

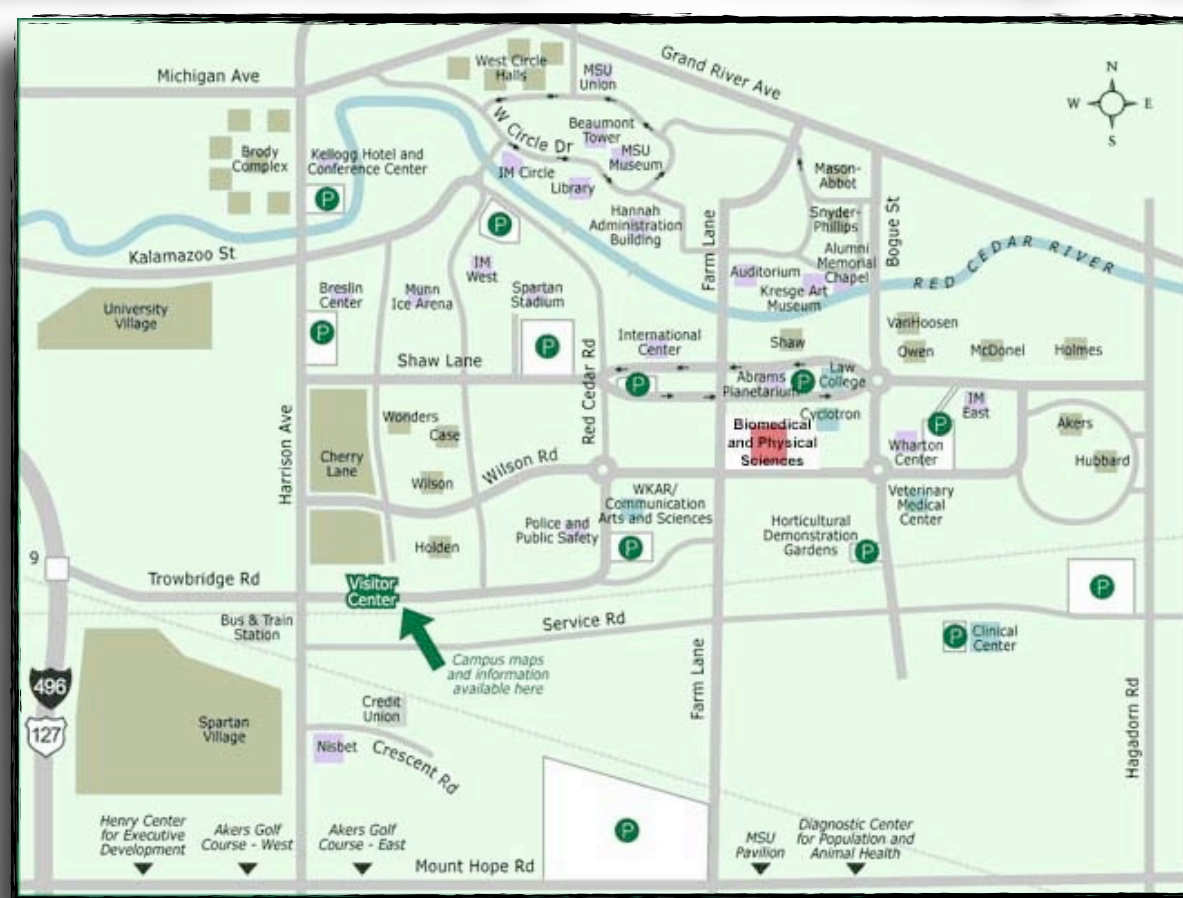


A Brief History

In 1855 the Agricultural College of the State of Michigan was founded, known today as Michigan State University! When founded, the campus consisted of 676.57 acres of land, most of which was heavily forested. John C. Holmes, a huge advocate for the creation of the school, designed the original two buildings on campus, College Hall and Saints' Rest. College Hall was where classes took place and Saints' Rest (pictured above) was the first dormitory. In 1870 Williams Hall was opened, it was used as a dormitory as well, and many of Saints' Rest's functions, such as the kitchen, dining, and laundry services were transferred to Williams Hall. Saints' Rest essentially became the "dormitory" while Williams Hall became the "boarding hall."

