

# ARCHAEOLOGY OF HISTORIC HOUSES

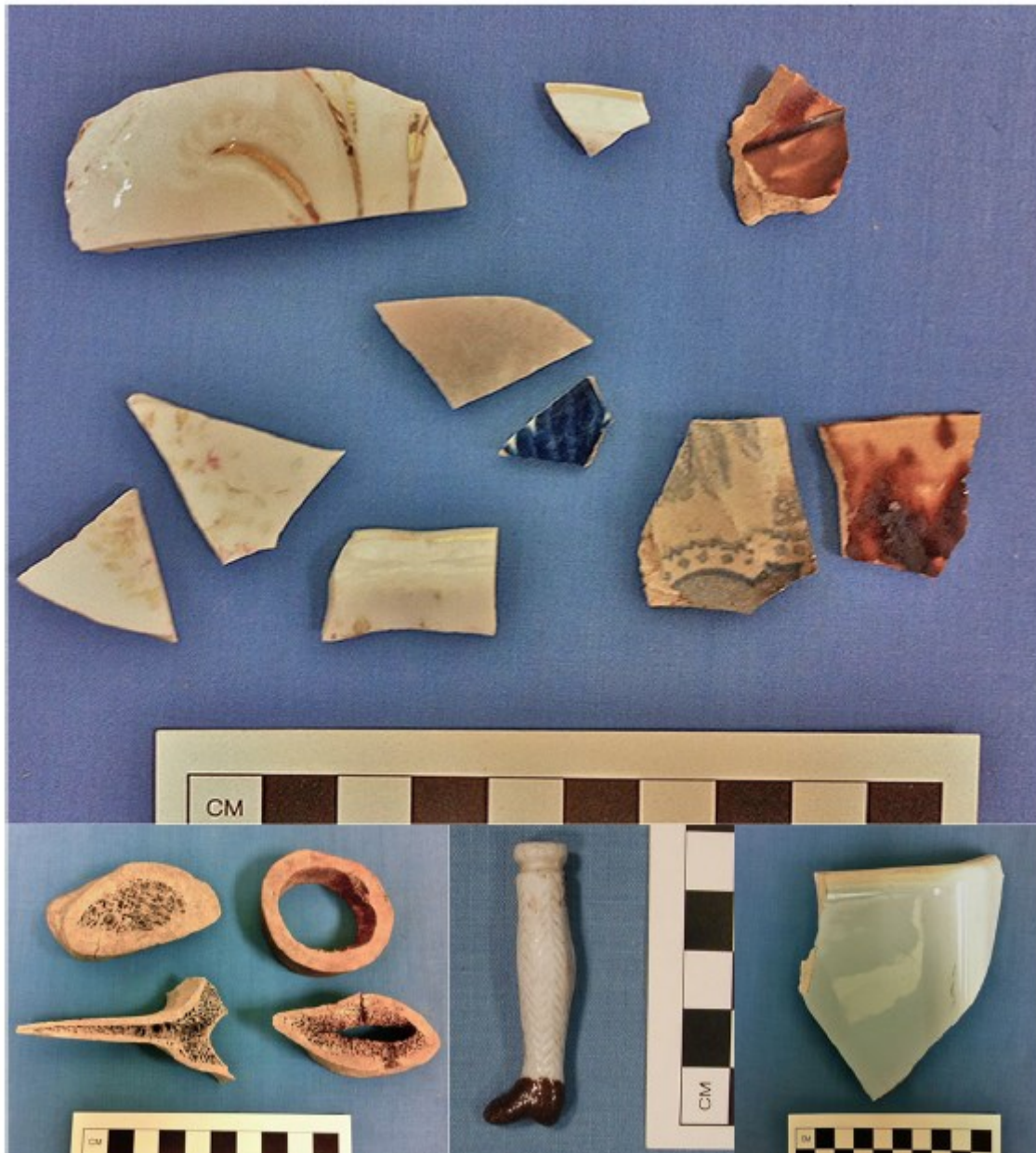
June 29, 2012 april.beisaw Excavation, Finds, Historical Archaeology Archaeology, Geography of the United States, Heidelberg University, metal thimble, National Register of Historic Places in Wisconsin, New York, Octagon house, Ohio, Ohio Historical Society, Seneca County, The Octagon, Tiffin, Tiffin Historic Trust, Wisconsin

My Day of Archaeology began with a trip to the local historical society. I delivered two boxes of artifacts and a report that detailed the weekend excavation conducted with my Intro Archaeology class right in their back yard.



*Grammes Brown House in Tiffin, Ohio – Headquarters of the Tiffin Historic Trust*

As usual, the historical society folks were a bit skeptical that we would find “anything” but we sure did.



*Some of the artifacts recovered from the Grammes Brown House. Ceramics, bones from steaks, a doll leg, and the corner of a toilet bowl tank.*

After I left the historical society, I made a similar delivery to the archives of the college where I have been teaching for the last four years. The oldest building on campus is an 1852 octagon shaped house and I spent three days excavating there with an honors course called “The Power of Place.”



*Octagon House – located on the campus of Heidelberg University*

Again we uncovered a lot more than anyone imagined, including the remains of a greenhouse that was attached to the octagon around 1900. The artifacts here were very different from those at the Grammes Brown house, which makes sense. Although both houses were built and occupied around the same time, the people living in the Grammes Brown house were wealthier than those who lived at the Octagon.



*Some of the artifacts recovered from the Octagon House. A metal thimble, two buttons (glass and shell), a fragment of slate pencil, a plastic checker piece, and a fragment of a large milk pan.*

The archaeology of historic houses helps to bring community history to life. The students who worked on these excavations learned as much about their new hometown as they did about archaeology.

Anyone interested in learning more about these excavations can find a copy of the full report [here](#). Paper copies of the report will be on file at the Ohio Historical Society, the Tiffin Historic Trust, and Heidelberg University.

The rest of my Day of Archaeology is being spent preparing for new projects in New York. I already have the remains of an entire town waiting for me.