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Storage Organization and Analysis of Artifacts

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Abstract

I worked with the Institute for Human Science and Culture at the Drs. Nicholas & Dorothy Cummings Center for the History of Psychology and Department of Anthropology at the University of Akron to help create an inventory of the collections that are being stored in the storage of the Cummings Center. After I finished the general inventory, I selected a collection of interest to do further research on an item level. The collection was processed and photographed and this paper is a report of what I learned about the collection and a guide of how to process a collection for future students to work on with the other collections in the storage at the Cummings Center.

Introduction

In this paper, I will present the results of a study conducted on archaeological artifacts found at the John Brown House, located on Diagonal Road in Akron, Ohio. Excavations were undertaken prior to 2008 according to the Artifact Analysis paper that will be discussed later but the actual date of excavation is unknown. The documentation from these excavations was incomplete and much of the useful contextual information that could have been drawn from the collections has been lost. The artifacts are housed in the Institute for Human Science and Culture at the Drs. Nicholas & Dorothy Cummings Center for the History of Psychology ("Cummings Center") storage facilities. Part of the work of this Honors Project was to inventory the artifacts to prepare for an online catalogue with basic artifact descriptions and photographs. My Honors Project also involved two written components, provided below. First, I present a detailed description of the process I followed in inventorying the artifacts to help guide future student projects. Second, I provide a summary of the history and significance of the John Brown House and its place in Akron's history.

A valuable lesson I learned in doing this project is that record-keeping is an essential part of research and it is very problematic when done inefficiently, or not at all. In archaeology, the provenience of artifacts within sites is crucial to understanding and dating the site, interpreting what the site was used for (occupation, place for work, cemetery, etc.), and placing the site in the archaeological record with other sites. When archaeology is done, it is beneficial to take detailed notes and keep a good record of what is found and where. Once this work is done in the field, then this information is used to process the collection fully.

For this project, the first step was to create an inventory of all the collections from the University of Akron’s Department of Anthropology that are stored in the Cumming Center. No detailed inventory of the collections being stored in the Cummings Center existed and, before work could be done with the individual collections, we needed to know what was there. These collections range in size from a single storage box per site to several boxes per site, totaling 193 boxes from roughly 50 sites.

Creating this inventory and guide for working on specific collections is helpful for faculty and future students to use the collections as teaching materials or projects. The main inventory is useful in knowing what collections are being kept at the university; it will also serve as a guide to whether any collections need to be deaccessioned and returned to the places who own the property where the material was found or if there is a singular owner of the material. For example, if the John Brown House collection is deaccessioned from the university and returned, it will be given to the Summit County Historical Society because they own the property where the John Brown House sits. Once the initial inventory was completed, the next step was to create a detailed inventory and photographic record of one selected collection and write about the contents and how it fits into the history of the site it comes from.

Processing Guide

In the Cummings Center storage room, there is a wall of shelves where the Department of Anthropology collections are stored. The shelves are numbered so that the items on the shelves can be found easily. The first part of the project was giving all of the boxes a new number. I worked with Hannah Curtis, another Honors Anthropology student, to make the general inventory of the collections in the Cummings Center storage room. The boxes had labels on them that grouped them together by specific sites but the new numbering system allowed for easier access to finding specific boxes (Figure 2). The labels were titled “The University of Akron – Archaeology Lab Artifact Processing” along with spaces for the project name and number, site name and number, dates/who washed, analyzed, organized, and curated the collection (Figure 1). Most of the labels had a project name and sometimes a site name. The rest of the information was very limited.

