

Why 17th and Early 18th Century Sites are Under Represented

1. Early historic artifacts written off as isolated finds
2. Early historic artifacts written off as “field scatter” ...where are the scatters? Are they on knoll, a bluff, next to a stream?
3. Early artifacts are explained away...that early coins were lost later in their use cycle or that the window lead was reused ... “this window must have been built into some other unknown house that has probably long since disappeared”
4. Early artifacts are not explained at all ...Large amounts of burned daub were present in Strata B and C.
5. Redware is eliminated from consideration when plotting artifact distributions.
6. “Coarse earthenwares are not very useful for dating archaeological sites, because they were used throughout the colonial period and into the nineteenth century”.
7. There is a mindset out there that the lack of refined wares (white-salt glazed, pearlware, creamware ...) means the occupants were poor ...it probably means the site is early.
8. Under staffed excavation crews (one person crew) rushed to meet a quota
9. Early artifacts such as Buff-bodied Staffordshire wares should be treated the same way a fluted point or bifurcate are treated....search harder!!
10. 50 foot interval shovel testing will miss most of these early sites. Radial tests need to be mandatory around tests which yield early materials.
11. When an early cellar hole is found sampling should not be an option From two small units used to sample a cellar hole in New Castle County, DE ... “The only ceramics found were delftware (41), an eighteenth-century (ceramic) type, and a hoe blade... what Egloff calls “Type 2” also dating to the eighteenth century”. Also recovered from these two units were more than 20 animal bone fragments
12. Archaeologists with a prehistoric bent have little or no interest in these sites unless they are contact period.... The hearth was disturbed by an unfortunate historic disturbance....a circa 1683 house foundation. On one site in southern NJ the CRM archaeologist wanted to rebury the artifacts in a PVC tube rather than write it up since the client wasn’t going to pay. The site contained a large Swedish copper coin.
13. “The first excavations at theSite gave little hint of the riches we would eventually find on the site. The plowzone on the site contained only about 30 artifacts per 1x1-meter square, much less than what we were finding across the creek on the north side and less than a quarter of what we have found on some other sites. We were not at all impressed by this collection, and since we had found no features we were almost ready to move on and let the site be bulldozed. But as it turned out we **simply were not looking hard enough**. When we found the ...cellar hole in one of our backhoe trenches we found a trove of artifacts.”