance of the site is recommended.

Housing, as opposed to clothing and other more perishable elements of culture, is usually well represented and more visible archaeologically, and some see housing as the most sensitive indicator of class in 19<sup>th</sup> century America (Soltow 1992: 131). Other classes of material culture, ceramics, glass, faunal remains, etc., can be used to better understand the lifestyles of the inhabitants versus their use as status indicators. Catts and Custer (1990: 227) found that 450 square feet formed a convenient dividing line between the houses of the poor and those of the middle class. The Fuller house floor size was approximately 432 square feet, making it below dividing line between middle class and poor. The examination of the size, structure and layout of the Fuller 's house, can provide insight into the social class and real status of this industrial period working class family. Conversely, some investigators see status as best indicated by social status followed by the quality of the house or residential area (neighborhood) (Spencer-Wood 1984: 35).

During the Victorian Period, architectural styles changed so that individuals had their own rooms, specialized rooms for children appeared and special ritual and presentation rooms appeared. Some of these changes were the result of the Industrial Revolution which often led to men, who were up to this point the leaders of the home and family, being away from home working in the new burgeoning industries. This led to women taking control of the day to day workings of the home, thus creating two world spheres, the home and workplace, where once, in the more rural pre-industrial times, they were both one and the same. In preindustrial times, the family often had to make what it needed to survive, with the rise of industry, men could now go to jobs that produced goods and services while the remainder of the family stayed at home. The idea was also created that the work world (the public sphere of life) was a rough place full of temptation, vice and violence where men had to do whatever it took to survive. Women, being weak and delicate creatures (as the wisdom of the time believed) needed to be defended and protected from this world. It was logical that they and the children would remain at home while the men went out, confronted and conquered the new Industrial Age. The emerging middle-class, which soon became the ideal for the lower class and the rungs on the ladders of power for the upper class, began to look at itself and the nuclear family as the backbone of society.

The Victorian Age recognized women's new roles as house managers and created the ideology of the "cult of domesticity", the virtues of which were extolled in many aspects of popular culture of the time. The cult of domesticity was a belief that women, as keepers of the home, were also viewed as being the keepers of purity, piety and domesticity. The home became a man's refuge from the dog eat dog world of industry and became the showplace for status, affluence and the ideals that women were relegated as the keepers of. This led to the creation of ritual rooms in the house in which the ideals could be showed off and savored. These rooms included the parlor and dining rooms. These rooms were located on the first floor of the house and were rooms which were visible to the public and thus a place to display your real or desired status. The parlor was the room where afternoon tea parties were held and as it was a showplace of the home, it was often the most luxuriously furnished room in a middle-class house. The parlor essentially served as the area where class members aspired to make their claims to refined gentility and the afternoon tea was an important showplace for the family's social status (Di Zerega Wall 1991: 79). By the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, meals had taken on the form of ritual and were considered as a time to affirm the moral values of the family and a good dining room was seen as a space that reinforces the spiritual unity of the family (Di Zerega

Wall 1991: 80). Concurrent with the appearance of dining rooms and parlors is an increased attention to table settings including glass and ceramic dishes. This included an elaboration over time of the types, and quality of vessels used in meals which was reflected in the decorative styles, the amount of decoration and the relative cost of ceramics (Klein 1991: 79). As has been shown by George Miller's work on cream-colored ceramic pricing (1991), ceramic prices dropped between 1810 and 1850 as plain creamwares were replaced by edged, dipped, and painted wares in the 1780s. These wares were subsequently replaced by transfer printed wares following the War of 1812. By the 1830s as the price of transfer printed wares dropped and a greater variety of vessel forms and sizes increased, these wares had become the most popular type for both tea and table (Klein 1991: 80).

Not all houses of the period contained formal rooms such as the dining room and the parlor. Farm and rural families were not building houses with dining rooms due to the nature of work on farms and in rural settings. Rural families became involved in domestic changes at a slower rate than their urban counterparts. By the 1830s the ideal of the farmhouse as a unified work place had begun to erode and there was now a noticeable shift in the arrangement of rooms within the house. From the 1850s farmhouse plans began to separate the house into public and private areas. The public areas were the front porch, front door, and sitting room or parlor, these contrasted with the private rooms of the kitchen and bedrooms (Adams 1990:98).

No evidence of an actual farmyard or work yard was identified during site examination testing. The house itself appears to be of Colonial style dating to the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century. While details of the exterior appearance are unknown, the interior appears to have been divided into a minimum of two rooms- a hall and a parlor- on either side of a central chimney. The house may have begun as a single room house with a chimney on the western wall-possibly the "small house" inherited by Waldo Fuller- which was subsequently expanded to form a hall and parlor house plan. In any case, the house form appears to have been more utilitarian versus reflective of the wider regional and national trends of Georgian architecture. Georgian architecture projected an air of symmetry and order, whereas Colonial architecture was more of a reflection of utility. It is possible that if the structure began as a single-cell dwelling, the addition of a second cell and the terrace may have been done to "modernize" the house, to bring its outside appearance more into line with Georgian ideals, and provide more space for a larger family. Further investigations at the site could investigate the architecture and its development further.