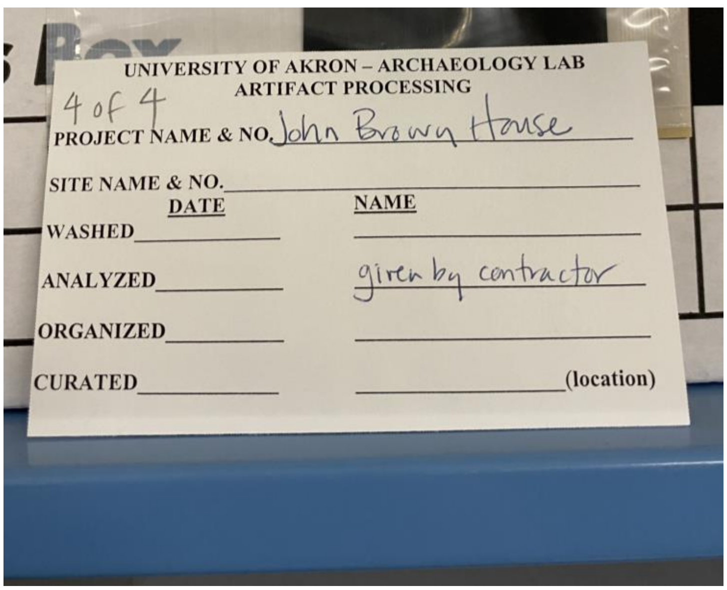

Figure 1. A close up of a box label. Photograph by Rebecca Glatz

Figure 2. The four boxes in the John Brown House collection on the shelf in storage, Photograph by Rebecca Glatz

The number system that was created was I.XXX. The “I” was for Institute and then the numbers used were 1-193 because of the total number of boxes. The numbers were printed out and cut into small rectangles to be taped to the boxes. They were taped in the bottom right hand corner (if possible) to all of the boxes in order of how they were stacked on the shelves. In a spreadsheet, we recorded the information on the labels of the boxes in the collections and what range of Institute numbers were given to the boxes. We also included the shelf number where the boxes were at. By looking at the information on the labels of the boxes we attempted to divide the boxes into different collections. Some of the boxes had been moved from the rest of the collection they belonged to, so if possible, we moved a few boxes to keep them together. We found that they might have been separated on the shelves when the collections were being moved from the Archaeology Lab into storage at the Cummings Center. On the spreadsheet, we identified the general content of the boxes for future reference, if there were concerns with the storage of the material, and if it was safe or not.

All of this information has been recorded on the spreadsheet that the Cummings Center has access to and can give access to students or faculty who need it. While making the inventory, we took notes on collections that we would be interested to look at in more depth for the main portion of the project. After the general inventory had been made, we each chose a collection that we wanted to work with to document more completely. We had to choose collections that had 5 or fewer boxes as an appropriate project to process and photograph in one semester. I spent over 45 hours working on creating the general inventory and the specific inventory for the collection I chose. Onsite hours were scheduled around my class schedule. The initial commitment was 45 hours onsite to do the inventorying. I did around 45+ hours total in the Fall semester of onsite work and offsite work to finish in time to start writing in the spring.

I chose the John Brown House Collection which had 4 boxes of material (Figure 2). I chose this collection because of my previous interest in the historical figure, John Brown. I thought it would be interesting to look at the historical context of John Brown in relation to Akron and archaeology. I also chose the collection because it did not seem to have a large amount of material. The collection consisted of fragmentary historical ceramics, glass, various metal pieces, leather material, and some animal bones. Once I chose my collection, I was provided access to another spreadsheet that was specific to the John Brown House collection.

