

Phase III Archaeological Survey of the Market Street Bridge Site (36De130) in Lower Chichester Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania

Conducted in 2013-2015 for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, the U.S. Department of Transportation, and the Federal Highway Administration

A PROJECT to replace the deteriorating 1927-era concrete bridge carrying Market Street (S.R. 0452) over an active AMTRAK-SEPTA-Norfolk Southern railroad corridor between Marcus Hook Borough and Linwood (Lower Chichester Township) in Delaware County, Pennsylvania (*Figure 1*), was initiated in 1998 by the [Pennsylvania Department of Transportation](#), the [U.S. Department of Transportation](#), and the [Federal Highway Administration](#). Complying with historic preservation and protection laws in force for federally funded, licensed, or aided undertakings where scientific, historical, or archaeological data might be impacted, the sponsoring agencies authorized a Phase IA archaeological survey of the geographic area that could be affected by the project (i.e., the project’s “Area of Potential Effect,” or “APE”). A Phase IA survey of the Market Street Bridge Replacement Project’s initial 8.5-acre APE was conducted by Cultural Heritage Research Services, Inc. ([CHRS](#)) in the fall of 1998. Drawing primarily on documentary sources such as historic maps, aerial photographs, deeds, and newspaper articles, researchers gathered evidence of more than a dozen structures that had stood in the portion of the APE west of Market Street for at least half-a-century prior to their removal in the mid-1920s to make way for construction of the railroad overpass. The Phase IA report submitted by CHRS in November 1998 asserted that now-vacant portions of the APE west of Market Street in Lower Chichester Township had high potential for containing historic and precontact (prehistoric) archaeological deposits, and that sub-surface archaeological investigation of the APE was warranted. The sponsoring agencies and Pennsylvania’s Historic Preservation Office—the [Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission’s Bureau for Historic Preservation](#)—agreed.

Phase IB/II archaeological testing performed by CHRS in the fall of 2000 confirmed the presence of historic archaeological deposits within a 0.41-acre portion of the APE bounded on the east by Market Street, on the south by Morton Avenue, and on the west by Green Street. The historic archaeological site was duly recorded with the Pennsylvania Archaeological Site Survey as the “Market Street Bridge Site (36De130)” (*Figure 2*). Because it contained “material likely to provide significant information concerning changing lifeways on the edge of a developing industrial urban area in southeastern Pennsylvania,” the Market Street Bridge Site was deemed eligible for listing on the [National Register of Historic Places](#). In light of that eligibility, a Phase III Archaeological Survey Work Plan was prepared in 2001.

A dozen years then passed while the sponsoring agencies explored possibilities for shifting the project to the opposite (east) side of the Market Street Bridge, away from the Market Street Bridge Site. When various alternatives ultimately proved unfeasible, the agencies finalized a project design back on the west side of Market Street, with a much-reduced APE that included only a quarter-acre of the Market Street Bridge Site. The Phase III Archaeological Survey Work Plan was revised in 2013 to address the quarter-acre portion of the Site remaining within the reduced APE (*Figure 3*).

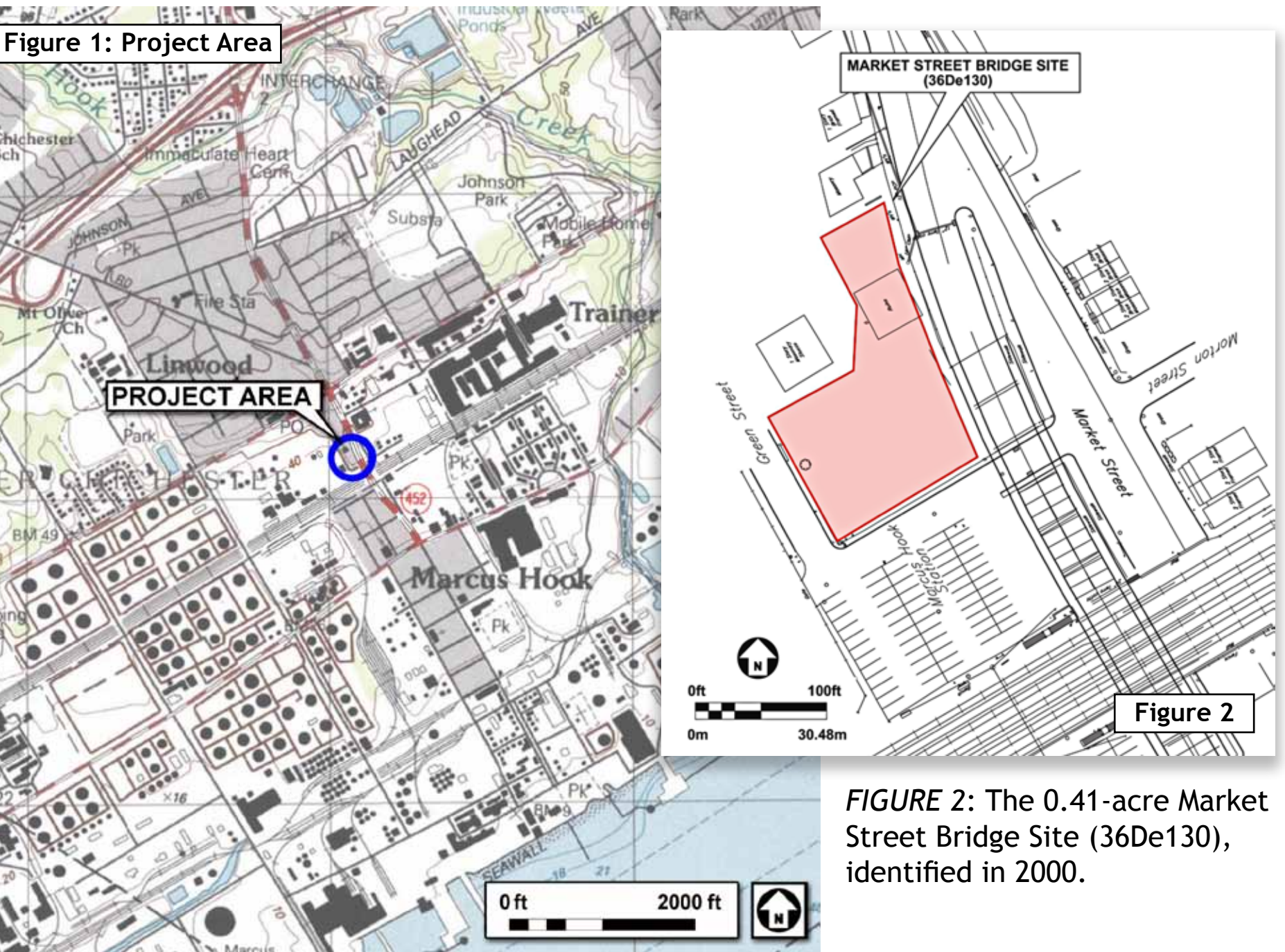


FIGURE 2: The 0.41-acre Market Street Bridge Site (36De130), identified in 2000.



FIGURE 3: The project’s Area of Potential Effect (APE), revised in 2013, included a quarter-acre of the Market Street Bridge Site.

Phase III Survey Expectations, Methodology, and Discoveries

The revised Phase III Archaeological Survey Work Plan noted that “during its peak period of residential and commercial occupation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the APE included portions of 12 town lots. Six of those lots fronted on Market Street, while the other six fronted on Green Street. The rectangular lots varied in width, from 97 feet down to 20 feet, but they all measured 100 feet in length. The lots fronting on Market Street were trimmed to varying lengths in 1927 through construction of a curved approach to the new overpass carrying Market Street across the railroad tracks south of the APE, which allowed elimination of Market Street’s accident-prone at-grade track crossing.”