The house occupied a rise and faced a portion of the road to the south where the road turned to the west and continued towards other homes. It is estimated to have measured eight meters east to west by six meters north to south and had a central chimney and a cellar hole that was accessed through a staircase placed against the north side of the hearth. A two meter wide by eight meter long terrace was constructed on the front (south) side of the house in the 1830s-1840s. Terraces are used to add height to the appearance of a house, to create a separation and transition zone between the home and world beyond it and were used as show places for flower and herb gardens. The south yard in front of the 50 cm high terrace was "attached" to the house by a meter and a half long by 50 cm wide professionally quarried and roughly shaped walkway stone. The positioning of the house on the rise and the construction of the terrace may have been an attempt by the builder or the occupants to set this house off from the surroundings and to essentially place it on a pedestal and a place of prominence as an expression of its perceived importance.

The house appears to fit in well with a lower class attempt to present themselves within the cultural language of the Victorian ideals. The possible expansion of the house from a single-cell to double-cell plan separated the kitchen (the hall) from the parlor more than was possible in a single-cell

house, but not as much as was possible with the addition of a room on the rear of the house as was present in saltbox and Georgian style houses. This the apparent time lag in architectural styles present at the site may be a reflection of the rural nature of the site, the possible construction by Consider Fuller, a man who practiced his craft in rural settings just after the first generation of Georgian architecture was being adopted, and the construction of a utilitarian or vernacular versus a trendy or secular house plan. The possible expansion of the house and the construction of the terrace on the front of the house reflect a rural lower class expression and interpretation of the Victorian ideals of the house as a show place and expression of domesticity. The presence of tea sets, multiple tea pots and faux gemstone and gold jewelry also represent the Fullers' expression of presentation of desired status and their interpretation and expression of the wider Victorian ideals.

No evidence of farming or animal husbandry were identified, except possibly the oxen shoe, which may date to the earlier occupation, It appears that the Fuller's purchased most of their goods as opposed to producing them themselves.

### **Construction Material**

Construction and architecturally related materials formed the single largest category of material recovered from the site.

### **Flat Glass (Window Glass)**

Site Examination testing yielded 685 pieces of flat glass, assumed to be window glass, from across the project area. Glass color included predominantly aqua, but clear, olive and even amethyst colored solarized glass was recovered. All the flat glass appears to be cylinder glass, no crown glass was identified. Cylinder glass was produced after 1820 until approximately 1920. Trench 1, the east yard, the terrace fill and the cellar hole had the highest occurrences of flat glass (Table 1).

**Table 1. Flat glass occurrences**

<b>Context</b>	<b>Count</b>
North Yard Midden	16
EU 4	50
EU 5	28
EU 6	17
Trench 1	116
West Room	36
Hearth	14
West Yard	8
East Yard	134
Terrace	119
North Yard	32
South Yard	7
Cellar Hole	108
<b>Total</b>	<b>685</b>

The flat glass from the terrace fill was found predominantly in the first two meters south of the cellar hole south wall from the upper 20 cm, indicating that it was likely deposited in situ or close to it during demolition or deterioration of the house. Trench 1 artifacts are believed to have originated from a cleaning out of the house following the death of Samuel Fuller. The flat glass present here was likely the result of the disposal of extra panes or damaged panes, if the house was dismantled or repaired at the time.

An abundance of nails and other fasteners is always typical of archaeology conducted on historic habitation sites, and the Samuel Fuller homesite is no exception. Fasteners at the site consisted of 487 nails (hand-wrought and machine-cut) nails and nail fragments, a u-shaped staple, two square nuts, a tack and a wood screw.

### Hand Wrought Nails

Twenty-five hand-wrought nails were recovered in a limited distribution across the site (Table 2).

**Table 2. Hand-wrought nail distribution**

Context	Count
North Yard Midden	1
EU 4	3
EU 5	3
EU 6	0
Trench 1	0
West Room	0
Hearth	1
West Yard	0
East Yard	8
Terrace	2
North Yard	2
South Yard	0
Cellar Hole	5
<b>Totals</b>	<b>25</b>

The east yard had the highest occurrence of hand-wrought nails, followed by the cellar hole. The hand-wrought nails from the cellar hole were concentrated in Trench 3 at 3-4 meters north of the south wall within Fill layer 1, the uppermost fill. While hand-wrought nails and spikes were produced since ancient times, by the late eighteenth century they were replaced by partially machine cut nails between 1790 and 1825, with the machine cutting the nail shanks and a human finisher applying the heads by hand. By 1825 machines had been developed to crudely make the heads and by 1840 the heads and shanks were completely machine-made. Machine-cut nails continue to be produced until the present time. Eventually, by 1890s, round-shanked wire nails, which were first produced in the 1850s, began to dominate the nail market, replacing the machine-cut nails. The presence of hand-wrought nails in the assemblage may indicate a late eighteenth to early nineteenth century construction of the site, a hypothesis supported by the occurrence of creamware in the ceramic assemblage.

