



ABBOTT FARM

The Abbott Farm Complex is a part of a large complex of archaeological sites in Trenton, New Jersey, in what is now the Abbott Farm Historic District, a National Register landmark. A few sites, such as Riverview Cemetery and the Trenton Gas Works, are outside the Historic District but are still nearby and for the purposes of this summary are considered part of the complex.

A very large number of burials from these sites were removed by the Indian Site Survey in during the 1930s by a crew under the direction of Dorothy Cross. These burials are housed at the New Jersey State Museum, along with associated funerary objects.

Other material from these sites probably resides at the American Museum of Natural History and the Field Museum in Chicago, both of which had connections with Ernest Volk and others. Both the New Jersey State Museum and the additional Volk material will be described later in this report.

Lalor Field

The site was dug by Ernest Volk in 1894 and 1895. It was reported in Volk's 1911 *The Archaeology of the Delaware Valley*. Some of the UFOs were recovered by C.C. Abbott and Ernest Volk between 1888 and 1917.

According to the Peabody inventory, 6 individuals were recovered from Lalor Field in 1894, along with several AFOs: one animal mandible with teeth, 1 notched stone, and 3 stone implements. Other artifacts in the grave fill included lithic flakes and ceramic sherds. This material was dated to the Middle to Late Woodland.

Between 1894 and 1895, 7 other individuals were recovered, along with a single AFO: a stone gorget. According to Peabody records, "other artifacts were found in the grave fill. This material was also dated to the Middle to Late Woodland." It is unclear whether the "other objects" and the grave fill itself were regarded as funerary.

Other material from the site included 5 lots of ceramic sherds, 2 projectile points, and 1 ceramic pot base, recovered in 1895 by Ernest Volk, and 3 lots of ceramic sherds, recovered between 1888 and 1917 by C.C. Abbott and Ernest Volk.

According to a statement of significance published in 1976, the Abbott Farm area is "the largest known Middle Woodland (ca. 500 B.C.-500 A.D.) village site in the coastal Mid-Atlantic/New England region. This property became the focal point of a famous 40-year controversy about the antiquity of human occupation of the New World. More than 100 books and articles have been published on Abbott Farm, one of the country's most famous archeological sites" (<http://tps.cr.nps.gov/nhl/detail.cfm?ResourceId=1632&ResourceType=Site>).



The Lalor and Wright Fields site (28Me10) was recorded in the Abbott Farm National Historical Landmark Interpretive Report (pg. 6-4) as "The Lalor and Wright farm fields were a major focus of the excavations carried out by Ernest Volk on behalf of the Peabody Museum between 1889 and 1911; work revealed part of a continuous chain of village sites which occupied the bluff rim and supposedly marked the headquarters of the Unami division of the Lenni Lenape; Volk found a wigwam site surrounded by ten graves and a fragment of bison bone, also numerous other pit features, including burials" (NJSM Site Registration Files; Volk 1911; Skinner and Schrabisch 1913:64).

A.K. Rowan Farm

The A.K. Rowan Farm site was recorded in the Abbott Farm National Historical Landmark Interpretive Report (pg. 6-6) as "Area referred to as Rowan's Farm (centered on the Isaac Watson House) excavated by Ernest Volk in 1909 yielded numerous pits, burials and artifacts" (Volk 1911:183-202).

The site was dug by Ernest Volk and R.E. Merwin in 1909. It was reported in Volk's 1911 *The Archaeology of the Delaware Valley*.

The Peabody inventory lists 1 individual from the site, recovered in 1909. AFOs include 5 sets of shell and glass beads, 1 copper box containing vegetable fiber, 1 lot of woven fabric, and one lot of hide fragments with metal oxidation. The site is dated to Contact or Historic Period.

Some 20 UFOs were found on the site and the "burial place near old house." These include 6 projectile points, 1 stone scraper, 1 set of glass beads, 4 lots of ceramic sherds, 2 worked bone fragments, 3 metal bells, 1 worked stone, 1 stone effigy pendant depicting a face, and 1 kaolin pipe fragment. These materials are dated Middle Woodland through Contact.