This spreadsheet was more in-depth because each line was going to represent one artifact instead of one collection of boxes like in the general inventory. The Institute numbers the John Brown House Collection was given are I.126-I.129. The main identifier that was used for each artifact was the artifact number on the item. The artifact numbers that the items (08-02-xxx) were given was a trinomial system created by Dr. Timothy Matney and Linda Whitman, Department of Anthropology faculty, at the point of original storage in boxes. The first number in the sequence is 08 for the year the items were accessioned in the Olin 101 Archaeology Lab. The second number was the collection number by year, so the John Brown House material was the second collection in the Olin 101 lab in 2008. The third number was the individual artifacts number within the collection. The artifact number was the first column in the spreadsheet (Table 1). The second column was the bag number that I had given each bag that was in the boxes to make it easier to find specific artifacts. The bag numbers are at the top right hand corner of the bags in small print. The next column was the box number (I.126-I.129) and after that was the information on the label on the box. The first artifact in each box that I photographed and inventoried I typed out the label information after that I just typed “same” in that column until I got to the first artifact in the next box. The next column in the spreadsheet was a description of the artifact, generally what the artifact was and any distinct qualities about it. The next section was the range of images for each artifact. I usually photographed all of the artifacts in each bag and then did individual photographs of the artifacts from various angles and sides. The range numbers were from the camera SD card, DSC_XXXX, and were recorded in the spreadsheet. I had several sets of ranges for each artifact. I recorded the range for the ‘group’ photo of the artifacts and then a range for the individual photographs of the artifacts. Some artifacts had another set of ranges because I might have gone back to rephotograph the material to make sure I got a good image. The next few columns were for condition notes and any other information that I thought should be noted in the spreadsheet.

Object identifier	Bag#	IHSC Box #	Original Box marks + notes	Description	Image # (Range)	Material	Condition notes
08-02-079	21	I.128	John Brown House; 3 of 4; washed and labeled	Ceramic sherd	1945-1947; 2012-2019	Ironstone	Good other than it is a fragment

Table 1 Example of Spreadsheet

To photograph artifacts I had a table in the storage room that had black fabric on it and two photography lights on either side of the table (Figure 3). I kept the main lights off and used the two lights only when taking pictures. I had a stool that I could stand on if I needed to be higher up to get a level photograph of the artifacts. When handling the artifacts, I only used gloves for certain pieces. I wore gloves when handling the rusty nails, leather shoe soles, and animal bones. It was for safety and to help ensure the artifact did not suffer further damage. I used the black background for lighter colored objects and a tan fabric background for darker colored objects. Sometimes the artifacts were various shades so I usually did two sets of photographs one on the black background and one on the tan background to try to make sure the details were visible. In every photograph, I used a centimeter scale so that anyone looking at the pictures could get an idea of the artifacts size. This made the process faster because I did not have to measure every artifact and using the scale is standard archaeological practice when photographing artifacts. As every artifact was photographed from every box and recorded into the spreadsheet, I downloaded the pictures to my computer. Once I was finished I made folders in a SharePoint file that was created (Figure 4). The main folder has subfolders for each of the boxes. I named the folders with the Institute numbers given to the boxes. In each folder for the box, I created folders using the bag numbers. In each bag number folder, I created folders using the artifact number. Once that was done I put each range of photographs into their respective folders. For the ‘group’ pictures for all of the artifacts in the bag, I usually just downloaded those into the bag number folder and put the individual artifact pictures in the artifact number folder. In these boxes, alongside these artifacts, were several documents recording what the artifact typology is. I scanned the documents to digitize them and added them to the box folder to match the box that I found them in. The Artifact Analysis document was one of the documents in the box that had the most coherent information regarding the material in the boxes. It consisted of types of artifacts, how many historical groups the artifacts could be divided into, and how many artifacts fit into those groups.