The reduction of the APE meant that the Phase III Survey would be limited to the rear yard areas of the former town lots (as illustrated through a succession of maps, including a fire insurance map published in 1917, *Figure 4*; and a property atlas published in 1934, following completion of the Market Street Bridge, *Figure 5*). The earlier phases of archaeological investigation had revealed that “until approximately 1847, when the first house was built [on the west side of Market Street], the land within the APE was undeveloped farmland. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, additional buildings were constructed, until there were structures on each of the properties. In the early twentieth century, the buildings along Market Street were occupied primarily by white working class individuals and shopkeepers, while the buildings along Green Street were occupied primarily by black laborers.”

Two stages of field work were performed over the course of the year beginning in September 2013. In the first stage, 40 strategically placed test units measuring 5-feet square were hand-excavated across the former yard areas to a depth of approximately 1½ feet. Following that work, an excavator was used to strip the topsoil and fill from nearly three-quarters of the APE, and the exposed surface was then carefully scraped by hand. All cultural features discovered through such methods were drawn, photographed, and mapped; recovered artifacts were cleaned, identified, and inventoried. [Click here to view photographs of field work](#)

By the time field work concluded in September 2014, 200 features had been identified, and more than 81,000 artifacts had been recovered. [Click here to view photographs of select artifacts](#) One feature alone—a brick-lined privy shaft designated “Feature 74”—yielded 5,652 artifacts, including a wide range of glass, ceramic, and metal objects, along with bone, shell, ash, and cinder. In the months that followed, archaeologists completed processing the artifacts, then turned to analysis, figure preparation, and report writing. CHRS submitted the Phase III report, replete with property histories, historic and modern photographs, charts, tables, figures, and detailed feature descriptions, in November 2015. [Click here to view historic photographs](#)

As acknowledged in the report’s “Conclusion,” the limitation of field work to portions of rear yard areas posed considerable challenges for archaeologists trying to interpret the cultural evolutions of the associated town lots. Data derived from the great quantity of recovered artifacts and numerous unearthed features shed light on particular activities within the APE, but that was only part of the mission. Equally important was teasing out the *significance* of those activities, and placing them in historical context. That was only possible through documentary research aimed at identifying the individuals and families who had occupied the properties during specific periods.

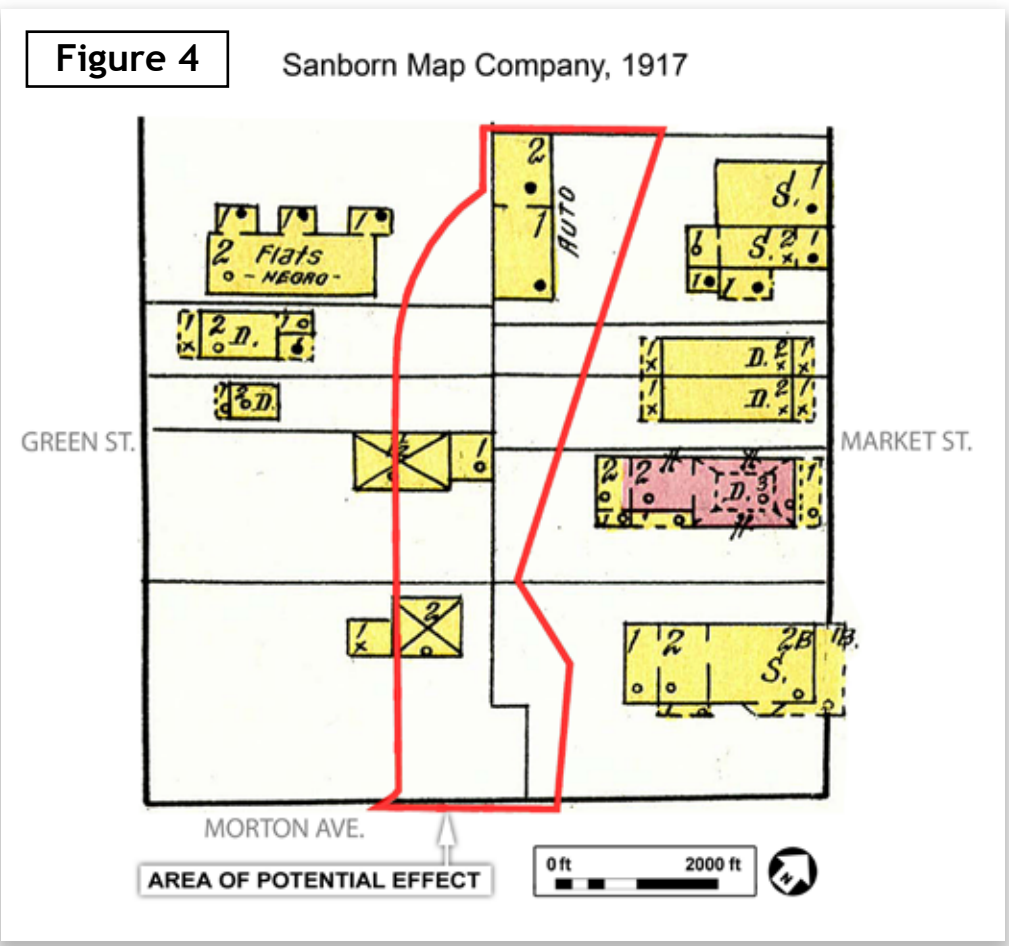


FIGURE 4: A detail from a fire insurance map revised in December 1917 depicted portions of three frame outbuildings within the APE (superimposed in red). By that date, the two southernmost town lots had been consolidated with the abutting lots to the north, leaving 10 parcels for the mapmaker to delineate.

