

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT THE JASON RUSSELL HOUSE

IN ARLINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS

by Mark E. Boulding

Center for Archaeological Studies
Boston University
232 Bay State Road
Boston, MA 02215

Principal Investigator: Professor Mary Beaudry
Project Archaeologist: Mark Boulding



April 1986

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Acknowledgments

Thanks are first of all due to Mrs. Margaret Spengler, Chair of the 350th Anniversary Celebration Committee of the Town of Arlington, and to Mr. Phillip Hagar, President of the Arlington Historical Society, for providing the means to the end. Members of both the 350th Committee and the Historical Society offered valuable support for the project. Mr. David Baldwin, Museum Director of the Arlington Historical Society, provided practical assistance and advice throughout the excavations.

From the Arlington High School, Mr. Don Bockler -- with whom the idea for these investigations originated -- and Ms. Geri Tremblay performed miracles of organization with the high school volunteers. Mr. Bockler let us invade his geology lab, and both he and Ms. Tremblay loaned excavation equipment. The students of these two were the core labor force of the dig, and they did their job with an admirable degree of dedication: Cathy Anderson, Charlie Aggouras, Tom Ahern, Jennifer Belden, Kathy Conroy, Elizabeth Crowley, Anne Dacey, Rich Dahill, Kristen Davis, Martin Devine, Matt Ferraro, Carole Finochetti, Terry Gampp, Mike Gearin, Jeanne Gilgun, Mike Goulian, Amy Guiney, Regina Harrison, Darrin Hart, Jim Hodgson, Lisa Hogan, Rebecca Jackson, Cathy Johnson, Maria LaFrance, Valerie Lembo, Renee Mariani, Billy McKeon, Julie Moffat, Beverly Nazarian, Suzie Phetteplace, Jay Pirog, Joanne Powers, Laura Powers, Lisa Reisz, Keith Rowe, Jean Simeonidis, and Jennifer Whitney. The following Junior High School students also helped: Ben Ardito, Frances Anderson, Amy Reynolds, Alison Adams, Diana Golding, Jimmy Bahey, Jacob Galley, John Wilson, Jerry Mentor, Heather Reisz, Cinnamon Leung and Nancy Deutsch. Before the actual excavations, Ralph Geosa, Ken Hand, Mike Hogan and Frank Pruzick (all of the Arlington High School) removed the floorboards from the kitchen; they also replaced them at the close of the work.

From Boston University, Professor Mary Beaudry -- the Principal Investigator of the project -- was of course present at the site throughout the excavations, where her long experience in these matters was indispensable. I also owe her thanks for her assistance in the preparation of this report, and her patience when proofreading earlier drafts and letters. From the Graduate Department of Archaeological Studies, Julie Ernstein, Daniel Finamore, and Elizabeth Shapiro served as Field Assistants, Sara Mascia was Laboratory Assistant, and Dino Zamanis was our Cartographer. I cannot find words enough to thank these people -- in addition to their flawless performance of their actual duties on and off the site, they gave me the moral and psychological support I needed to see the project through. Assistance was also

provided by Dr. Ricardo Elia, Bill Barnett, Lauren Cook, and Don Jones, as well as an undergraduate, Brendan McDermott.

Finally, the following volunteers from the Arlington Community worked long and hard hours in the service of archaeology: Betty and Jimmy Akiba, Shirley Baker, Cathy Brescia, Kathleen Coxe, Michael Coyne, Pamela Enion, Mary Lou Frey, Charles, Jean, John, Joseph, Michael and Patricia Galluccio, Joan Gearin, Sandy Grindlay, Peggy Holdsworth, Aaron and Diane Jette, Jean Keezer, Michael Kogan, Roberta Kovitz, Daniel Monty, Erin, Jim and Kathleen Nelson, Audrey Pilibosian, Inga Pinciak, Laura Powers, Edward Recher, Timothy Recher, Beth Rogers, Barbara and Jennifer Santosuosso, Sally Sapienza, Gary Skocay, Keith Sovie, E.J. Trembly, Moira Turnan, Ann Varnik, Pauline and Thomas Wadzinski, Bruce Whelittle, and Linda Young.

It is obvious to me that many of the volunteers who worked on the Jason Russell House Excavations are not listed here. Let me assure them that this is not intentional on my part; I have simply listed all the names available to me. This does not mean that I do not feel a debt of gratitude to these anonymous workers, or to anyone else who assisted us in our investigations without the reward of publicity.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Jason Russell House, in Arlington, Massachusetts, achieved its notoriety in the course of a violent April day in 1775. British troops commanded by General Gage were retreating along the Concord Road, under the occasional fire of local sympathizers with the revolutionary cause. Jason Russell was one such; he, along with several other men, set up behind a barricade in front of his house to harass the redcoats with sniper fire. Unfortunately, the enemy passed not only before but behind the position of these brave -- some might say foolhardy -- colonists, and in the ensuing dash for the safety of the house proper, Jason Russell was felled on his very doorstep by a musket ball. This baptism of blood ennobled what was otherwise a standard farmhouse of the period, and accounts for the structure's purchase and renovation by the Arlington Historical Society in 1923.

Only one attempt has been made to synthesize a scholarly history of the Jason Russell House from documentary sources: Robert K. Nylander's article "Jason Russell and His House in Menotomy" in Olde-Tyme New England (October-December 1964). Rejecting the accepted construction date of c.1680, which implies that Jason's grandfather (also named Jason) built the house, Mr. Nylander assigns to the structure a date of c.1740 -- around the time that the younger Jason married Elizabeth Winship. Apparently

the house began as a simple two-story structure, with one room on each floor, but soon the Russells doubled their living space by building a two-story addition, creating the basic farmhouse design of the period. A detailed description of later modifications may be found in Mr. Nylander's article (for a quick summary, refer to the house plan and accompanying text); he concludes by commenting that after 1896, the house was "moved partly off its original foundations to install a furnace."