Figure 3. “Behind the scenes” photographing set up, Photograph by Rebecca Glatz

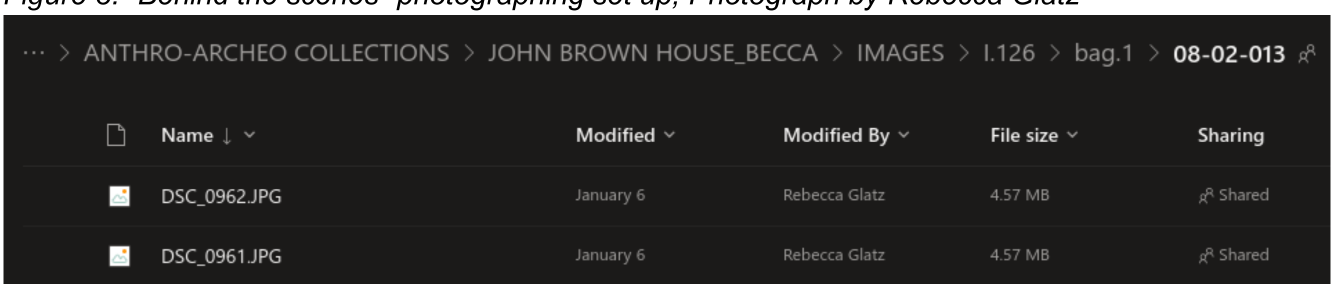

Figure 4. An example of the SharePoint folder, the progression of subfolders is listed at the top of the image. Photograph by Rebecca Glatz

When processing the collections, the things that worked best was creating the Institute numbers for the boxes. Another thing that worked well was picking a smaller collection to ensure I could process it fully and ensure the project was as complete as possible. Some of the challenges came with trying to figure out the best way to process the collection when it has a large amount of material. There was a lot of small fragmentary ceramic sherds in the bags. Photographing everything and then inputting the artifact numbers into the spreadsheet took a long time. Making sure to record the proper numbers between the artifact numbers and picture range numbers was time consuming especially when I had limited time every day to come into work. Eventually towards the end of the processing I would photograph all of the artifacts together to save time and finish up in the semester. Another thing that I did to save time was photographing everything with a scale instead of measuring the artifacts individually. If I had photographed, inventoried, and measured individual artifacts I would still be measuring instead of writing this paper. There were other problems that arose with the contents of the collection but that will be addressed later in this paper. Before discussing the artifacts themselves and how they fit into the history of the John Brown House, some contextual information is needed about the site and the man himself. Research on John Brown and the house he lived in was the next step of the project. I worked on compiling information to include in this paper at the end of the Fall 2021 semester and continued in Spring 2022 semester.

History of the John Brown House

The house known as the John Brown House was built circa 1830 by Benjamin O. Greene and Salmon Hoisington (SCHS, 2022). General Perkins owned much of the land that is now Akron. In 1825, he co-founded the town with Paul Williams. General Perkins donated some of his land for the canals to be built through what is now Akron (SCHS, 2022) He realized the benefits that could arise for the city of Akron if the canals would be built through the area. Colonel Simon Perkins, the son of General Perkins, brought his family to the area in 1834 as General Perkins agent (SCHS, 2022). The

Perkins family owned the property where the John Brown house sits, and they were living in it until their much larger stone house being built nearby was completed in 1837. The John Brown house sits at the intersections of two integral routes: the historic Portage Path and a stagecoach route (Rutkoski, A. et al. 2019; SHiP TR7 2019). It is assumed there were various tenants living in the house before 1844 when the house was rented to John Brown and his family (SCHS, 2022; SHiP TR7 2019). John Brown had not succeeded in his tannery business ventures and had worked with sheep previously before moving to the Akron area. Colonel Simon Perkins went into the wool business with John Brown, after Brown had filed for bankruptcy in 1844. The Brown family came to live in Akron and rented the house from Perkins (SCHS, 2022) from 1844 to 1854. During this time, Perkins was responsible for providing food and shelter for the sheep while Brown washed and sheared the sheep, and got the wool ready for market. Along with these agreements, in their contract, Perkins was to provide provisions to the family, “Said Perkins agrees to let said Brown the frame dwelling house on his farm (south of the house in which he now lives) door-yard, garden grounds, and the privilege of getting wood for fuel, for the rent of thirty dollars a year. .” (SCHS, 2022).