Deutzville

One lot of ceramic sherds was recovered from Deutzville, Hamilton County, New Jersey between 1888 and 1917 by C.C. Abbott and Ernest Volk. These items may be associated with other items from the Lalor Field site recovered between the same dates by Abbott and Volk.

Deutzville (28Me11) is recorded in the Abbott Farm National Historical Landmark Interpretive Plan (pg. 6-3) as "Site of fragments of human parietals and human femur found by Ernest Volk in the gravels in a railroad cut south of Hancock Street on December 1, 1899; exact location unclear (NJSM Site Registration Files; Volk 1911:115-117, 242-249; Skinner and Schrabisch 1913:65)."

Riverview Cemetery



A set of glass beads and a kaolin pipe were recovered from the area of Riverview Cemetery in 1911 by Frank Wachter. The site is on the south shore of the Delaware River in Trenton, Mercer County, New Jersey. This site is nearby other sites of the Abbott Farm Complex.

Trenton Gas Works

The Trenton Gas Works site was excavated by C.C. Abbott in 1878. Located in Trenton, Mercer County, New Jersey, the site was apparently discovered by workmen digging a trench at the gas works. One individual was found.

The location of the site is not clear, but based on information supplied by Greg Lattanzi of the New Jersey State Museum it is where the Department of Agriculture is now, off Warren Street near the Assinpink Creek in Trenton.

“Trenton”

Two UFOs were recovered from Trenton in 1872: both were stone effigy pendants. It is not clear how these UFOs relate to any other sites.

Miscellaneous Notes on Abbott Farm

From Abbott Farm National Historic Landmark Interpretive Report, pages 5-11 to 5-15:

“Volk’s work in the Trenton area on behalf of the Peabody Museum between 1889 and 1910 was wide-ranging and involved not only formal excavations but also extensive monitoring of ground disturbance caused by new construction and mining. As is apparent from his published journal extracts between 1906 and 1910, included in *The Archaeology of the Delaware Valley*, he examined countless railroad and sewer line cuts, sand and gravel pits, dredge spoil, and excavations for building basements, particularly with an eye to recovering artifacts from the Trenton gravels, a task in which he was not entirely successful. Volk’s formal excavation activity mostly took place on the bluff top to the west of the Abbott Farm, concentrated especially between modern-day Hewitt and Reeger avenues, within 500 feet or so of the bluff rim, on either side of Bow Hill (Figures 5.1 and 5.2). At the time this area consisted of cultivated fields on the outskirts of Trenton on farmland owned by the Lalor and Wright families.

“Volk also excavated extensively further to the east on the Rowan farm, including close to the Isaac Watson House (the nucleus of the farm) and in the lowland below the house alongside Watson’s Creek within what is today Roebling Park (Figure 5.2). While sketch maps and representative profiles of Volk’s excavations in the Lalor and Wright fields are included in the publication of 1911, little detail is provided about the precise location and soils of this other work. Nevertheless, it is



apparent that both the Rowan and Abbott farms, the lowland and countless other locations all produced a large volume of archaeological features and artifacts (Volk 1911).

"Volk's excavations dealt predominantly with what Abbott had referred to as the black soil (essentially the upper humic layer and plowzone) and the yellow sand (the immediately underlying layers of sand of variable texture and depth, within which were bands of reddish sandy clay, the so-called "red veins") (Figure 5.3). He found an abundance of cultural material within the yellow sand, especially argillite artifacts, evidence of Abbott's argillite culture, which today would mostly be assigned to the Middle Woodland period. The darker soil above also yielded large quantities of artifacts, but with a higher proportion of non-argillaceous material, most likely attributable to the Late Woodland and Contact periods. Numerous pit features, including refuse and storage pits and many graves with human skeletal materials (and occasional grave goods), were identified, mostly at the interface of the black soil and yellow sand, but also within the sand (Plate 5.7).