When the 350th Commission of the town of Arlington sought a public-participation project to increase interest and awareness in the historical background of the community, an archaeological excavation on the current grounds of the Jason Russell House seemed eminently appropriate. In addition to providing valuable information concerning the integrity of the archaeological record to the Arlington Historical Society, work on the site held great interest for Professor Mary Beaudry at Boston University, as it dovetailed neatly with an extended research project she was conducting at the Hooper-Lee-Nichols house in Cambridge and the Balch House in Beverly. The Center for Archaeological Studies at Boston University developed a research proposal tailored to meet the diverse needs of the principals involved: a survey and limited excavation of the Jason Russell House property. The primary research objective focused on the supposed relocation of the building: had it in fact been moved, and if so, when and from where? Professor Beaudry's study formed the second research objective: the spatial organization of the New England houselot

with specific regard to the developmental cycle of the domestic group as well as individual vs. corporate responses to the basic requirements for waste and water management. The actual amount of soil turned over, in relative terms, would be quite small -- the excavations primarily constituted a test rather than a full scale unearthing of the area. In fact, the chief goal of the project was educational. The public would be directly involved, since apart from a small staff of Field Assistants only volunteer labor (from the Arlington High School and the community) would be employed. The specific research objectives described above provided a well-defined limit to the work. Ordinarily, these objectives would not constitute sufficient grounds for excavation, especially in view of the evidence for major construction and regrading efforts in the immediate vicinity of the project. In this case, however, it proved necessary to minimize archaeological risk in order to maximize the participation of untrained community residents.

In order to coordinate with the Town of Arlington's Patriot's Day celebrations, the Jason Russell House excavations were scheduled from March 18 through March 22, 1985. Two areas of the property were targeted: the yard in front of the house (possible buried foundations) and the kitchen (see house plan). Beneath the kitchen floorboards -- removed before the excavation by volunteers from the Arlington High School -- was a hole filled with unidentified deposits. There was some suggestion that these deposits overlay the original (pre-nineteenth century) cellar

hole of the Jason Russell House; furthermore, indoors excavation provided a good fallback position in case of poor weather.

II. EXCAVATION

Most of the supervisory staff worked over the weekend before the start of the excavations, laying out the grid and surveying the yard by means of a soil resistivity meter. We chose to use a 4-meter grid system divided into 1-meter excavation squares, with a datum (central point) located at the front doorstep of the house -- from this central point, a sort of imaginary graph was laid over the site on axis with the points of the compass. On the overall map (see endpapers) the units of the system are indicated by crosses (+) at their corners; on the site itself a surveyor's nail was sunk at the center of each cross. Grids such as the one we employed are a standard feature of archaeological excavations, and offer numerous benefits, among which are simplified test-unit layout, easier mapping capabilities and straightforward record keeping. In our case, the grid nails also provided ready-made transects for soil resistivity testing, a procedure in which electrical current is passed from point to point underground. Variations in resistivity readings indicate subsurface features (at least in theory): a disturbed trash pit will trap water, and conduct more electricity than the surrounding soil, whereas a brick wall will conduct very little. At the Jason Russell House, we hoped this technique would enable us to pinpoint various potential locations for earlier house

foundations. Unfortunately, after only a very few transects (linear passes) were placed across the site on a north-south axis, it became evident that the readings were too confused to help us -- possibly, we thought at the time, because of the bedrock's proximity to the soil surface. Later, we would find convincing reasons for the failure of this technique. Unable to place our 1-meter excavation squares (or as they are more properly called, test units) on the basis of this pre-excavation survey, we were forced to fall back on logic. If the purpose of the excavation was to sample the yard of the Jason Russell House, then the first step would be to determine where the original yard was located. Based on Robert K. Nylander's sketch map of the supposed movement of the house, I set up a series of one-meter squares, in effect a trench, heading east from the front of the house on the south side. The squares are referred to by their southwest coordinate -- thus the square nearest the house in the south series is 5S2W. If the remains of a foundation wall existed in the position suggested by the map, they would be uncovered by this trench and thus reveal precisely the former situation of the house.

The 18th dawned cloudy, and before long a heavy snow was falling. By the time the staff arrived at the house, at least an inch covered the strings and nails of the outside trench. A constant fear of mine during the planning stages was here immediately realized: too many people, not enough to do. The problem was exacerbated by a shortage -- on that first frosty

morning -- of field assistants. Our cartographer, Dino Zamanis, helped by taking some of the better insulated souls outside to finish mapping the yard. Meanwhile, in the kitchen, we were faced with a complicated situation. It has been said that archaeology is a form of interrogation in which the questions murder the subject. Without careful record-keeping, without notes and photographs, our excavation would leave the area under the kitchen floor just an empty hole, and the artifacts recovered from it just a meaningless pile of bric-a-brac. The first step, then, was to set up a grid in the kitchen, but a mere extension of the four-meter/one-meter system involved a lot of nails and string in some very awkward places. Acting on a suggestion from Bill Barnett, who had experience digging in caves in Portugal and France, we decided that an overhead grid would be more convenient. To avoid increasing the number of obstacles in our already cramped excavation area, our plan was to set up the kitchen grid not with one meter squares but within the larger rectangles formed by the extant floor beams. Since Dino had prepared a complete floor plan of the house, mapping in the rectangles would be simple (see house plan); in addition, the fixed height of the beams promised easy recording of excavation levels.

To think up an excavation plan is easy; to put it into effect with ten or so complete novices -- especially at eight a.m. on a gray Monday -- is somewhat more difficult. The initial phases of the grid layout -- such as deciding which sides of the beams to

use, where to define the edges of excavation units when no beam was present, how to anchor grid strings, and how to label the units -- required little if any assistance from our crew of students. Fortunately, they were patient, acting perhaps on the principle that anything is better than being in school. By late morning, we managed to put most of the volunteers to work, and by lunchtime they had finished taking readings for a contour map of the kitchen area (this map follows the house plan in the endpapers). The staff stayed on and photographed both the soil surface and various features of interest (Figure 1), which left us very little time to recover before the arrival of the afternoon shift. Consisting mostly of adults and children, this group displayed unbounded enthusiasm as we set them to collecting the scatter of artifacts laying on top of the soil. Rather than being sloppy and haphazard, these volunteers possessed an infinite capacity for detail, in many cases using a bag for each separate artifact, or writing lengthy descriptions on the bags themselves. As I hopped from unit to unit identifying remains for the excavators (including such culturally and historically significant items as oil filters, chewing tobacco tins, building paper and a not-quite-empty container of maple syrup), field assistant Julie Ernstein headed a desperate crusade to minimize bag usage and keep our records straight.

