

7 Hawley Street Project Conclusion

Precontact Period of Site Use

The historic, post-Contact component of the 7 Hawley Street site had a substantial impact on the precontact cultural remains. Precontact, Indigenous cultural material was relatively sparse, the spatial structure (location of different activities) of the occupation could not be determined, and a chronological date could not be assigned. It is possible that the archaeological signature of the precontact occupation would have been more significant without the damage done by nearly 200 years of intensive historic occupation, but that point is now moot; we have to base our conclusions on what exists.

What exists is a low-density artifact assemblage that contains a small percentage of utilized debitage (flakes of chert from manufacturing stone tools that were used themselves as informal tools for different tasks, such as cutting or scraping). This type of low density occupation would be interpreted as a small resource procurement/processing locale or small camp of unknown temporal affiliation. The larger and denser Chenango Point/Chenango Point South site lies just 300 m (984 ft) south of 7 Hawley Street. It is possible this site is associated with the 7 Hawley Street area, and represents an activity area of the larger Chenango Point/Chenango Point South site. Adding the 7 Hawley Street material to the greater pattern of land use centered on the confluence reveals the expanded boundaries of a large precontact occupation spanning millennia.

The 19th and 20th Centuries

Over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries, the 7 Hawley Street project area has changed radically from a sparsely occupied residential space to a packed commercial space with workin- class housing, finally becoming a parking lot during the late 20th century. At its height, the area had 12-13 properties and dozens of people living and working here. Not all of these people left material traces that survived or can be associated with them; not all of their stories can be told or their stories touch on larger issues. It is the larger issues of major transformations and trends that are the subject of this concluding section.

Home and Household

The 19th century witnessed major social transformation rooted in the shift to industrial production that changed household organization and led to an idealized vision of what home meant (Boydston 1990). For centuries, the home had been an arena of work and production where the shop was physically linked to the home and master craftsmen headed a household that frequently contained apprentices and journeymen (Johnson 1978; Larkin 1988). Industrial production and the factory physically separated the world of work from home life at the same time as it embraced, competitive, free market principles. The concept of home was freed to take on new meaning and, as the middle class became increasingly uneasy with workings of the free market, the home came to be defined in opposition to the world of work. This idea of home as a private, family space of sanctuary from work was entrenched in middle class culture by the late 19th century. The working class, however, often could not maintain this ideal or had no interest in maintaining it. The material record of 7 Hawley Street provides insight in the complexity of transformations in the concept of home in the daily lives of block residents.

Robert and Dorcas Bartlett were living in the project area by 1840; Joseph and Robert Bartlett had been forced to move their gun shop to Washington Street by the construction of the Chenango Canal in 1837. The Bartletts were among a generation that witnessed the transformation of concepts of home and production and the Bartlett household may have uneasily straddled the divide between old and new forms of manufacturing. Joseph and Robert Bartlett began their gun shop c. 1830, shortly after moving to Binghamton (Lawyer 1900:105), in a period when large-scale industrial production was still limited, particularly within this area. The demise of this business was apparently due to an inability to compete with industrial manufacturing in large urban areas (Lawyer 1900:105). This would suggest that production in the Bartletts' gun shop was closer to a skilled, craft-based model of production. Robert and Dorcas lived close to the works on Washington Street and had apprentice or journeyman gun smiths living in their household. By the 1850s the business was suffering from increasing competition with the new gun manufacturers and closed (Lawyer 1900:105). The Bartletts sold the house lot on Washington Street in 1857.

The major material culture related to the Bartlett household comes from a privy deposit dated c. 1840-1860. Ceramic and glass vessels comprise most domestic items and reveal certain interesting trends. The ceramic assemblage is dominated by fashionable, more expensive transfer printed wares but there is no evidence that they were purchased as a matching set. The transfer print ceramics are all thematically similar in their emphasis on romantic scenery and generally light blue color but include at least 13 different patterns. The bulk consists of basic tableware pieces, such as plates and platters. What this suggests is somewhat contradictory priorities for fashionable, more expensive dishware but little concern with more refined aspects of presentation. Glass tableware confirms a limited concern with presentation and fashionable aspects of dining; most were basic pressed glass, paneled tumblers. There were no stemmed goblets or other stemware in the assemblage. Combined with the relative lack of personal items and household furnishings, and faunal evidence that indicates pigs and chickens were raised on site, the picture we have is of a household more focused on necessary household goods and food stuffs than fashionable, decorative items.



Transfer print ceramics from the Bartlett privy.



A glass ring, one of the few personal items from the Bartlett privy.