"By modern archaeological standards, Volk's reporting of his Peabody-supported research is disappointing. Locational information is sparse; quantification is absent."

From Abbott Farm National Historic Landmark Interpretive Report, page 5-15:

"The Indian Site Survey's five-year program at the Abbott Farm entailed excavations, several of them immense in scale, at some 20 different locations, most of them on the bluff top, but some also in the lowland surrounding Watson's Creek and Sturgeon Pond. These areas yielded no less than 85 burials, most of them within pits, and 35 caches (deliberately placed concentrations) of various type of stone artifacts."

From Abbott Farm National Historic Landmark Interpretive Report, page 5-23:

"In the fall of 1966 a delicate balance was struck between private property owner, collector, avocational archaeologist and professional archaeologist to achieve some limited controlled excavation on the grounds of the Isaac Watson House, within the heart of what is today the AFNHL; the Unami Chapter of the Archaeological Society of New Jersey, under the direction of Janet S. Pollak, then a professional archaeologist in training, undertook an excavation of 700 square feet, finding no less than 28 separate Native American features, including three burials and four hearths. Artifacts dating from as early as the Early Archaic period were recovered, but the bulk of the cultural materials found were of Middle Woodland and Late Woodland age, including a hitherto unrecognized type of Middle Woodland pottery classified as "Abbott Zoned Punctate." A brief note, without drawings, was published on this work in the Bulletin of the New Jersey Academy of Science (Pollak 1968:84).



Table 5.1. From Abbott Farm National Historic Landmark Interpretive Report, describing excavations by Indian Site Survey in 1930s

Excavation #	Location	Dates Excavated	Excavation Type	Typical Depth (ft.)	Area Excavated (sq. ft.)	Volume Excavated (cu. ft.)	# of Pits	# of Hearths	# of Burials	# of Caches
Excavation 1	bluff top	4/17/36-5/6/36	1 block, 7 trenches	five to 8	750	6450				
Excavation 2	bluff top	7/7/36-7/12/36	1 trench, 6	four 5	42990	171989	69	5	18	7
Excavation 3	bluff top	6/17/36-3/11/36	2 blocks 8	four	15725	67761	13	2	4	2
Excavation 4	bluff top	7/7/36-7/12/36	1 trench 6	four	425	1612				
Excavation 5	lowland	8/12/36-10/15/36	9 trenches	four and a half	975	4387				
Excavation 6	bluff top	10/19/36-12/1/36	2 trenches	no data	275	640				
Excavation 7	bluff top	1/5/37-8/14/40	4 trenches	4.5 to 5	2925	12900				
Excavation 8	bluff top	1/28/37-2/2/37	6 trenches	no data	721	2204				
Excavation 9	bluff top	12/3/37-8/8/39	1 block, 9 trenches	four	56800	206837	52	2	20	14



OFFICIAL WEB SITE OF THE
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Excavation 10	bluff top	8/29/38-1/15/3 9	1 block	four	5250	20624	14			2
Excavation 11	bluff top	1/12/39-3/26/3 9	1 block, 1 trench	four	2675	9000	8		3	
Excavation 12	bluff top	2/14/39-8/4/39	1 block, 4 trenches , 1 test pit	no data	21625	72332	15	2	1	7
Excavation 13	bluff top	4/12/39-4/27/3 9	1 block, 1 trench	three and a half	3125	10940	6			
Excavation 14	lowlan d	8/7/39-2/4/41	1 block, 8 test pits	five and a half	10241	61478	44	13	39	2
Excavation 15	lowlan d	8/15/39-8/16/3 9	15 test pits	four	250	1000				
Excavation s 16-18	bluff top	8/21/39-9/28-3 9	3 blocks, 10 trenches	1.5 to 4	5615	16583	1			
Excavation 19	bluff top	3/5/1940	1 trench	three	300	900				
Excavation 20	lowlan d	3/27/40-4/17/4 0	7 trenches	no data	875	2187				
TOTALS					171542	669824	22	24	85	35
							1			