Then, in 1846, a new business venture emerged that allowed for Perkins and Brown to expand the scope of their undertaking. They started an office in Springfield, Massachusetts and John Brown and his sons left Akron to run. The sons eventually returned to Akron to take care of the flock while Brown’s wife and the rest of the younger kids moved to Massachusetts to stay with John Brown while he ran the business there. John Brown spent a lot of time traveling between Akron and Springfield and even New York but used the house in Akron as his Ohio base from 1846-1854 (SCHS, 2022).The wool business was not doing well in the States so Brown went overseas to try to sell the wool in various European cities like London. This did not work and their wool business failed in 1854 after various lawsuits. Brown stayed to fulfill his contract and then left Akron permanently. Once John Brown left Akron, he moved to North Elba, New York.

After Brown's departure, a number of other occupants lived in the house. In 1858, Joseph Perkins, son of Simon and Grace Perkins, lived in the house. Next, Thomas K. and Charles E. Perkins, also sons of Simon and Grace Perkins, lived there starting in 1870. In 1883, Thomas moved out while Charles stayed in the house until 1905, after that William B. Miller lived there for two years. Finally, Charles E. Perkins moved back into the house from 1907 until 1925. Upon his death, a trust was established for Charles' widow, May Adams Perkins. The Summit County Historical Society (SCHS) received the home through the will of May Adams Perkins upon her death in 1942, but the agency did not have complete ownership until 1943 (SCHS, 2022). The house is named the John Brown House because he was the most famous occupant. He was famous nationwide for what he did with the rest of his life and less well known for the time he spent in the wool business in Akron, Ohio.

The Man, The Myth, The Legend: John Brown

John Brown was born May 9, 1800, in Torrington, Litchfield County, Connecticut (Caccamo, 2022). He moved around a lot growing up and into his adult years. His family moved into the Connecticut Western Reserve, settling in Hudson, Ohio in 1805. After his mother died and father remarried, John was sent to Morris Academy in Connecticut in 1817 (Caccamo, 2022). He moved home due to sickness and married his first wife, Dianthe Lusk, in 1820. He attempted many different business ventures, like several tanneries in Pennsylvania and in Ohio along the Cuyahoga River, that were mostly unsuccessful. He moved around Ohio and neighboring states. He married his second wife, Mary Ann and they eventually moved to Portage County (Caccamo, 2022). In 1837, while visiting family in Hudson, John Brown learned of the death of Elijah Lovejoy. Elijah Lovejoy was an American minister who was outspoken in his anti-slavery views. He is said to have preached more about anti-slavery than religion from the pulpit. People did not like what he stood for and in a pro-slavery mob in 1837, shots were fired and he died during this outbreak of violence (Neumann, 2009). Upon hearing this news, John Brown denounced slavery (Caccamo, 2022). John Brown was at a gathering about the death of Elijah Lovejoy and was deeply moved to denounce slavery (Brands, 2020).

John Brown is known for being an abolitionist and an active worker with the Underground Railroad before he moved to Akron (SCHS 2022). He used his house in Akron as a safe house for slaves escaping from the south. He lived a polarizing life, almost on the run at times after his time in Akron. He was anti-slavery but still had some controversial ideas about appropriate ways to act upon this ideal. Leading up to the Civil War, from 1855 when he left Akron until his death in 1859, he traveled around the states helping start the fight for ending slavery in the US. He helped enslaved people move through the Underground Railroad and he worked in communities encouraging anti-slavery. He was involved in the raid on Harpers Ferry in 1859. He was caught, charged with treason and other crimes, and was later executed by hanging on December 16th, 1859 in what is now West Virginia. He was buried on the grounds of his farm in North

Elba, New York. John Brown was a key figure in the events leading up to the Civil War although he did not live to see the war. John Brown may not be historically significant for his contributions to city of Akron, he became famous enough to have a house he lived in for a short time to be named after him.