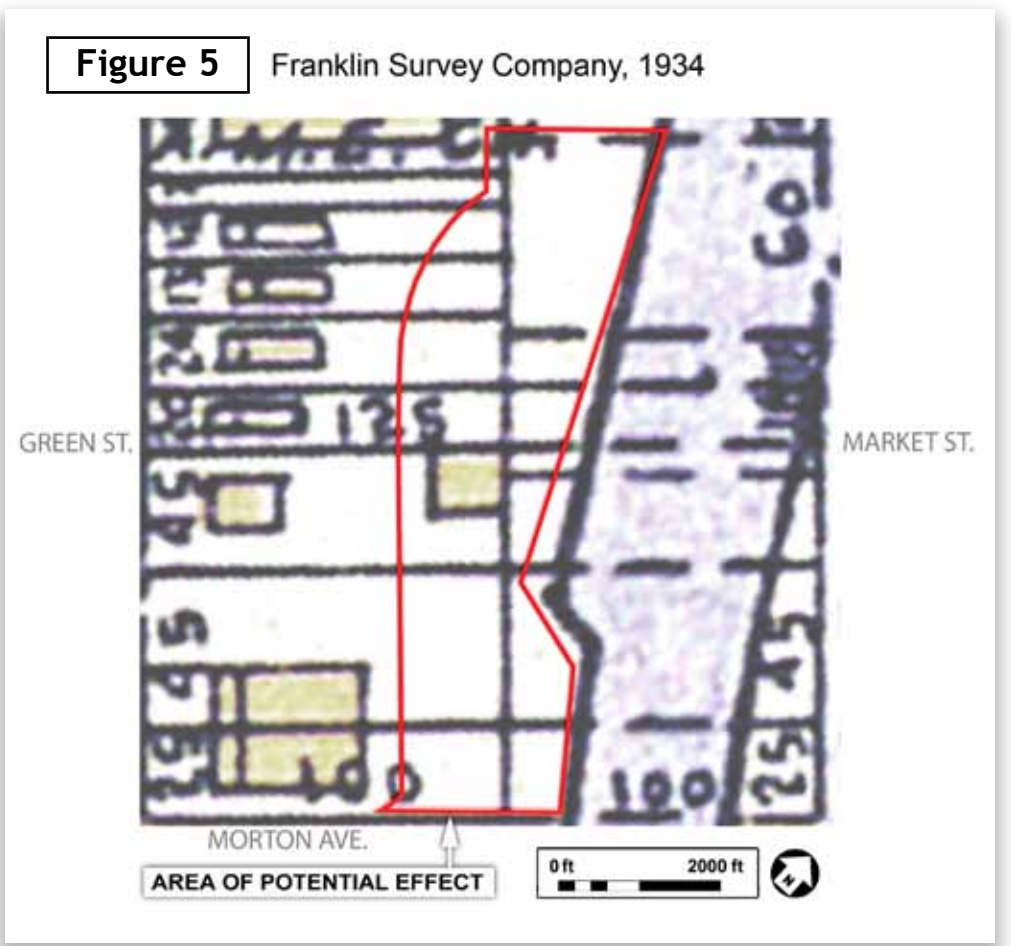


FIGURE 5: A detail from a property atlas published in 1934 reflected conditions following the 1927 construction of the Market Street Bridge. A frame outbuilding near the center of the APE was the only structure left standing within the APE. Its footprint was exposed in January 2014 through mechanical stripping of topsoil and fill.

What Documentary Research Revealed

Because most of the uncovered features and artifacts dated to the eight years immediately preceding construction of the Market Street Overpass (1920-1927), researchers redoubled their efforts in scouring census schedules, deeds, archival newspapers, genealogical databases, circa-1920s photographs, and maps for information concerning the properties’ occupants during that period. A picture emerged of middle-class white households occupying the properties along Market Street (Properties 1-5), and a mixture of working-class and middle-class black households occupying the adjoining properties along Green Street (Properties 6-10).

The latter were regarded by the early years of the twentieth century as part of Linwood’s “Negro Quarter” (according to contemporary newspaper accounts). That identification was partly based on the presence on Property 6 of St. Luke’s Hall, built in 1886 as a meeting place for the African-American benevolent organization known as the Evening Star Council No. 13, Daughters and Sons of Saint Luke. By 1913, the organization had moved to Chester, and the former Hall had been reconfigured by a new owner into three rental apartments, labeled “Flats Negro” on a 1917 fire insurance map (*Figure 4*). One of the renters, Delaware native Richard Cooper, made a good enough living as a general laborer at the nearby Sun Oil refinery that he and his widowed mother-in-law, Maryland-born Lizzie Sewell, were able to buy Property 6 in the spring of 1919 and remodel the building into a duplex. Cooper, his wife Laura (employed as a sweeper in a local rayon mill), and only-child Alfred William then occupied one side of the duplex until May 21, 1925, when 11-year-old Alfred died at home from “valvular heart disease.” Richard and Laura continued to occupy their half of the duplex through the next half-century. Laura’s mother Lizzie made her home in the duplex’s other half for nearly that long, sharing the residence for some time with bachelor son William (“Buddy”) Sewell (an occasional highway laborer), and William’s daughter Bernice. All three generations of the Sewell-Coopers became active members of the Mt. Hebron A.M.E. Church erected in 1926 on the lot immediately north of Property 6.

On adjoining lots to the east, in what had become by the dawn of the twentieth century an exclusively white residential-commercial district lining the west side of Market Street, archaeologists recovered great quantities of early-twentieth-century artifacts from brick-lined privy shafts on Properties 3 and 4. The associated lots had been vacant until merchant Harvey M. Booth—owner of a house and attached grocery store on Property 5—purchased them in 1915 and constructed on them a frame duplex, which he hoped to sell at a handsome profit. In April 1916 Booth conveyed the southern half of the duplex on a 1,300-square-foot lot (Property 3) to Sun Oil Company “pumper” Lewis Baldwin and his wife Margaret. The Baldwins occupied the property through the following decade, presiding over a large household that included children Helen and Charles, as well as a shifting collection of working-class male boarders. As of January 1920, the boarders comprised John Spencer (29, married, Pennsylvania-born “stove keeper”), George Haston (30, single, Delaware-born ticket agent for the Pennsylvania Railroad Company), Robert Coleman (54, married, Maryland-born bricklayer), Robert Corsey (54, married, Pennsylvania-born bricklayer), William Russell (62, married, Pennsylvania-born machinist), and Fred Katin (19, single, North Carolina-born plumber).

Harvey Booth ended up retaining ownership of the northern half of the duplex (on Property 4) and renting it to a succession of tenants through the 1910s and 20s. The resident household in January 1920 comprised 45-year-old silk mill operator Patrick Roddy (a native of Danville, Pennsylvania), his 34-year-old wife Esther, and daughters Anna, Elizabeth, and Mary, ranging in age from 15 to 18 (two of whom were also employed as silk mill operators). Other tenants of the Property 4 house between 1920 and the house’s demolition in 1927 (to make way for the Market Street Overpass) could not be identified from available records, but from the 5,652 artifacts recovered from a privy shaft in the rear of the property, the house appears to have continued in active use through the mid-1920s. While the vast majority of those artifacts were fragments of kitchen-related items, some were intact or nearly intact, and a handful of those—including figurines, toys, novelties, and perfume bottles—provided fodder for further research into middle-class lifeways in the region.