The contextual evidence on the Bartlett household suggests that they had not fully embraced emerging middle class ideals of the home as a private, family space of consumption divorced from production. If the Bartlett household provides a glimpse into a period, and household, where Victorian, middle class ideals had not yet invaded, the late 19th century and early 20th century residents of the boarding houses along Water Street were living within a cultural milieu where this concept of home was fully embedded in native, middle-class life and had become naturalized. These residents (largely single, working-class men, many immigrants), could not, and perhaps had no desire to, live within a “home” setting. Rather, they “lodged” in a house and their material circumstances provide insight into the contradictions of the concept of home and the reality of working-class lives in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Boarding houses were widely criticized in the 19th century as spaces where there was little privacy, strangers and sexes could mingle freely, and, worst of all, domestic relations were reduced to market transactions. The boarding house stood in stark contrast to idealized notions of home as a nurturing, family space where the evils of the market did not intrude. The home as sanctuary work was an ideal; it never truly existed since it rested on the fiction that women’s work in the home was an act of love, rather than labor. The boarding house exposed this myth by charging for women’s labor and revealed the uncomfortable truth underlying middle class ideals. The boarding house, for all its violation of new concepts of home that arose with industrial production, was also essential for sustaining this production. The men and women who flocked to urban centers for jobs in factories or service industries were often young, single, and did not have the economic resources to enact middle class ideals of domesticity. Boarding houses met their needs for shelter and provided meals and other services that would have been more difficult to manage as a single person living alone and working long hours.

The boarding houses/hotels that appeared along Water Street in the project area in the late 19th century primarily catered to working-class men. This relatively undeveloped section of Water Street became an ideal location for such enterprises as commercial and industrial activity increased in the immediate area. The boarding house/hotel period at 128 Water Street began c. 1885 when Fredrick Teufel started the White Horse Hotel, which had a brief existence. Thomas Connolly probably began his tenure as proprietor of the newly renamed Franklin House Hotel in 1888, eventually purchasing the property in 1894. It remained in the Connolly family until at least 1905. Archaeological

deposits in a privy at the rear of this property are associated with the boarding house period and provide evidence of the material conditions within them.

The ceramic assemblage at 128 Water Street was probably purchased piecemeal and used. Many of the ceramic vessels from the privy have production ranges that pre-date the existence of the 128 Water Street parcel and there is a high level of variability in decorative patterns, which are typical characteristics of assemblages purchased second hand (Brighton 2001; O'Donovan and Wurst 2001/2). The purchase of second-hand ceramics would have decreased the cost of furnishing the boarding house/hotel. The working-class men lodging at 128 Water Street were probably not overly concerned about whether the proprietor set a fashionable table. There is very little emphasis on fashionable ceramic decoration or patterns and plain, undecorated ceramics dominate the assemblage. This is also reflected in the form of information from the ceramic assemblage, which contained 36 plates, 18 cups, and four platters. Overall, this is an assemblage that suggests basic dining for a large number of people with little effort made at table presentation, which is consistent with a working-class boarding house/hotel context.



Ceramics from the privy at 128 Water Street.

There is evidence from the faunal (animal remains) data suggesting that keeping down the cost of the food served on these ceramics was an issue. One of the more interesting aspects of the faunal assemblage is the high quantities of wild riverine fish present, along with small game such as rabbits and squirrels. Game animals are rarely present in late 19th century urban contexts and wild riverine fish are also not common. Their combination within this context suggests the non-domesticated animal species were more likely to have been a food source rather than shot purely for sport or to eliminate pests. Domestic cuts of meat tend to be more economical cuts, such as shanks and chuck; shanks were the most frequently consumed cut of beef. Hams, which provide good value for cost and preserve well, were also relatively common. These data suggest a focus on economical meals, which is not unexpected in this context. One of the most common complaints regarding boarding houses was the quality of the food and it is almost cliché that a lower-class boarding house would try to cut corners wherever possible (Gamber 2007).

There is little question that men who boarded at 128 Water Street, and the female staff, led very different lives from the Bartlett family. The residents of 128 Water Street were lone individuals who labored at relatively menial jobs and came back to a room within a lodging house. These are the rootless circumstances that middle class reformers feared would lead to vice within the urban setting due to the absence of the moral influence of the home. Robert and Dorcas

Bartlett were prominent members of Binghamton's manufacturing class and jointly owned a gun shop and their large house on Washington Street. Their household was prosperous; Dorcas and Robert could afford a domestic servant, better quality meat, and fashionable dishes. Yet, although their possessions and consumption suggest significant differences in their material circumstances, there are some striking similarities between the Bartletts and the residents of 128 Water Street. The assemblages from both contexts have evidence of very few personal possessions and household goods, and both ceramic assemblages showed a significant emphasis on tablewares and basic dining for a large household. Neither the Bartletts nor the residents of 128 Water Street lived in a "home" in the sense of the middle-class ideals that prevailed by the mid-19th century; rather they lived as their work and their circumstances ordained. For the residents of 128 Water Street, this may have been far from *their* ideals in terms of the comforts of life and family while the Bartletts seem to have continued to embrace older concepts of home as a productive space even as these were being undermined. Both expose the real truth of ideal concepts of home in the 19th century - that home and household cannot be divorced from work and material conditions.