Content of the Collection

The artifacts in the John Brown House collection are historical artifacts with some faunal remains and some modern trash. The most common artifacts are ceramic sherds and glass shards with some reassembled partial vessels and bottles. According to the Artifact Analysis document that was in the boxes, there were 403 artifacts found at the John Brown House and donated to the Department of Anthropology at the University of Akron (Artifact Analysis, 2008). Some of the artifacts are from a surface collection made by a contractor. Along with the historical artifacts and faunal remains there were also leather shoe soles that were found. In the analysis document they put the artifacts into different categories. Five functional historic artifact groups (out of seven) were classified from the material: activities group (20 artifacts), architecture group (3 artifacts), clothing group (14 artifacts), furniture group (2 artifacts), and finally the kitchen group (264 artifacts) (Artifact Analysis, 2008). The Artifact Analysis document has a lot of inconsistencies with the numbers given. The breakdown of groups and the artifacts that fit into those groups does not add up to the total they listed in the beginning. Either the discrepancy is the result of a simple typographic error, or there are 100 artifacts missing from the analysis document. Or there could be more artifacts in the collection and the analysis only covers a portion of the artifacts. The number of artifacts that were analyzed does not match the number of artifacts I found in the boxes. The total number of artifacts in the boxes was 605 artifacts. Comparing that with the number listed on the paper, there are 202 artifacts not accounted for in the analysis. I had thought that the fourth box of artifacts (box I.129) might contain the artifacts missing from the analysis because on the box label it said the material was given by contractor and the bags inside the box were labeled as surface collected material. When I added up the number of artifacts in the fourth box there was 299 artifacts. Based on this information, there are definitely more artifacts in the collection than are accounted for in the analysis document. I also found many artifacts with the same numbers as other artifacts so they were listed as 08-02-XXXa and 08-02-XXXb in the spreadsheet because I wanted there to be some way that they could be differentiated. There are other potential typos in the document when listing the numbers of the artifacts.

In the activities group, twenty artifacts were listed. “Four unidentified glass fragments, one top fragment of porcelain chess piece/lid handle, one unidentified metal object, one metal file, and thirteen animal bones.” The animal bones consisted of “six cow bones (vertebra, rib, proximal radius, distal femur, distal humerus, astragal -ankle bone), one lower pig jaw, two possible dog bones (½ pelvis and lower distal tibia), one lower rodent jaw (possible opossum), and three unidentifiable bones. Four of the bones (cow vertebra, rib, proximal radius, and one unidentifiable bone) show evidence of modern saw cuts” (Artifact Analysis, 2008). Most of the contents listed in the Artifact Analysis document seems to match up with the contents of the box in regards to the activity group.

In the architecture group, “the three artifacts are metal nails, two of which are cut but the specific type is unidentifiable, they are badly corroded (Figure 5). The third is a common siding cut nail" (Artifact Analysis, 2008). The nails were rather damaged due to rust and I had to be very careful when handling them because they were delicate. There were also three pieces of linoleum. The linoleum would have been placed in this group had it been properly inventoried/analyzed.

Figure 5. Rusty nail, 08-02-311, DSC_2744, bag.40, box I.129. Photograph by Rebecca Glatz

In the clothing group, "all artifacts are leather shoe soles or pieces of leather shoe soles (Figure 6). There is one leather shoe sole with metal tacks and stitching marks, four shoe soles with stitching marks, three half shoe soles with stitching marks, and seven leather shoe sole pieces with stitching marks" making 15 artifacts in total, most of these artifacts were very fragmented leather shoe soles. (Artifact Analysis, 2008). The actual number of shoe soles is hard to determine because most of the leather material is fragmentary and maybe should not have been counted as a single item. Some of the fragments are very delicate and had been placed in the same bag so I ended up photographing the entire bag without taking them out because I did not want to destroy any of them further. The actual shoe soles I did take out of their bags and it was very interesting to look at the level of craftsmanship that went into making these shoe soles.