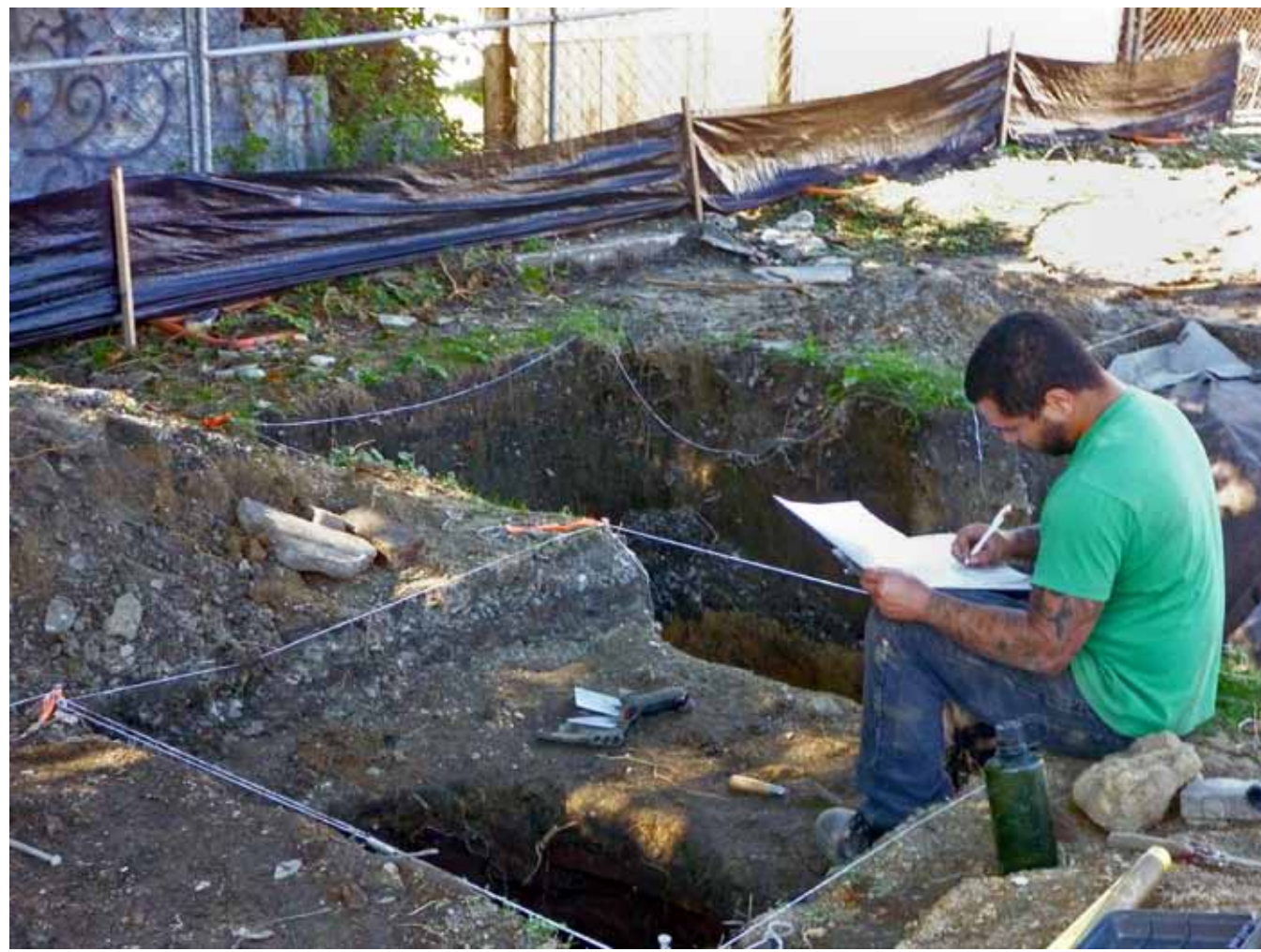
[Click here to view associated presentations at archaeological forums](#)



On September 9, 2013, an archaeologist unearths a glass bottle from the upper portion of a brick-lined privy shaft designated "Feature 74."



Among the features exposed through the stripping of topsoil in January 2014 was the footprint of a structure identified on early-twentieth-century fire insurance maps as a 2-story frame outbuilding standing on Property 9.



An archaeologist records data from excavations of shafts in Features 69 and 74, September 15, 2013.



On September 11, 2013, an archaeologist looks for artifacts while screening soil from Test Unit N150/145 on Property 4. The Market Street Overpass rises to clear railroad tracks in the background.



An archaeologist continues excavation of the Feature 74 privy shaft, September 11, 2013. The shaft ultimately yielded 5,652 artifacts, including numerous bottles with early-twentieth-century manufacturing dates.



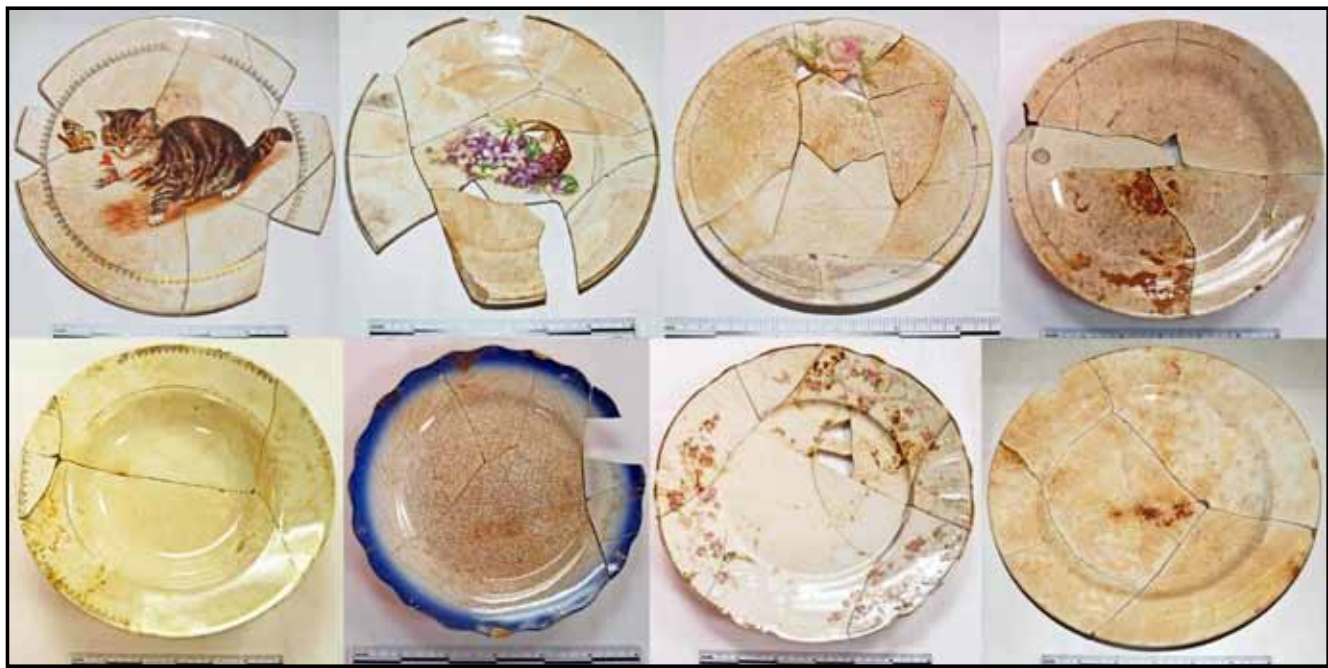
Feature 189—a brick-lined slit trench containing ceramics, colorless bottle glass, window glass, cut and wire nails, can fragments, and cinders—is excavated on Property 6 on September 3, 2014. To the left is Feature 187, a brick-lined, rectangular privy shaft.



Clockwise from ABOVE: toothbrushes (celluloid "Extra Fine Quality," top) (bone, middle) (celluloid "Ukemo," bottom); corncob and kaolin pipe bowls; jewelry (pins, a and b; cameo, c; ring, d; decorative buckle, e); porcelain figurine; porcelain doll parts and snow babies; mouthwash and detergent bottles.



LEFT: Whiteware and ironstone cup shapes and decoration designs, from Feature 74.



RIGHT: Whiteware and ironstone plate designs, from Feature 74.



BELOW: Glass tumblers



LEFT: Embossed bottles (from left) Father John's Medicine, Piso's (medicine), RRR Radway & Co. (medicine), and embossed perfume bottle.

RIGHT: Liquor bottles.



LEFT: Stoneware jug and jar.

RIGHT: Graniteware vessels.



Historic Photographs of the Project Area and Immediate Vicinity

All images courtesy of the Delaware County Historical Society



Southwestward view along Market Street, April 19, 1921. The storefronts and houses on the right, standing on lots whose rear yards lay partly within the Project Area, were demolished or moved to make way for construction of the Market Street Bridge in 1927.



Northwestward view of storefronts and mixed-use buildings on the west side of Market Street, north of the Project Area, April 19, 1921. Cars approach Market Street's intersection with Ridge Road on the right.