In the late 1800s there were not garbage systems like we have today. Garbage was typically thrown into trash pits. In Saints' Rest case, the pit was located to the south of the building.

In the winter of 1876, while the students were away for break, Saints' Rest burned to the ground. The land was capped until MSU's Sesquicentennial in 2005, which was celebrated by MSU's Campus Archaeology Program (CAP) with an excavation at the location of the dormitory. In the fall of 2008 and summer of 2009 follow up excavations were conducted at the location of the trash pit. This excavation is referred to as Saints' Rest Rescue.



Methodology

The methodology of my research is best understood in two parts.

Part One: Saints' Rest Rescue:

- Sorted artifacts into categories by type then entered into relational database (i.e. glass, ceramic, metal, etc.)
- Basic exploratory data analysis of artifacts based on type, frequency, weight
- Chronological assessment of artifacts
 - Used distinct markings (i.e. Liddle, Elliot & Son, J. Wedgwood)
 - Most valuable information was found from ceramics

Part Two: Saints' Rest Comparison:

- Used Heather L. Mustonen's thesis on 2005 Saints' Rest excavation to do a comparative analysis of the artifact assemblages
- Compared artifact types, frequencies and weights to get an idea of the time period and function of the space on campus
 - Focused mostly on ceramics
- Created pie charts of artifacts
- Dated the sites based on artifacts

Understanding Life, Through Trash

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Purpose of Research

In 2005, the Campus Archaeology Program (CAP) conducted an excavation on campus of the school's first dormitory, Saints' Rest, which was in use from 1856-1876. In 2008/2009 CAP excavated an area just south of the dorm. Both of these areas are located north of West Circle Dr., just east of the MSU Museum's current location. The second excavation is believed to be a trash pit from Saints' Rest. The purpose of my research can be broken into two parts. The first being the importance of analyzing the artifacts from the 2008/2009 excavation to determine the time range of the pit. Trash pits are extremely important to archaeologists because they offer an unfiltered look into the past.

Secondly, my research was done to make a comparison to the artifacts uncovered from the 2005 Saints' Rest excavation. The importance of this comparison is to determine if the trash pit was definitely linked to Saints' Rest, and to gain a better grasp of what campus space and buildings were used for when campus was first created.

My research also opens doors for future research. In the summer of 2010, CAP held another field school, which I was fortunate enough to be a part of. We excavated an area west of the Saints' Rest location, our aim was to find a trash pit, probably from College Hall. A comparative analysis could be done of the 2010 College Hall trash pit to the 2008/2009 Saints' Rest trash pit.



Center Images: Top Left - Modern day aerial photograph of MSU campus, with the Saints' Rest Rescue excavation site shown; Top Right - November excavations at Saints' Rest Rescue in 2008; Bottom - Final south wall profile of the trash pit in 2009.

References

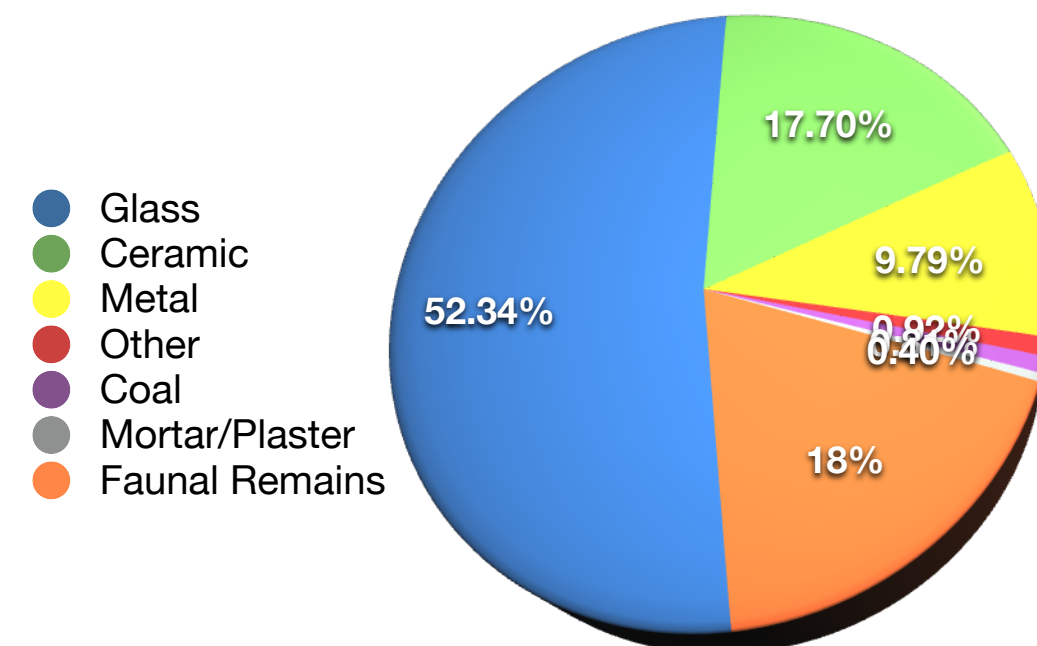
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Analytical Findings