Later that evening, after the dust had settled, we reviewed the evidence of the day. As expected, most of the surface debris in the kitchen dated after the 1920s, and therefore probably owed

its deposition to the workmen who renovated the Jason Russell House after its purchase by the Arlington Historical Society in 1923. The general outlines of the kitchen area had never made sense to me, and seeing them from above, cleared of all clutter, helped my interpretation not at all. One area, between units K1W and K2W, we had designated Feature #1. In archaeological parlance, the term "feature" usually refers to an installation or object (of relatively large size) whose function is an outgrowth of its position. Thus a wall, a trash pit, or a fireplace as revealed in the archaeological record might be referred to as a feature. Our Feature #1 (Figure 2) looked like a filled-in trench, or perhaps a narrow stairway. There was no real question of surface collection here -- the stone rubble and large glass fragments extended throughout the feature. On its southern edge, Feature #1 abutted the rock foundations of the house, while to the north it opened out into a larger pit filled with a wide variety of building debris. In this pit (which we designated Feature #3) was a brick pillar (Feature #2) supporting the main flooring beam (Figure 3). On both east and west sides of Features #1 and #3, the soil surface was considerably higher, while to the north of the kitchen the bedrock ledge separating the excavation area from the present-day cellar rose up to within a short distance of the floor. Was Feature #3 the old cellar hole of the Jason Russell House, and Feature #1 a stairway down into it? At this early stage, all was supposition. It did appear likely, in view of the numerous glass jar fragments and whole jars recovered

from Feature #1, that this pit had last seen use as a cold storage space, or perhaps a discard area for glass. There was no corresponding hole in the floorboards, but then they were not original. As for Mr. Nylander's statement that the house had been moved, we noticed several pieces of circumstantial evidence in his favor. On two sides, east and south, the foundations were of rock with a patch coat of mortar occasionally supported by bricks (these bricks were of exactly the same dimensions as those making up Feature #2, and so were presumably of quite late application). The west wall of the kitchen -- the original back wall of the house -- had no foundation underneath it. Furthermore, there were small patches of dried-up turf near the west wall, clearly breaking off where the foundation trench for the south wall began. Of course, playing devil's advocate was easy with this kind of evidence: foundations can be redug without moving a house, and the grass could have grown in place, nurtured by waste water and light from chinks in the rock or from the window well in the east cellar wall.

With these and other nebulous possibilities floating around in our heads, we returned to the site ready to begin full-scale excavation. Our crew, once again complete novices, gripped their Marshalltown trowels -- the modern day archaeologist's equivalent of pick and shovel -- and scraped away. In the yard, the moist humus peeled back cleanly and easily, but in the kitchen, clouds of dust (and, so rumor had it, rat poison) filled the air. We donned paper masks, but the dust still managed to find its way

inside not only the masks but our clothing as well. Feature #1 rapidly gave up its glass, and before long crumbled bedrock was reached. No stairway here; it was not even apparent whether man or nature had cut the rock. To the east of Feature #1, near the intersection of the east and south walls, a layer of humus shot through with still moist and pliable roots yielded to bedrock within a few centimeters. The west units, K3W and K4W/1N, presented difficulties in excavation: with their dry and crumbly soil, cave-ins were frequent, and level changes difficult to detect. Nevertheless, a stream of glass and ceramic materials emerged from the kitchen, in the main belonging to the nineteenth and in some cases eighteenth century AD. Pieces of one particular item, a tobacco ware jug, turned up in a number of places, reassuring us as to the continuity of our stratigraphy. Meanwhile, in the yard, field assistant Elizabeth Shapiro began another trench, extending out from the north side of the front wall (see site map). Our purpose with regard to this second series of excavation units was to reveal the extent of the remains in the vicinity of the present-day cellar, and also to gather more evidence concerning the house's possible relocation.

By the third day of the dig, operations were proceeding very smoothly. All of the high school students had a fairly clear grasp of archaeological techniques, although it was still necessary to train new groups of adult volunteers in the afternoons. We began to appreciate the dedication of our crew, and also to notice some interesting character traits. To the

younger workers, every new potsherd, each new soil level, was a revelation; they worked cheerfully through much of the boredom of record-keeping, taking elevations, sketching profiles and sifting dirt. The adults, on the other hand, needed much more to keep them excited -- accustomed perhaps to positions of greater responsibility, or all too aware of the contrast between recent film depictions of archaeology and the real thing, these older amateurs required (curiously enough) closer supervision. The Wednesday in question was the most hectic day on the site, with nearly 45 volunteers (a junior high school class, a few Arlington High School students, and a large crew of parents and children) at work, in addition to large groups touring the grounds. Each of the screens used to sift through and examine the excavated soil was manned by at least four people, with the result that many oddly shaped or attractive (but archaeologically meaningless) rocks found their way into the artifact bags. In the yard, field assistant Dan Finamore turned up a layer of large pebbles (10 cm average diameter) which Professor Beaudry identified as the remains of a cobbled yard, common in nineteenth century tenements. Bone fragments, Dan's specialty, turned up both in the outside units (Figure 4) and indoors; they were from common domesticated animals (cow and sheep, and possibly cat), and also some fragments of walnut shells, although these latter were confined to the kitchen. Our lab assistant, Sara Mascia, relieved some of the overcrowding at the Jason Russell House by setting up a field lab in the nearby high school, where

volunteers began washing and cataloging artifacts. The excavation of archaeological materials represents only a small portion of the time required to interpret them effectively: only by translating the raw data into a manageable format can reliable conclusions be drawn.