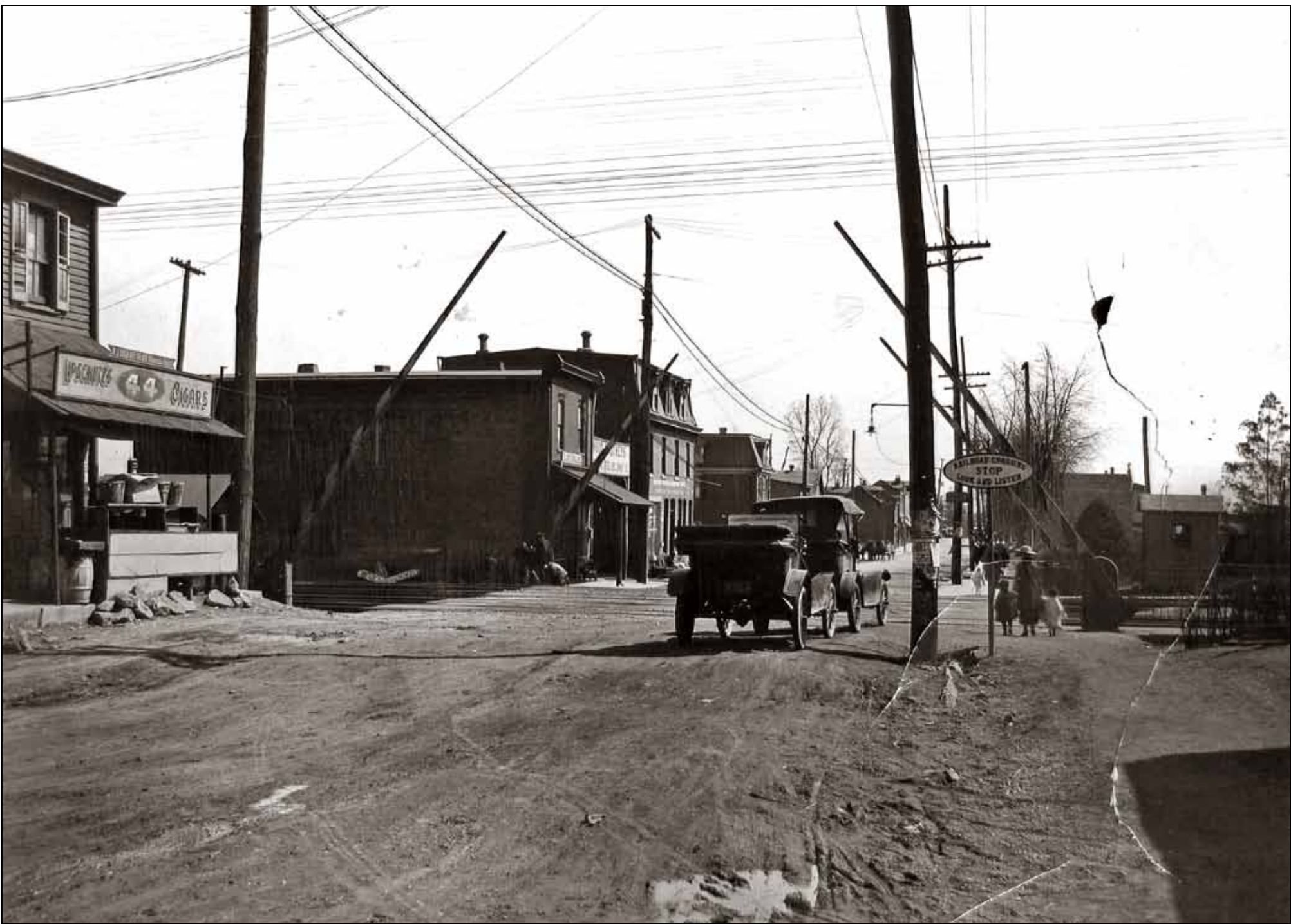
Northward view along Market Street, just north of the Project Area, April 19, 1921.



Westward view of the intersection of Morton Avenue (in the foreground) and Green Street, circa 1923. The fenced-in area on the right was part of Property 10B, which served as a rear yard for Property 1 (fronting on Market Street) at the time this picture was taken. The row of two-story duplexes lining the west side of Green Street was constructed during the period 1913-17 to accommodate workers and their families drawn to employment in local industries.



Northwestward view along Market Street where it crosses four sets of Pennsylvania Railroad tracks, April 1918. The at-grade crossing would be eliminated in 1927 through construction of the Market Street Overpass. The superimposed arrow points to the two-story frame building on Property 1, the core of which had been constructed circa 1863. When this photo was taken, the building housed Green's Restaurant and residential rental units.



Southeastward view of Market Street at the Pennsylvania Railroad crossing, April 1918. The shadow of the mixed-use building on Property 1 is visible in the lower right corner, falling across Morton Avenue.

Not Abominable Snowmen, but Adorable Snow Babies!

*Adapted from a paper presented by Kenneth J. Basalik, Ph.D., CHRS, Inc.
at Explore Philadelphia's Buried Past, 2014*

This presentation discusses recent finds of ceramic statues from an early-twentieth-century privy in the Marcus Hook area. When these objects were cleaned, they looked like monsters **(A)**. But, upon examination, they turned out to be *snow babies*. A snow baby is a small figurine that depicts some aspect of the Christmas holidays or of winter sports. The traditional snow baby is made of unglazed porcelain (bisque) and portrays a child dressed in a snowsuit; the suit itself is covered in small pieces of crushed bisque, giving the appearance of fallen snowflakes. The type of snow babies illustrated in **(B)** **(C)** **(D)**—from a variety of Internet sources—are usually referred to as “tumblers.”

Snow babies have two divergent origin stories. One story links the development of snow babies to honoring Marie Perry, daughter of polar explorer Robert Perry **(E)**. Marie Perry was born in 1893 while her parents were in Greenland. The story goes that Marie Perry was called “snow baby” by the native people because of the whiteness of her skin. The birth of a child to a white women in Greenland with her explorer husband was news throughout the world. The snow baby suit is said to represent a snow covered fur outfit made for the baby shortly after she was born.

Another explanation, perhaps more plausible, is that snow babies originated in Germany in the nineteenth century. This origin story has snow babies starting as *zuckerpuppen* that were made in the early-nineteenth-century by German housewives as Christmas decorations or children’s treats. Later, confectioners began creating similar figures from marzipan to use as candied decorations on cakes **(F)**. These figures were made of marzipan rolled in sugar to look like snow. In the 1890s a confectioner commissioned the porcelain factory of Hertwig & Co. in the Thuringia area of Germany to produce snow baby figures as reusable cake toppers. They were made by pouring hand-whipped liquid bisque into mold and left to harden. Then the piece was removed and slip containing finely crushed pieces of bisque was poured over it to give the appearance of snow. The piece was then fired and painted.

Snow babies were popular from about 1900 through 1930 in both England and America. Before World War I, snow babies were imported only from Germany, although they were not always marketed as such **(G)**. Snow babies were called “Alaska Tots” in a Marshall Field’s catalog in 1914. During and after the war, the Japanese began copying German snow babies. In the 1980s, Department 56 began producing snow babies in Taiwan.

More recent examples of snow babies tend to be less well-made, and the distinctive “snow” wears off. Although a large number of snow babies were produced in a variety shapes—including Santa Clauses, elves, polar bears and a wide variety of winter related themes **(H)**—snow babies have branched out in the twentieth century, and they are not just for Christmas anymore **(I)**.