## Machine-Cut Nails

Machine-cut nails accounted for 452 of the overall fastener class and they were fairly evenly distributed across the site with concentrations occurring in the east yard, the cellar hole, the north yard and the terrace fill (Table 3).

**Table 3. Machine-cut nail distribution.**

<b>Context</b>	<b>Count</b>
North Yard Midden	18
EU 4	32
EU 5	22
EU 6	19
Trench 1	17
West Room	32
Hearth	24
West Yard	15
East Yard	77
Terrace	56
North Yard	61
South Yard	8
Cellar Hole	71
<b>Totals</b>	<b>452</b>

The overall distribution without any exceptionally high concentrations likely indicates that the structure collapsed in place, eventually falling to the north and east. In addition to the hand-wrought and machine-cut nails, four nail fragments, unidentifiable to type were recovered along with two nuts (cellar hole), a tack and staple (east yard), and one u-nail (west room). The nuts may be related to the wagon wheel parts recovered from the cellar hole as well.



**Figure 1. Architectural hardware**

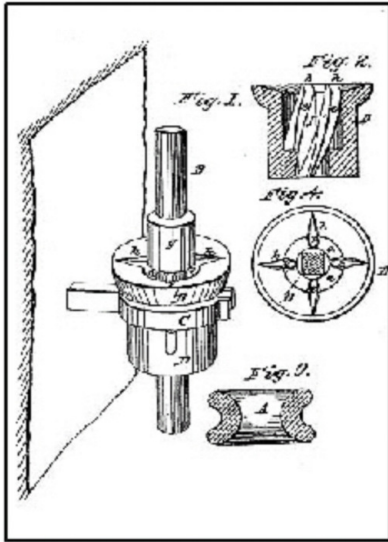
**Building Hardware**

Ten building hardware related items were recovered. Four were recovered from the cellar hole fill, consisting of a pintle hinge strap, a cast iron hinge, a screw-ended possible wall hook, and an iron strap, possibly part of another strap hinge (Figure 1). Another strap fragment and a widow shade hanging bracket were recovered from immediately east of the east wall of the cellar hole, an L-



shaped bracket was found near the hearth, and a possible iron wall hook was found in the north yard midden.

One additional piece of building hardware was found associated with Trench 1 in test pit N25 E00. This item was a dark green glass lightning rod insulator. It measures 6 cm in diameter and has "PATENT 1859" embossed on the exterior. This type of lightning rod insulator was patented on March 29, 1859 by Russel Hickock of Fort Edward, NY (Hickock 1859) (Figure 2). Hickock's improvement over other lightning rod insulators was the presence of molded ribs on the interior of the shaft hole. These ribs allowed dirt and debris to pass through the insulator and not be trapped, allowing it to work more effectively. The presence of this artifact indicates that the occupants were living beyond bare necessity and adding things to their houses which were extras, in this case, a safety extra.



R. Hickok March 29, 1859 patent drawing  
(patent no. 23, 373)



N25 E00 0-15 cm



Intensive survey JTP 3 30-40 cm



Figure 2. Lightning rod (Top) whale oil lamp (bottom)

### Brick and Mortar

These artifacts make up the largest portion of the total overall assemblage with a total of 2,241 pieces of mortar and 2,779 pieces of brick being recovered. The majority of the brick was recovered in the cellar hole, especially against the west wall where the hearth was located, in the hearth and in the west room. The majority of the mortar recovered was found in the cellar hole, the west, east, and north yards. It is possible that the bricks from the hearth and chimney stack were salvaged at some time after the abandonment of the house. The stack may have collapsed and the mortar concentrations identified separately may be the result of cleaning old mortar off brick before

removing them from the site. It is also possible that some of the mortar recovered from the yard area may be wall plaster and represents the areas where the walls fell post-abandonment (Table 4).

**Table 4. Brick and mortar occurrences.**

<b>Context</b>	<b>Brick Count</b>	<b>Mortar Count</b>
North Yard Midden	14	0
EU 4	60	45
EU 5	106	0
EU 6	127	10
Trench 1	101	1
West Room	269	38
Hearth	330	27
West Yard	51	144
East Yard	98	85
Terrace	149	16
North Yard	17	74
South Yard	4	1
Cellar Hole	1,374	1,174
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,779</b>	<b>2,241</b>

## Roofing Material

A total of 475 pieces of roof or roofing material were recovered, consisting of roofing tar, tar soaked wood, tin flashing, and tar paper (Table 5). Roofing materials were concentrated in the north yard and terrace fills predominantly within 2 m of the cellar hole south wall. All of this material likely represents in situ material resulting from the collapse of the structure to the north and east.

**Table 5. Roofing material occurrences.**

<b>Context</b>	<b>Tar</b>	<b>Tar Paper</b>	<b>Wood</b>	<b>Tin</b>
North Yard Midden	22			
EU 4	1			
EU 5	6			
EU 6	4			
Trench 1	30	3		
West Room				
Hearth		1		
West Yard	2			
East Yard	5		2	
Terrace	25	30	14	
North Yard	262		13	2
South Yard		1		
Cellar Hole	25		24	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>3</b>

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