The analytical findings of my research are best expressed with charts. By creating charts of the overall artifact types found, I was able to look at what the pit was probably being used for. Looking further into the ceramic breakdown, I found that most of the ceramic was Iron Stoneware. Most of it was inexpensive utilitarian material, typically bowls and plates. The mass amount of inexpensive bowls and plates tells us that this pit was probably linked to the dining hall. Many broken glasses were also found, but since they did not have any markings they were not analyzed as thoroughly. There were a lot of faunal remains as well, many of which were cut cow bones, indicating the cow had been butchered. The mass amount of glasses, and cow remnants also steers us toward the dining hall theory. At the time of Saints' Rest demise, Williams Hall was being used as the dining location on campus. Using maker's marks on several pieces of ceramic, I was able to narrow down the terminus post quem (the earliest date the pit was from) to determine which building the pit was related to.

Artifact Assemblage Saints' Rest 2008/2009



Stoneware

Yellowware

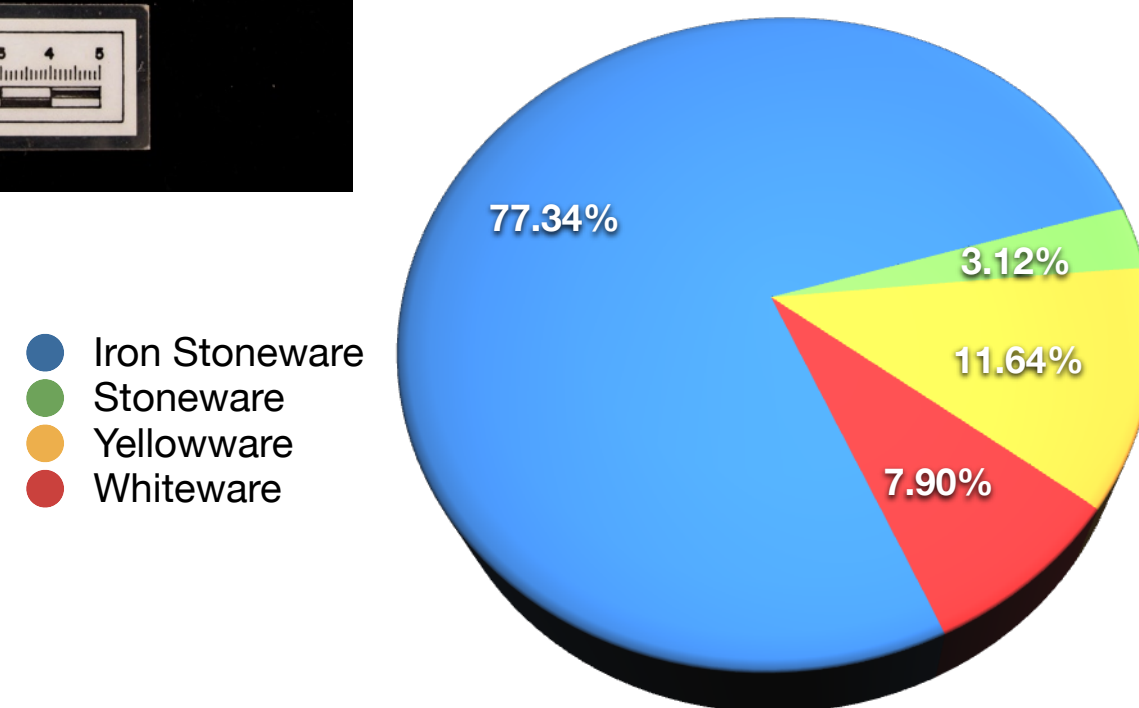


Iron Stoneware

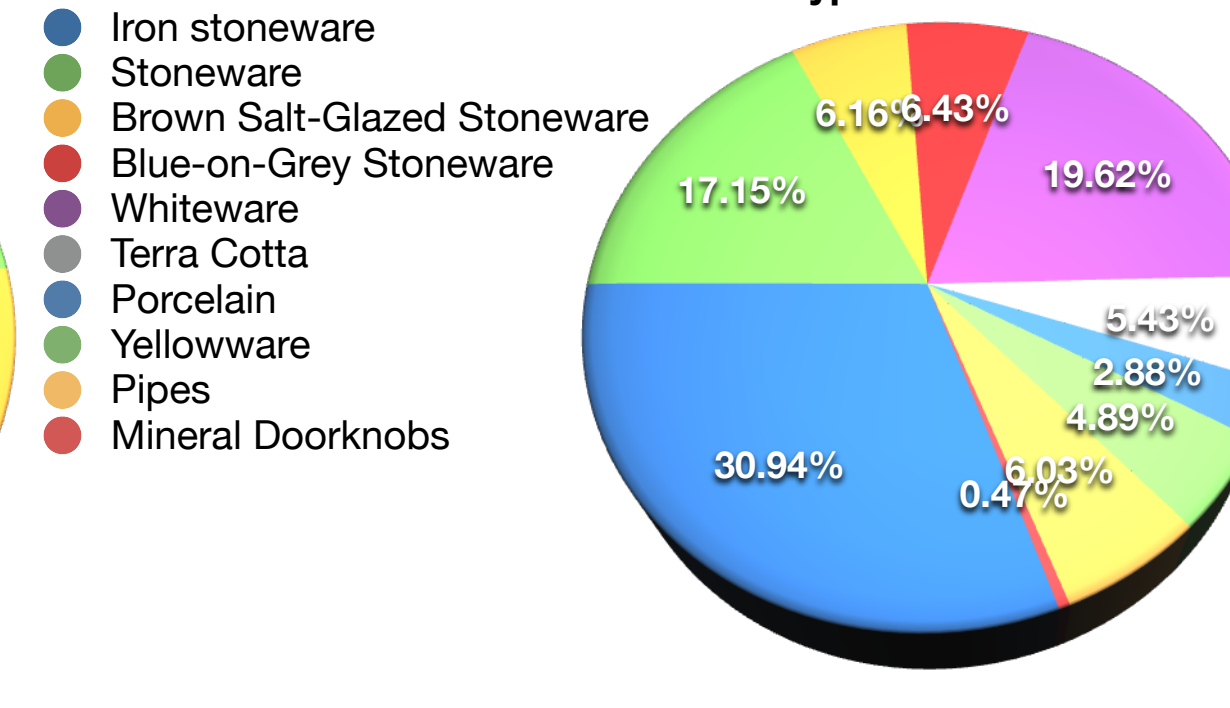
Whiteware

Rockingham Ware

Ceramic Types Saints' Rest 2008/2009



Ceramic Types Saints' Rest 2005



Comparative Findings/ Conclusions

Comparison:

- Both Saints' Rest and Saints' Rest Rescue had large amounts of Iron Stoneware uncovered
- Determined the terminus post quem (the earliest date the pit was from) was between 1862-1868
- Majority of Iron Stoneware found at Saints' Rest were personal items (i.e. shaving mug, toothbrush holders, etc.)
- Majority of Iron Stoneware found at Rescue were dining items.
- Minimal amounts of faunal remains found at Saints' Rest
- Saints' Rest Rescue had a lot of butchered cow bones uncovered.

Conclusions:

The ceramics analyzed tell us that the trash pit was definitely in use before Williams hall was constructed in 1870. There is strong evidence that the pit was used as a refuse pit for the dining hall on campus, which at the time was Saints' Rest. By the time Saints' Rest burned down, there was little evidence of the dining hall's former location.