We were beginning to worry about the success of the investigation. Already the halfway mark had been passed, and we had no more concrete information on our first research objective, the moving of the house, than on the first day. The second objective, part of Professor Beaudry's ongoing inquiry into the management of houselots, also presented considerable difficulties: first, the stratigraphy in the yard was too complex and confused to provide any useful information, and second, we weren't even sure that we were digging in the original yard of the Jason Russell House. Thursday's work complicated matters further. In the kitchen, a general pattern had emerged: the loose surface dust blended into a compact grey soil, rich in artifacts of relatively recent date; below this, a yellow soil, with only a few cultural inclusions, soon gave way to the crumbled surface of the bedrock. The answer seemed to lurk in Feature #3, which continued to produce amazing amounts of construction debris. Maintaining a classically vertical sidewall proved impossible; the only available course of action was to remove the entire fill of the pit. As three or four of the larger high school students began clearing, we noticed Feature #2 -- the brick pillar supporting the main floor beam -- beginning

to slip. The base of the pillar was not footed on bedrock, but on loose rubble, and to continue risked injury to crew members and damage to the house. We were forced to restrict operations in Feature #3 to a very small area near Feature #1, where, as we brushed the final dust and dirt away, an amusing pair of artifacts emerged. Every archaeologist, as he or she digs, looks for dateable objects, which provide the terminus post quem ("date after which") for the level they occupy. A coin of 1898 in a pit, for instance, means that the fill must have been deposited after 1898. At the bottom of Feature #3, we found two car batteries (Figure 5) with dates conveniently stamped on them: November, 1929. In four days of excavation, we had gone back in time only 56 years. A similarly unpleasant revelation took place outside in our second series of excavation units: asphalt chunks appeared at extremely deep levels. We knew that over the course of the Arlington Historical Society's ownership of the property, surrounding houses had been purchased and demolished, and the land on which they stood regraded, but we had never expected so extensive a disturbance. The first series of excavation units gave us no help -- sterile soil (soil without artifacts) had already appeared in the easternmost unit only 25 cm down, with no sign of foundations.

Friday, March 22 was the final day of excavation. In the kitchen, we probed to the bottom of Feature #3, discovering (beneath the car batteries) a sterile layer of silty, light brown soil which turned to bedrock within a centimeter or two. The

walls of bedrock around the feature were virtually perpendicular, and on Thursday the possibility that these might be traces of a cellar hole at a 45 degree angle to the present house had arisen. Usually, however, the floors of filled cellars are rich in artifacts; here, there was nothing, and we were again reduced to speculation. Meanwhile, two volunteers were excavating the builder's trench against the inner foundations of the kitchen's south wall, and here a vital piece of information came to light. Embedded in the soil between the actual stones of the foundations were sherds of pearlware, a nineteenth century ceramic product. Outside, a similar discovery was made in the south series of excavation units against the east wall of the house. Large fragments of whiteware (early nineteenth century) were found just above the yellow sterile soil, only a few centimeters from the house foundations. Here was circumstantial evidence in favor of the relocation of the foundations at some point in time after the manufacture of whiteware. Another important find, at least from a public relations standpoint, was a musket ball recovered from the yard, near the doorstep upon which Jason Russell was reputed to have been shot. Of course the doorstep was a replacement, and the house probably moved, but nothing would dampen the enthusiasm of the volunteer crew, who were sure that this was the very ball that killed Jason. When we closed up for the day, the excavation units in the south series were all at or close to the yellow subsoil (at an average depth of 45cm), but the north series (at an average depth of 1 meter) were still plunging through mixed

fill.

After the close of the excavations, we planned to give a workshop consisting of lectures and a site tour. As project archaeologist, it fell on me to deliver the opening comment, but I was at a loss for anything to say. Fortunately, I received a cue from an unexpected source. While the actual excavations were proceeding, Phillip H. Hagar, the president of the Arlington Historical Society, and David Baldwin, Museum Director of the Arlington Historical Society, conducted a series of lectures and tours to increase public awareness of the project. On the afternoon of the last full work day, in the course of a presentation to a group of elementary school students, a slide of a bulldozer near a trench came to my attention. The slide appeared to date from the installation of a water line within the last decade, and made clear the extent of the disturbance -- caused by a variety of construction operations -- to the yard of the Jason Russell House. My summation of the excavations focused on this aspect of the site's history. The south series of excavation units revealed characteristics of a tenement yard of the 19th century -- cobbled floor, many nails, occasional animal bones, and fragmented ceramics. The distance from sterile soil to surface was small compared to the deep deposits encountered in the north series, probably because the latter suffered mechanical excavation and filling in the 20th century, mixing a thin crust of cultural deposits with a great quantity of sterile yellow soil beneath (Figure 6). In the kitchen, the chunks of turf and roots,

the low frequency of artifacts earlier than the nineteenth century in the fill above the bedrock, and the pearlware in the foundation wall trench all pointed to an establishment date for the Jason Russell House in its current position somewhere in the 19th century. Thus we could only partially answer the first research objective: the movement of the house was highly probable, but the original location remained a mystery. As for the second research objective, we could hardly sample Colonial houselot patterning without having found a Colonial houselot.

III. CONCLUSIONS

In many cases, the lack of documents forces the archaeologist to work from the evidence of excavation alone. Happily, in the case of the Jason Russell House, a variety of supplemental material existed in the historical record. Documentary evidence enabled R.H. Nylander to postulate a date of 1740 for the house, and also to indicate that the house had been moved in the late 19th century. A careful reinterpretation of this evidence, however, reveals a range of other possibilities. The house that Jason's grandfather (also Jason Russell) built holds the key to the issue. It was built, observes Mr. Nylander, on the occasion of Jason the elder's marriage to Mary Hubbard in 1684, and like the Jason Russell House, it began as a two-room, two-story structure; only later was it updated to the standard farmhouse plan.¹ The timber for the house, like the timber for the house of Jason's brother William, was probably cut from an area of common land known as the Rocks.² Five years later, on November 18, 1689, the decision was made to lay out the Rocks into lots for distribution. The final vote of the Selectmen was 57 for and 8 against: two of the negative votes were those of William and Jason Russell.³ Did the two brothers have some kind of interest in the land around the Rocks? Over the next decade, Jason Russell (the elder) purchased lots #23, #24, #25, #26 and #27 of the

division -- land that came to be called the "Great Pasture," and land on which the Jason Russell House now stands.⁴ Obviously Jason Russell had a good reason for buying all the above lots, but nowhere is this reason explicitly stated.