B



C



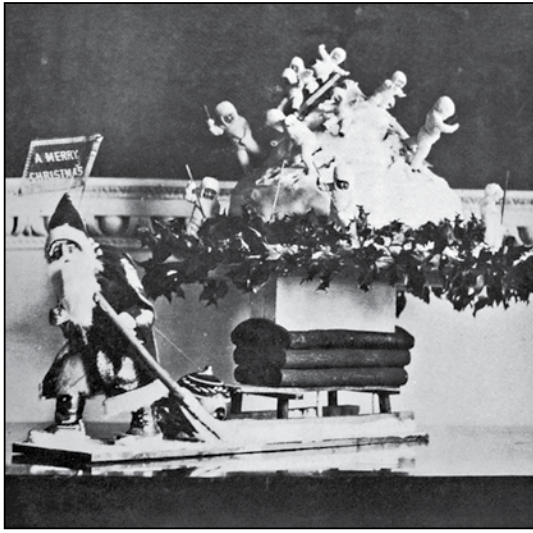
D



E



F



G



H



I

Man Does Not Live by Bread Alone; There is Also Candy

Early-20th-Century Glass Containers from Marcus Hook, Pennsylvania

*Adapted from a paper presented by Kenneth J. Basalik, Ph.D.,
at Explore Philadelphia's Buried Past, 2013*

Man does not live by bread alone; there is also *candy*. The archaeological presence of candy is not easily discerned, as much of this “food” was sold by the piece and consumed or packaged in paper which has deteriorated over time. Recent archaeological work being undertaken in the vicinity of Marcus Hook in Delaware County has recovered candy containers made of glass.

Candy containers made of glass were first made in the late 19th century. Containers shaped like Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell were made in celebration of the Centennial Exposition in 1876. By the early-20th-century candy containers began to be packaged in glass containers shaped like toys, like the glass truck shown here **(J)**.

These containers were mainly manufactured by a select number of Pennsylvania glass companies until the Great Depression. A large number of these companies were located in Jeannette, a city in western Pennsylvania. T.G. Stough was one such company from “the Glass City.” Stough manufactured a large number of candy containers with such names as “Whistling Jim’s Gun,” “Sleepy Eye The Circus Dog,” and “Musical Telephone,” as well as the fire engine shown here with the patent Stough filed in 1914 **(K)** **(L)** (these images, and those labeled **M** through **S**, derive from archaeological sites and sources unrelated to archaeological work in the Marcus Hook vicinity).

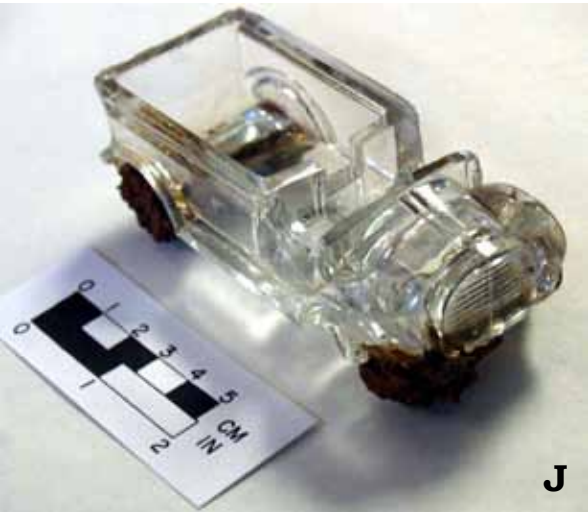
An amazing array of candy container types were produced that doubled as toys such as the guns and equestrian clown shown here **(M)** **(N)**, from a variety of Internet sources. The closures for the containers were primarily metal in the early 20th century. Production slowed during the Great Depression and began again in the 1940s. The scarcity of metal during World War II caused closure material to be changed from metal to waxed cardboard, cork stoppers and wood.

The variety of shapes was seemingly endless. Every mode of conveyance was represented **(O)**. This included not only cars, wagons, and railroad locomotives, but also ships. Commemorative pieces were also made such as the “Remember the Maine” shown here **(P)**, and candy containers shaped like “Spirit of St. Louis” made to commemorate Lindbergh’s flight across the Atlantic in 1927.

The call for candy seemed endless **(Q)**. The glass industry produced containers shaped like tanks, airplanes, soldiers, blimps, railroad cars, refrigerators, cash registers, baby bottles, animals, cartoon characters, gas pumps, treasure chests, mantel clocks, lamps, candlesticks, lanterns, dolls, doll furniture, and holiday novelties like the Easter Bunny and Santa Claus. The list of shapes was endless.

Candy companies dutifully filled and shipped these glass containers by the truckload **(R)** **(S)** until the late 1940s when glass candy containers began to be replaced by plastics as a cheaper alternative.

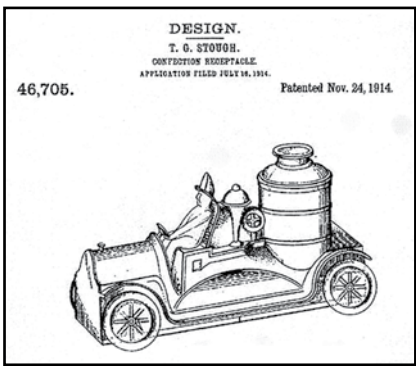
What had been a common object for nearly 100 years is now a mostly forgotten aspect of children’s lives.



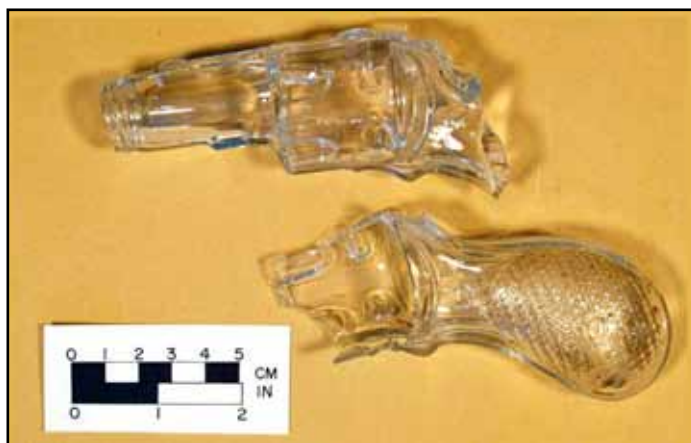
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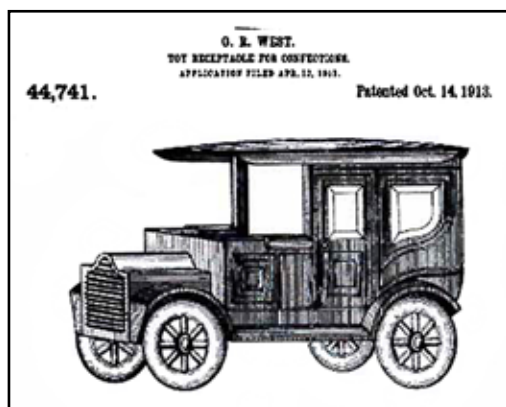
P



Q



R



S

From Baby Food to the North Pole and Beyond

Early-20th-Century Infant Food Products

*Adapted from a paper presented by Kenneth J. Basalik, Ph.D.,
at Explore Philadelphia's Buried Past, 2015*

While performing archaeological investigations of several mid-1920-era privies in the Marcus Hook area as part of a PennDOT project, several non-descript amber bottles were encountered **(T)**. The base of these containers were marked “Eskay’s” **(U)**. These objects, as well as nursing bottles and a bottle marked “Horlick’s” led us to explore the world of commercially processed baby food.