Figure 6. Leather shoe sole 08-02-303, DSC_2642, bag.32, box I.128. Photograph by Rebecca Glatz

In the furniture group, “the artifacts included one porcelain drawer knob and one oil lamp burner. The oil lamp burner contains a partial wick and the lip of the glass font (color: colorless/clear), which was broken off inside the base of the burner” (Artifact Analysis, 2008). I do not think the oil lamp burner was present in the collection. I do not know where it could be but I did not have that in the spreadsheet or photographs. I think the porcelain drawer knob was in the collection.

The kitchen group held the bulk of the artifacts. It was the dominant functional group at the site. The 264 artifacts fall into two classes: ceramics or glass. There are 203 ceramic artifacts that were Porcelain, Stoneware, Yellow Ware, Pearlware, Whiteware and Ironstone. There were 61 glass artifacts. Amongst the glass artifacts the “bottle colors include ‘black glass’, colorless (clear), shades of green, blue, olive, aquamarine, and brown. Bottle manufacturing includes hand-blown, molds, and machined." Both kitchen function groups of the glass and ceramic artifacts had refits (Artifact Analysis, 2008). There was definitely a lot more glass and ceramic than just the 264 artifacts listed in the Artifact Analysis document. There were many fragmentary ceramic sherds in the collection. Most of the pieces were small, around 5-10 centimeters, while other pieces were larger fragments from plates or cups. The glass shards were less common, more of the glass pieces were fragmented bottles. Some of the ceramic sherds were refitted together (Figure 7). There were a few glass bottles or glass objects that were refitted together. It was interesting to see the pieces that were refitted together. The bags containing ceramic and glass pieces were separated by style/color but not all of them were refitted or able to be refitted.

Figure 7. Nine ceramic sherds refitted together, DSC_1400, bag.11, box I.127. Photograph by Rebecca Glatz

The content of the Artifact Analysis document is clearly missing a lot of necessary information. What can be gathered from it is a start in the right direction in understanding what all of the material is. I find it interesting that all of the artifacts had mostly legible artifact numbers but they were not all accounted for in the Artifact Analysis document. I would argue that the material might not have been finished in the analysis portion before the collection was moved or a student who was working on the project graduated before completing the information. That could be one explanation for why the amount of material does not match the supposed total number.

Artifact Spotlight

One of the many artifacts that I looked at over the course of the semester was a ceramic sherd with a potter's mark. There were several sherds that had potter's marks visible but most of them were fragmented so you could not read the whole thing. The one that I liked the most had a complete potter's mark. The potter's mark is faded slightly in some parts of the mark but does not make it unreadable. The artifact number is 08-02-079 and was in bag.21 in box I.128 (Figures 8-10). The example from the spreadsheet in the Processing Guide section is the information from this artifact. This artifact looks like it could be part of a plate of some sort because it is a relatively flat piece of pottery and has a rim that looks like a plate or serving dish. It is ironstone china and made by J.W. Pankhurst & Co from Hanley, England. Along with the name of the potter who manufactured it has the Royal Arms, a lion and unicorn facing each other with a symbol and a ribbon weaving around it above the name of the manufacture, in this case James William Pankhurst. J.W. Pankhurst took over the pottery of William Ridgeway from the Ridgeway Potteries. From 1850-1851, he operated under the name J.W. Pankhurst. In 1852, the '& Co' was added because he partnered with J. Dimmock (J.W. Pankhurst & Co, 2015). They operated from Charles Street and Old Hall Street from 1850-1883. In 1883 they filed for bankruptcy and sold to Johnson Bros. (J.W. Pankhurst & Co, 2015). The pottery sherd that is in the John Brown House collection has the '& Co' included in the mark. This would date the pottery fragment to at least 1852 and later. Around the time the '& Co' was added to the Potter's mark, John Brown had been in England trying to sell the wool from Perkins and his failing wool business. John Brown could have brought back some stone china pottery from his travels overseas. I thought this was interesting to learn about, especially as the addition of the '& Co' mark dated the pottery to having been made sometime after 1852 until 1883. This could suggest that John Brown had picked it up in his travels and brought it back to Akron to the house.