Jason's only son, Hubbard, died young, and Hubbard's only surviving son -- the younger Jason, who was to be killed by the British -- became his grandfather's ward and lived in his house.⁵ When the elder Jason died in 1736, half the house was left to his widow, Mary, and the other half to Hubbard's children.⁶ Mary, however, followed her husband rather rapidly and was dead by 1738, at which point her inheritance reverted to Jason, who by this time also owned much of the Great Pasture.⁷ Mr. Nylander's argument depends on the shifting ownership of this latter property:

It is apparent, then, that there was no house on the Pasture when Jason Russell inherited it in 1738. On the twenty-eighth of January, 1740, when he was 23, he married nineteen-year-old Elizabeth Winship, and it is reasonable to suppose that he built the house about the time of his marriage.⁸

Circumstantial evidence only supports the first statement. Indeed, it is possible that the house of Jason Russell the elder stood near or on the Great Pasture: this would explain both his objections to the partition of the land and his subsequent purchase of a number of the lots involved. The second statement, as Mr. Nylander admits, represents nothing more than supposition. It is reasonable to expect a newly married man to want a house, but it is not reasonable to expect a man in full

possession of his deceased grandfather's house to build another simply to celebrate his wedding. Furthermore, even if the Great Pasture were unoccupied in 1738, it would seem more likely for the younger Jason to move the old house to a new location rather than start over from nothing. The house now known as the Jason Russell House, then, is in all probability the same house built in 1684 by the elder Jason. A number of minor details -- the two-stage construction and the black-sponge painting in the kitchen -- favor such a hypothesis.

The later move of the Jason Russell House mentioned by Mr. Nylander occurred towards the end of the nineteenth century. His sketch map of the move (not found in his article, but on file at the Arlington Historical Society) shows a slight rotation of the house, leaving some of the earlier foundations covered by the house in its new location. A glance through atlases of the area made in the 1900s shows many positions for the Jason Russell House, but such atlases are frequently inaccurate. Apparently Mr. Nylander's map is based on two of these: Atlas of Middlesex County, Massachusetts (Boston: G.H. Walker, 1889) and Atlas of the Towns of Watertown, Belmont, Arlington and Lexington (Boston, G.W. Stadly, 1898). In light of the failure of the excavations to find any traces of an 18th-century houselot, the maps must be discredited and the movement of the house viewed on a larger scale. An offhand comment by Mrs. A.T. Whittemore in her speech to the Arlington Historical Society ("Massachusetts Avenue as I remember it 60 Years Ago," preserved in Arlington: Past and

Present) refers to the Jason Russell House just before the beginning of the twentieth century:

On the opposite corner of Academy Street stood the Hannah Locke House, now owned by Dr. Keegan, and next to it a double house, the property of the Teel family, owners of several buildings, including the famous 'Jason Russell House,' the scene of the special tragedy enacted here April 19, 1775, and the old Teel homestead, both of which are still preserved, but on other lots of land(emphasis added).

The archaeological record supports this interpretation, and the excavations were at least a partial success in that they planted the seeds of doubt which enabled a new reading of the documents involved.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Soil resistivity analysis failed to provide us with an understanding of the Jason Russell House site because of the extremely disturbed soil around the remaining structures. Building remains from the houses which were torn down in the twentieth century (see Figure 7), combined with frequent regradings and intrusions into the yard (as well as the high bedrock level), render any further resistivity testing useless. Our own results were proven completely unreliable upon excavation of sampled areas. Furthermore, the artifacts recovered from the yard and kitchen are virtually without context, once again because of the mixed nature of the stratigraphic levels all the way from topsoil to subsoil. Therefore, a more detailed analysis of the artifacts would be a waste of time and effort.

Documentary research provided much interesting evidence, especially in light of the archaeological discoveries. An interesting project would be a complete deed evaluation of the early phases of Arlington's settlement to try to locate more precisely the houselots involved in these excavations. Until this sort of extensive research is undertaken, further excavation is not indicated. In light of our experience here at the Jason Russell House, it is unlikely that any further fieldwork on the current grounds of the house will prove profitable.

Notes

¹R.H. Nylander, "Jason Russell and His House in Menotomy,"
Old-Time New England (15:2), p.3

²Records of the Town of Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1630-1703
(Cambridge: University Press, 1901), pp.256-57

³Ibid., pp.291-292

⁴R.H. Nylander, Op. Cit., p.3

⁵Middlesex County Probate Records, Series 1, #19619

⁶Middlesex County Probate Records, Series 1, #19636

⁷Ibid.

⁸R.H. Nylander, Op. Cit., p.4

⁹Charles Parker, The Town of Arlington: Past and Present
(Arlington, MA: C. Parker, 1907)