The history of feeding infants other than with mother’s breast milk is not new or a recent phenomenon. Records indicate that such activities have been undertaken since at least 2000 BC. Historically this has included wet nursing (i.e., having a woman other than the mother breast-feed a baby), the use of feeding bottles with milk from animals other than humans, home cooked solids, and much more recently, the use of commercially produced formula products.

The development of synthetic baby food is credited to Baron Justus von Liebig. His formula—consisting of cow’s milk, wheat and malt flour, and potassium bicarbonate—was developed in 1867. Liebig was soon joined by Henri Nestle, who used a similar formula, and then Gustav Mellin who used a different formula that was apparently easier to prepare than Liebig’s or Nestle’s.

By 1883 there were 27 patented brands of infant food. Two of these were recovered from our archaeological investigations: Eskay’s and Horlick’s **(V)** **(W)**. Eskay’s was developed by Frank Baum, a Philadelphia druggist (not the author of the Wizard of Oz). Baum’s process was purchased by Smith, Kline and French and marketed throughout the country. Although the internet literature declares the Eskay name to be a mystery, I suspect it is simply the letter “S” and the letter “K” from Smith Kline. Horlick’s was developed by William and James Horlick, two Englishmen who had moved to Chicago and developed a product that they originally called “Diastoid.” They later moved back to Britain and continued the development of their malted milk product for infants and invalids. Why invalids? Early baby food products were generally thought to be nutritious and easily digested, features for both the young and old. The foods were fattening (which was a 19th century view of healthiness) but often lacked valuable nutrients like protein, vitamins, and minerals. Over time, the nutrients were individually added to the products.

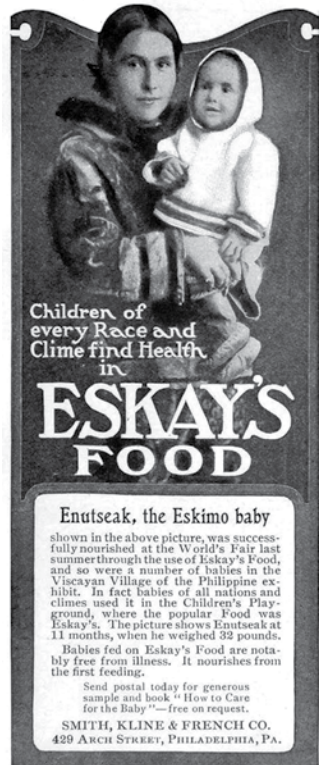
During the mid-19th century, running nearly concurrently with the processed infant foods, was “evaporated” or “condensed” milk. Borden developed sweetened condensed milk in the mid-19th century in part as an infant food and was quickly followed by others producing both sweetened and unsweetened “condensed” milk. Unfortunately, from an archaeological point of view, these products were canned. Although many can fragments were recovered from our archaeological investigations, due to rust and decay their contents could not be determined and thus we don’t know whether condensed milk was used by occupants of our site.

So, with so much competition, how do you expand your market? In Horlick’s case you capitalize on Arctic (and Antarctic) explorers using your product as part of their provisions (of course it helps if you sponsor the expedition with a little cash as well). Then you market it to children, the military, and foreign markets, suggesting that “when a man is middle aged his energies fail him.” Or that the wife gives her husband Horlick’s every night. Horlick’s was repurposed from baby food to aphrodisiac with a few stops for soda drinks and malted milks along the way.

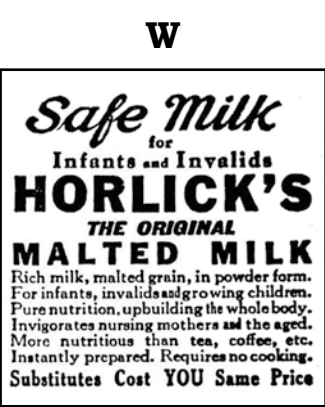
In the early 20th century, the basic message was still “Protect your Baby.” In the 19th century it was a concern of babies failing to thrive. Weight was the most readily evident aspect of the healthy baby. By the 20th century, there was the added concern of safe foods. On two trade cards from that era, note the scale where the healthy baby weighs as much as two other children **(X)** and the chubby faces of the children (and cat) who are slurping the formula from nursing bottles **(Y)**.

In the 20th century the children are still chubby, but the concern is with germs. Heinz is pushing the safety of its food and canning process (1937). While Ralston (of Ralston-Purina pet food fame) is suggesting you need to keep your child well fed with his Whole Wheat Cereal to be ready for the “Danger Days” of the mid-1920s. (Danger Days was an ad campaign developed by Ralston). The baby food picture is one that continues today. Eskay foods is gone, as is Bird’s Eye “Frozen Instant Baby food” (1959-1961), but Gerber (ca. 1928) and hundreds of other infant foods remain.

A final note: You may be wondering what happened to the sick infant that lived on Market Street outside of Marcus Hook in the 1920s. We don’t know. The occupants were all tenants and there are no traces of them in the historical records. One could only hope that the Eskay’s and Horlick’s helped offset the patent medicines that appear to have been used at the site. These medicines included syrup for teething (one of which was identified as a “baby killer” by several early-20th-century medical testing facilities), various cough medicines (all but one of which had alcohol), and a syrup for wasting diseases of childhood (which contained the poison strychnine).



V



W



X



Y

23 Skidoo and Chicken Inspector 23 Too!

A Glimpse of Early-20th-Century Slang and Humor

Adapted from a paper presented by Kenneth J. Basalik, Ph.D.
at Explore Philadelphia's Buried Past, 2016

People often ask me, “How do you know what that artifact is?” Sometimes I tell them it is a matter of experience and study. But then I jokingly tell them that sometimes the artifact has writing on it that tells you “what it is.” Of course, things are not always what they seem.

Recent excavations undertaken for PennDOT in Delaware County, Pennsylvania, unearthed early-20th-century remains associated with several households. Among the recovered artifacts was a badge labeled “Chicken Inspector 23.” **(A)** At first glance, most people would say “Oh, someone on that site worked inspecting chickens.” Well . . . not exactly. Digging a little deeper through the wonders of the Internet, I noted that there were a variety of different shapes and sizes for “Chicken Inspector” badges **(B) (C)**, but all of the badges had “23” on them. Obviously there was a deeper, symbolic meaning here.



So what was it all about? An early-20th-century certificate provides a clue. **(D)** The certificate is published by the Pastime Novelty Company of New York City, producer of prints, novelties, and postcards, best known for their nudes and other risqué items. As can be seen from two of their postcards **(E) (F)**, the “Chicken Inspector” is looking at a specific type of “chick.”

The “Chicken Inspector 23” badge is an expression of crude male humor. For anyone not recognizing the attempt at humor of the two postcards, I draw your attention to the “Samples of Chicken Feet” illustrated on a card announcing “You Have Been Appointed Chicken Inspector” **(G)**. The sample of “corn” is a coin. The implications are even clearer on a card delaring that “You have been recommended as a Chicken Inspector” **(H)**. There is also photographic evidence that Chicken Inspector badges were *actually worn* **(I)**. But what is the significance of the number 23?