Figure 8. The potter's mark from artifact 08-02-079; DSC_2018; bag.21, box I.128. Photograph by Rebecca Glatz

Figure 9. The other side of 08-02-079; DSC_2012, bag.21, box I.128. Photograph by Rebecca Glatz

Figure 10. Potter's mark side of 08-02-079; DSC_2016; bag.21, box I.128. Photograph by Rebecca Glatz

Conclusion

The lack of contextual information that was given with the collection makes it difficult to determine how the collection fits into the bigger picture of the John Brown

House and the surrounding area. No official site report was found for this collection. The only real knowledge we have is in the Artifact Analysis document dated from 2008. I still do not know who wrote the artifact analysis nor how this material was collected, who collected it, where on the John Brown House property they collected the artifacts, or even when it was collected. After reaching out to many different people to see if they had answers, I have started to eliminate some possibilities. While working on the project, I consulted with Dr. Timothy Matney and Maeve Marino, both archaeologists and faculty members from the Department of Anthropology, on what they know about the material and who to start to reach out to for more information. Maeve was very helpful in identifying some of the artifacts as her focus is on historical archaeology. After talking with them, I reached out to Eric Olson, an archaeologist, to see if he knew about this material, or when the artifacts might have been collected. He gave me sources about work done at the Perkins Mansion in the 1980s and suggested a few other people to whom I could talk. That led me to reaching out to Charlotte Gintert who had briefly worked at the SCHS around the time the Artifact Analysis was dated. She confirmed that she had not done this work and did not know who did but also offered a few other people as contact points. Both Eric and Charlotte had talked about the fact that no work was done in the 2000s at the John Brown House, but that some work had been done in the 1980s and 1990s at the John Brown House and Perkins Mansion. Next, I got in contact with Leianne Neff Heppner, the President & CEO of the Summit County Historical Society. After talking with Leianne, she believes this material might have come from their attic and was given to Dr. Lynn Metzger, a former faculty member in the Department of Anthropology, to use at The University of Akron for student projects. I also visited the SCHS and looked at documents that Leianne had found relating to some work done at the Perkins Mansion done by Dr. Earl Ertman, a former faculty member in the UA Art History program in 1984. The site reports and photographs from the SCHS from this time period, however, did not look like anything that was in the collection at the Cummings Center. This meant the work was most likely not done by Ertman.

It is still unclear from what project this material derived and, frankly, if it is even from the John Brown House site. The proximity of the Perkins Mansion and the John Brown House and the history of the buildings could mean that somewhere along the line the material could have been mixed up and or labeled incorrectly or imprecisely. Lacking documentation, I still am not sure who received the material when it was donated to The University of Akron by the Summit County Historical Society. The inventory document was typed, but the date of 2008 was written in pen. So there still could be a disconnect between the actual donation period and when the artifact analysis was completed. Leianne believes this material might have been given to Dr. Lynn Metzger and that a student or students might have worked on the analysis and the numbering of the pieces. I have not been able to find an official site report for this material and there might not even be one. It looks like it could be a collection of material from different places put into one collection and labeled all together. Leianne had suggested the idea that the material might have been combined if it had come from the attic of the SCHS before coming to the Department of Anthropology. The difference in numbers listed on the artifact analysis and the total numbers of artifacts in the collection boxes could point towards that idea.

Overall, the John Brown House collection is filled with inconsistencies. The artifact numbers were sometimes illegible on the objects that made inventorying hard. On top of that, having no clear knowledge or understanding of how, where, or who collected this material makes this analysis difficult. This is why recording information in detail and making copies of these records is essential in all aspects of archaeology. To avoid this happening, students are taught to take detailed records, make copies of the records, and ensure they are safe for future references. Had a better record been kept of this material and housed in a persistent archives, there might not have been quite so many mysteries yet to be resolved about these artifacts and how they fit into the history of the John Brown House.

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