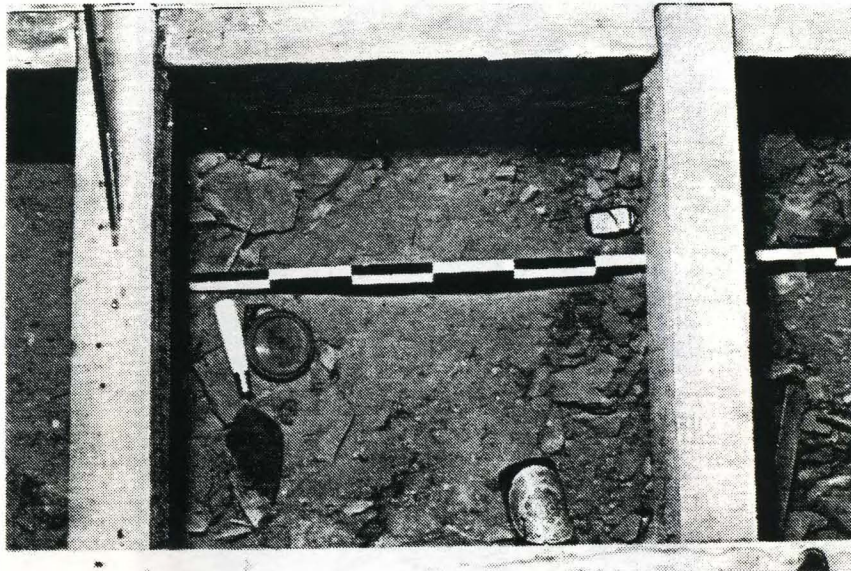


FIGURE 1

A view of the eastern half of unit K/4W/1N --in the kitchen of the house -- showing the variety of the surface deposits. In this figure, as in those that follow, the scale is given by the black and white rod, which in this case is divided into 10 centimeter increments, while the orientation of the photograph is indicated by a north arrow (in this case, simply a trowel pointing north).



FIGURE 2

Feature #1, showing both construction rubble and glass jar fragments. The feature is split between units K/1W and K/2W.

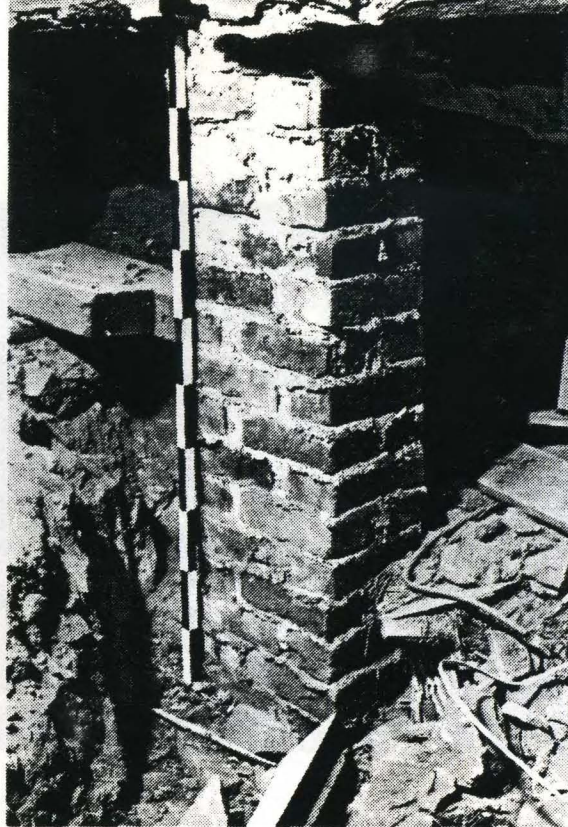


FIGURE 3

Feature #2 is the brick pillar. Note that it appears to provide essential support to the main flooring beam, and also that it is footed in the midst of a jumble of debris.



FIGURE 4

Unit 5S/1W, in the yard, showing bone fragments (upper right) as well as remnants of the cobbled yard in the north and west sidewalls. A gate hinge appears in the lower left of the photograph.



FIGURE 5

The batteries at the bottom of Feature #3, dated November 1929, gave us a definitive terminus post quem for the rubble which filled the feature. Feature #1 is due south. Note that the scale, in this case, is given by a 10cm rod divided into 1cm increments.

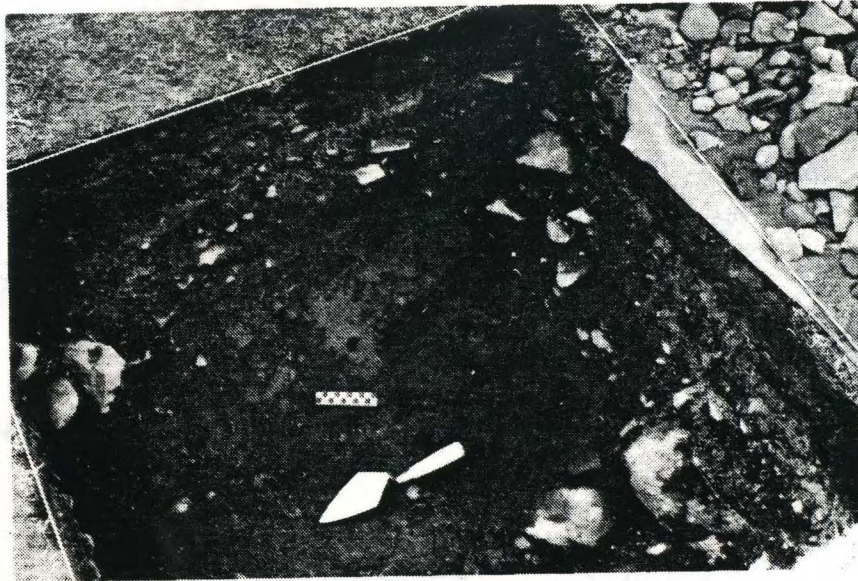


FIGURE 6

Unit 2N/2E in the yard of the Jason Russell House. The mixing of the sterile yellow subsoil with the cultural deposits (darker soils) is evident in the sidewalls of this unit.