“23” is early-20th-century slang. **(J) (K)** The meaning attached to it is to “move on,” “get out,” “good-bye,” “glad you are gone.” It first appeared in print in March 1899 in a Kentucky newspaper. The paper indicated: “[The number 23] has only a significance to local men and is not in vogue elsewhere. Such expressions often obtain a national use, as instanced by ‘rats!’ ‘cheese it,’ etc., which were once in use throughout the length and breadth of the land.” Seven months later, the *Washington Post* described a street encounter: “I saw a street beggar approach a well-dressed man. The man looked at the beggar in cold disgust and said: ‘Aw, twenty-three!’ I could see that the beggar didn’t understand it any better than I did. I happened to meet a man who tries to ‘keep up’ on slang and I asked the meaning of ‘Twenty-three!’ He said it was a signal to clear out, run, get away.” So much for local slang. In terms of the object at hand, it seems plausible that the 23 on the “Chicken Inspector” badge is a jocular way of telling other people to “back off” or “beat it” and let the Chicken Inspector alone to do his “job.”

A few years after “23,” the slang word “skidoo” appeared. It is thought to have derived from “skedaddle,” which in itself may be a slang word. “23” and “skidoo” became linked, as seen in this badge **(L)** (chicken inspection was obviously no longer a concern). “Skidoo” began to take on a different meaning, as shown on this button. **(M)**

Although the use of “23” has faded from memory, “Chicken Inspector” humor lives on through some modern examples, including a “Hootch Inspector” badge, which continues the use of the number 23, and an “FBI” (Female Body Inspector) badge, which does not. The Chicken Inspector 23 badge is reflective of crude male humor from the early 20th century that continues into our own times. But the badge is also a reminder of the ever-changing nature of language, meaning, humor . . . and for the archaeologist, that things are not always what they seem.

Lilies Of The Fields

An Example of an Early-20th-Century Ornamental Light Bulb

Adapted from a paper presented by Kenneth J. Basalik, Ph.D.,
at Explore Philadelphia's Buried Past, 2014

Electrical lighting is something we tend to think of as modern and everyday. But like many everyday things, it has a much longer history. Electrical lighting began in earnest more than 135 years ago. This paper discusses an ornamental light bulb associated with the electrification of the Christmas tree. **(N)** The light bulb was recovered from an early-20th-century privy in the Marcus Hook area.



The first use of electric lights on a Christmas tree occurred in 1882 when a General Electric executive had his tree wired with lights. Plain bulbs were used in that initial installation. Within a decade, painted glass bulbs molded in varying shapes were being produced. **(O) (P)** Early Christmas tree lights required an electrician to wire the sets and connect them to an electrical source. By 1900, though the price had fallen, lights were still so expensive that an advertisement in *Scientific American* suggested renting them for the holidays. Despite the price, by the early twentieth century, Christmas tree lights were becoming a tradition.

Flowers were a popular shape for bulbs up into the late 1930s. Roses and rosebuds in a variety of shades, as well as lilies, were the most popular. The majority of those bulbs were painted on colorless glass and were manufactured in Germany. As the popularity of electric Christmas lights expanded, so did the number of shapes. Shortly before World War I, American manufacturers tried to establish factories in Japan, but Japanese craftsmen had trouble producing quality painted bulbs on colorless glass. Eventually the manufacturers discovered that by using milk glass bulbs, the Japanese could produce acceptable painted products.

The technology used to produce the bulbs was not very innovative. Glass molds similar to those used for producing glass ornaments were used. Electrical connections in the 1880s required lights to be temporarily wired to outlets. Screw in “plugs” were available in the late 1890s and were used until the mid-1920s when screw-in connectors were replaced by the blade plug.

The popularity of Christmas lights increased as the price decreased. Lights became available to nearly the whole population and were used even by those who had no public source of electricity. The popularity of Christmas lights can be summed up by the packaging of one early-20th-century set: Simple, Clean, Safe. Although none of these terms is strictly true, they were perceived as such.



Made in “Roumania”

An Early-20th-Century Novelty Perfume Bottle from Delaware County

Adapted from a paper presented by Kenneth J. Basalik, Ph.D.
at Explore Philadelphia's Buried Past, 2016

To an archaeologist, every object has a story. Most objects have *more* than one story. Some stories are more interesting than others. Some are more complete. Some are easily told, while others take a lot of “digging.” The object addressed in this paper is a bottle **(Q)**. One of the stories it tells touches on four countries, international copyright laws, corporate mergers, and a 20th-century invention. Ferreting out the story is a story in itself and required a lot of digging beyond the excavation of the bottle from a privy during a PennDOT-sponsored bridge project in Delaware County.



Without the Internet, this story would not have been told. It begins with an Internet search of the mark on the bottle: “Made in Roumania.” The search turned up a cleaner example of our bottle **(R)**, and a series of bottles that help identify our object as a perfume container. From the 10th through the 20th centuries, in Europe and America, perfume was usually made from the same essential oils as food flavorings. Eau de Cologne arrived in the 18th century, and American-made scents were manufactured from that point forward and throughout the 19th century, although generally the perfume and scents were made from materials obtained from France. In 1920, Chanel introduced a synthetic scent and the world of perfume was never the same. Perfumes were marketed as emblematic of elegance, and an astounding variety of bottles were created to contain the fragrances.

Back to the Internet search of bottles marked “Made in Roumania.” In addition to our sailor-shaped bottle, there were bottles shaped like top-hatted snowmen and grinning dogs **(S) (T)**. The bottles posted on the Internet all had original tags indicating their contents and the manufacturer. They all contained perfumes made from essential oils of roses, honeysuckle, jasmine and other flowers—traditional, non-synthetic scents. This wasn’t Chanel or the House of Arden with fancy scents and fancy bottles. These perfumes were all manufactured by Lorie Inc. of Boston. So who the heck was Lorie Inc.?

A search of Boston City Directories from the 1920s and 1930s—our bottle’s production era—turned up no references to Lorie Inc. Expanding our search, we tracked down “Perfumers Lorie” in a 1948 Boston directory. The address was shared with the United Drug Company, of which Lorie Inc. turned out to be a part. The United Drug Company was started in 1902 when Louis Liggett convinced 40 druggists to each invest \$4,000 in a new company. In 1903 the United Drug Company began manufacturing various products and established the “Rexall” name for stores that would carry its products. Though the products were manufactured and distributed by a drug store chain, Rexall sought to maintain an “elegance” factor in some of its advertising. Case in point: the faux French brand name “Jonteel,” suggesting tastefulness and refinement. **(U)** Lorie products carried a more modest cachet that didn’t keep them from being lumped in with stomach-ache medicines, toothpastes, and candy in Rexall sales ads. **(V)**

But what of Lorie’s “Made in Roumania” bottle shapes? Some of them were based on whimsical characters licensed in Britain, most notably a dog named “Bonzo,” drawn by British illustrator George Studdy. **(W)** “Bonzo” became a sensation in 1921, and his image was reproduced everywhere: on glass perfume bottles and inkwells, china figures, jugs, ashtrays, plates, cups and saucers, condiment sets, soft toys, metalware, children’s games, children’s books, and movies (1924-25 saw the release of more than two-dozen Bonzo-featuring films).

And so, from our little bottle recovered from a Delaware County privy emerged a story involving manufacture in Romania under license to reproduce comic images of a British cartoonist; containment of perfume materials originating in France and bottled by a Boston-based perfumer; and marketing by a drug store chain with outlets across North America. With its novelty shape and drug store retailing, our bottle reflects the lower end of the perfume trade, and sheds a little more light on middle-class lifestyles in the early years of the twentieth century along Market Street just north of Marcus Hook.