This Changing Place

The 7 Hawley Street project area seems like a relatively meaningless space in the contemporary context of Binghamton. We have become so accustomed to parking lots in the urban landscape that the fact these areas were once vibrant spaces often eludes us. The 7 Hawley Street project area was a very vibrant space that hummed with working-class life and commercial activity not so long ago, and before this lay at the heart of the small early village of Binghamton.

In the early 19th century, this area was one of large house lots where several of Binghamton's early settlers lived. The Bartletts, Joseph Abbott, a tanner, and Jeremiah Campbell, a blacksmith, were all relatively prosperous business owners. The Bartletts' frame house was valued at \$3,000.00 in the 1855 census, and their neighbor, Joseph Abbott, listed a value of \$4,000.00 for his home in the same year. Jeremiah Campbell, the least successful of these men, listed a home valued at \$3,000.00 in 1855. These are clearly substantial homes and they were on large lots; however, this was not the type of wealthy enclave that contemporary people would recognize with property used purely to display the wealth and taste of their owners. The Bartletts raised animals on their lot and intact soil suggests that these yard areas were kept free of trash, which was dispersed as sheet midden deposits in the Abbott, Campbell, and Bartlett rear yard areas. These properties reflect older ideals and practices that melded the presentation of wealth with an ethos that had not yet rejected its source in production.

Development within this area increased rapidly as these families departed in the second half of the 19th century and the large lots were subdivided. Within less than two decades, this area was transformed from a sparsely populated, residential enclave to a packed commercial/residential district. The residential character of this area changed dramatically with boarding houses along Water Street attracting a constantly changing clientele of working-class men, space above stores on Washington Street for apartments, and the one small house on Hawley Street that was a working-class rental unit before it was purchased by Fanny Beebe in the 1880s. This was now a space packed with people living, working, and passing through as they moved about the urban commercial district.



Smoking pipes from the 7 Hawley project area.

For its residents, life within this area may have been less than salubrious with little escape from the sounds and smells of urban life. The large properties of the early 19th century were gone and where three houses had existed, 12-13 structures were packed together with little to no surrounding yard area. The dwelling on Hawley Street was separated from the saloons along Washington Street by only a narrow alley and by the late 1880s was surrounded on two of its other sides by the lumber yard. Detailed Sanborn maps from the late 1880s through the early 20th century show six to seven saloons in this small area, including the “bowling saloon” at 121 Washington Street and a saloon/beer garden. Several additional saloons were located in the surrounding area along Washington and Water Streets. These saloons drew more people into the area who may not have always behaved that well after they had a few drinks. The Cafferty Livery stable, which was directly north of the project area next to 130 Water Street, must have also added to traffic in the area, and was likely a source of unpleasant smells. James Prendergast’s stove shop along Washington Street, that also contained a tin shop, was the source of other pollution. This was not a large industrial concern but stray pieces of tin and mica debris are still present within project area soils. It is not hard to imagine mica constantly floating and settling throughout this area in the past. The residents of this area endured and adapted to the trash, heavy foot traffic day and night with the saloons, noxious smells, and crowded conditions; unlike the wealthy residents of the early 19th century, they had little choice.

A discussion of this area on the Historic Binghamton Facebook page revealed enduring memories of this later period of working-class bars and saloons, albeit from the 1930s and 1940s, along with a reference to one of the early 19th century families (Historic Binghamton 2020). In a response to a query about what used to be on the corner of Washington and Hawley, a contributor mentioned that several bars were located there during the 1930s and 1940s and Abbott’s Alley ran in back. The contributor did not know the significance or origin of the name for Abbott’s Alley, which dates back to Joseph Abbott’s early 19th century ownership of the southeastern corner of the project area, but it is clear the name persisted through decades in the collective memory of the area. This comment reveals the layering of history and the past as this area changed and became a very different place within the urban landscape of Binghamton. Urban renewal wiped out the standing, architectural evidence of this past but it could not eliminate social memory or the material evidence lying underneath the parking lot that replaced these historic structures. Archaeological investigations have uncovered this material evidence and added new understandings of the past as a new chapter in the on-going history of this place is being written.