FIGURE 7

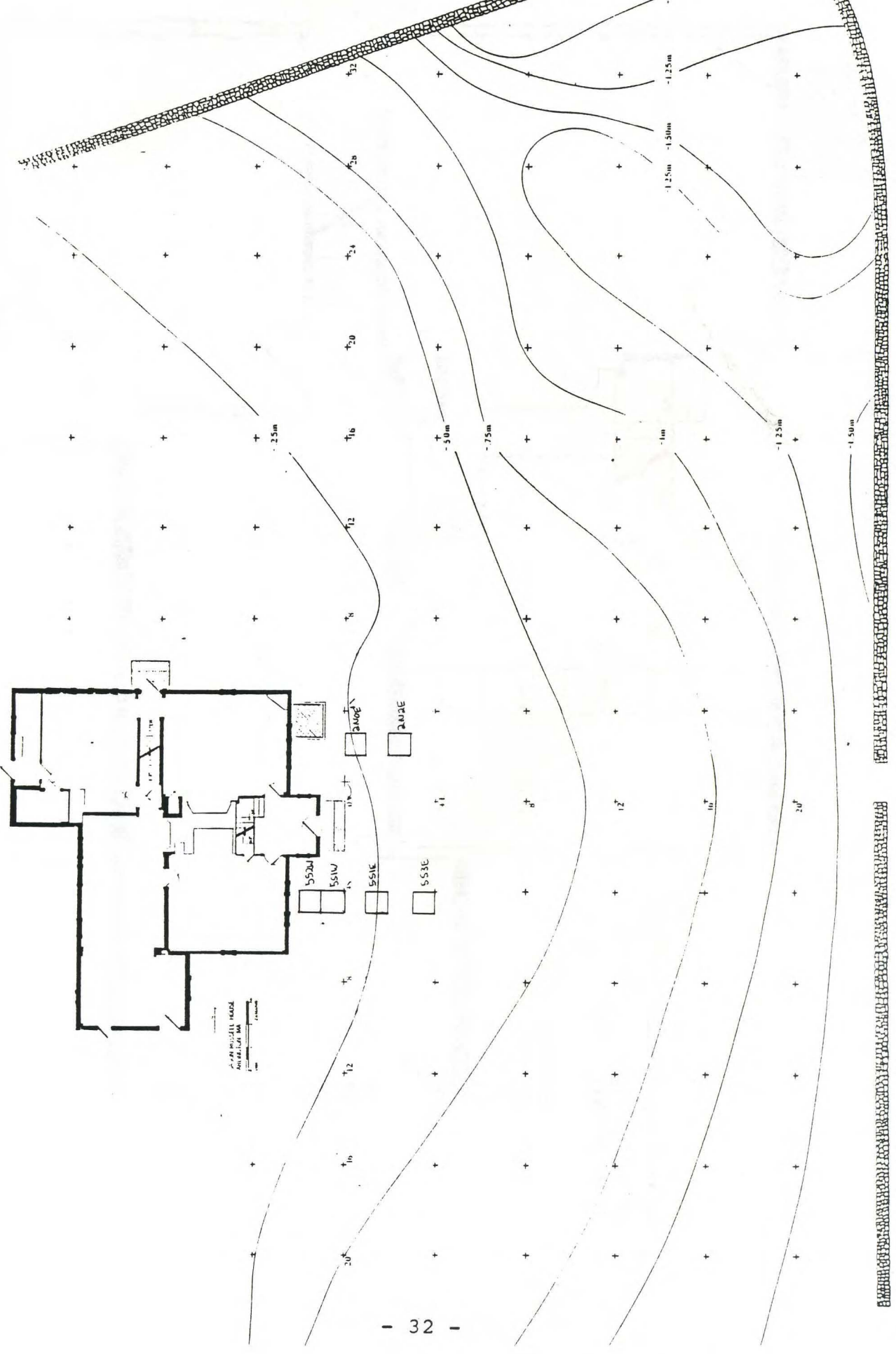
This excerpt from an early 20th century atlas shows the extent of the construction in the vicinity of the Jason Russell House (identified as #6531). Houses #3640, #7400, and #4681 are no longer standing; #5048 has been replaced by an outbuilding of the Historical Society.

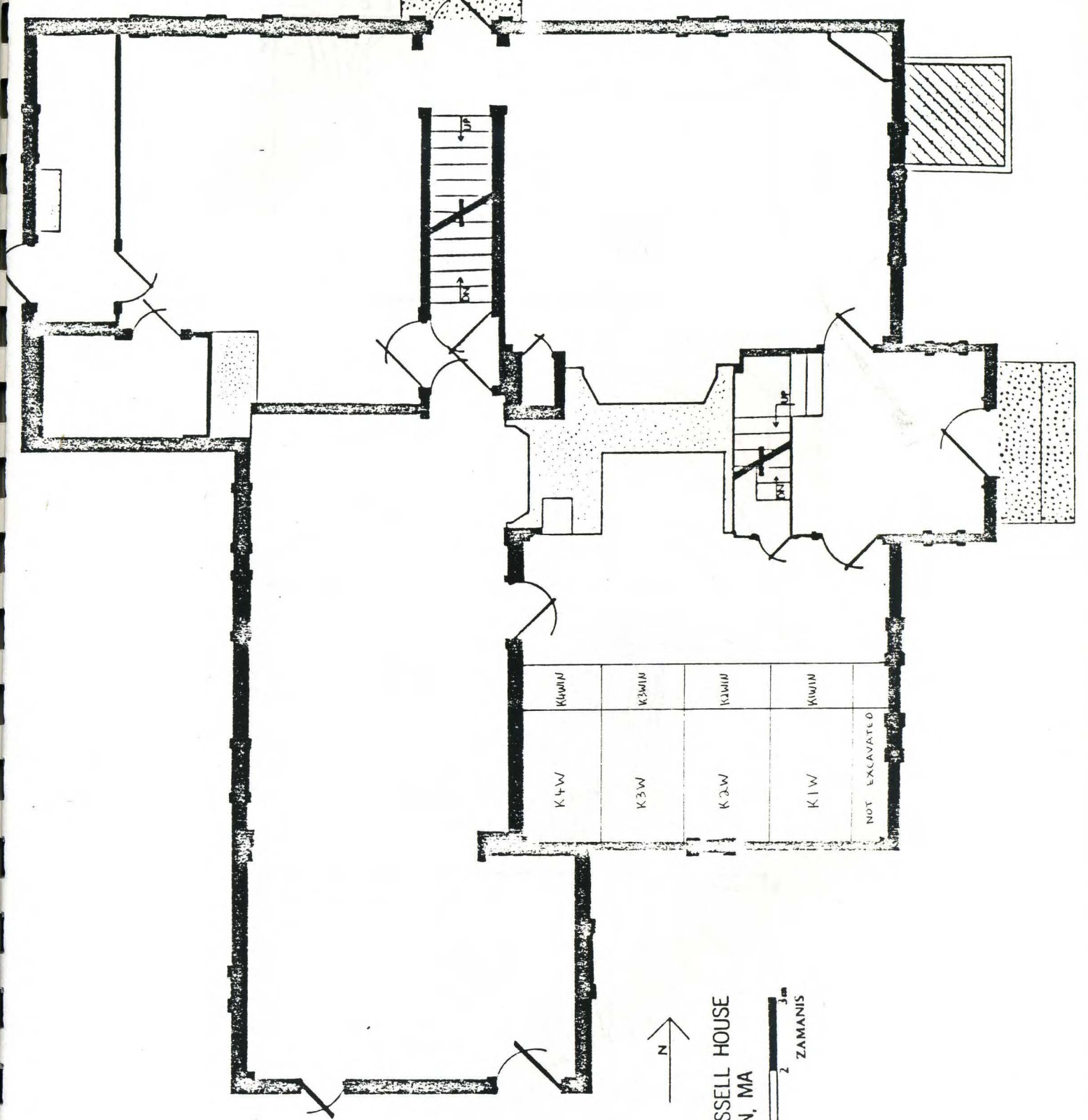
Maps and Plans

The following pages contain graphic aids to the understanding of the Jason Russell House. The first of these is the overall site plan, showing not only the placement of the house on its lot but also the contours of the lot. The datum point is labeled as \emptyset ; it is the center of an imaginary graph laid over the site. The positions of the external excavation units are noted; the kitchen units, however, are not indicated.

The second plan shows an overhead view of the house itself. The two eastern rooms are the central area of the house. The southernmost of these is the kitchen, which (together with the story above it) is the oldest part of the house. The northern room was added to the "kitchen" to form a classic farmhouse design. The two western rooms are later additions. Excavations were confined to the area beneath the kitchen floor, as indicated on the plan.

Finally, a contour map is provided to show the original soil levels in the kitchen. The gradient is 5cm; measurements are indicated as centimeters below the datum level. Note the steep gradients leading down to Features #1 and #3 (eastern half of the map). The presence of a trench under what would have been the original back wall of the house is indicated by the close contour lines in the southwest corner of unit K/1W.

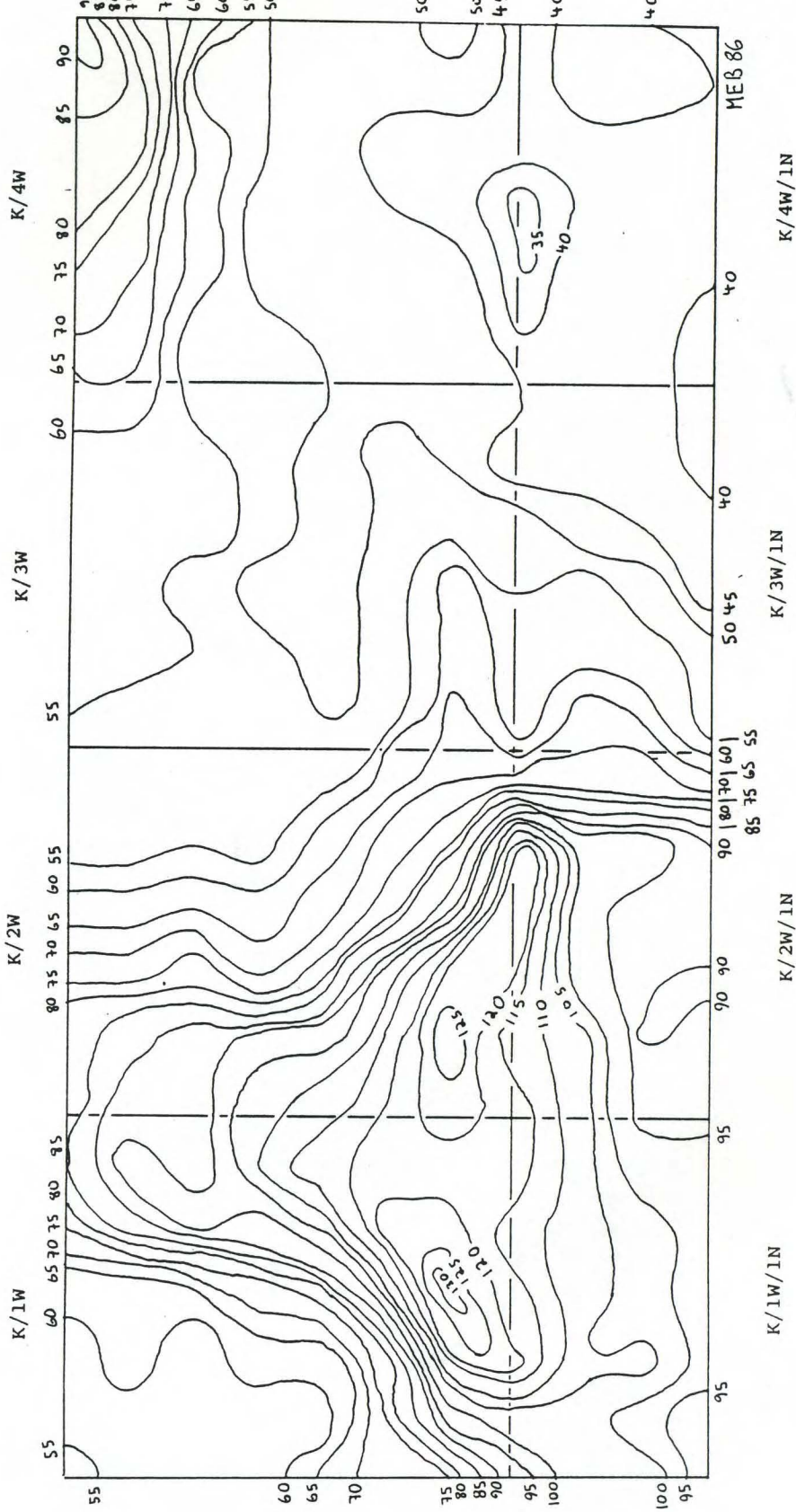




JASON RUSSELL HOUSE
ARLINGTON, MA



CONTOUR MAP OF KITCHEN AREA



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