HARPERS FERRY NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT

ARCHEOLOGICAL COMPONENT

PART I- BLDGS. 32,33,33A,34,34A,&35

PART II- Addendum Bldgs. 32 & 34A



West Virginia

December 1994

Part I

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT: ARCHEOLOGICAL COMPONENT

PACKAGE 116: BLOCK B, LOT 3, PARK BUILDINGS 32, 33, 33A, 34, 34A, 35 SHENANDOAH STREET, HARPERS FERRY NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK, HARPERS FERRY, WEST VIRGINIA

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FINAL REPORT
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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Management Summary 1

Introduction 2

Background History 4

Park Buildings 35, 34, 33, 33A, 32 4

Archeological Component for the Historic Structures Report 6

Methodology 6

General Description of the Stratigraphy 8

Archeological Investigation of Structures 10

Park Building 32 10

Park Buildings 35 and 34 15

Park Building 34A 16

Porch and Stairways: Park Buildings 35 and 34 25

Conclusions and Recommendations 38

References Cited 40

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Map of Package 116, Block B, Lots 2 and 3 3

Figure 2. 1835 Winchester and Potomac Railroad Map of Lower Harpers Ferry 5

Figure 3. Map of Site with Grid Coordinates and Excavation Unit Numbers 7

Figure 4. General Schematic of North-South Profile of the Backyard of Package 116 9

Figure 5. Plan of Powell's 1978 Excavations South of Park Building 32 12

Figure 6. Profile of East Wall of Park Building 32, Test Unit 7 . . . 13

Figure 7. Profile of Soil Against Park Building 32; North Wall Profile of Test Unit 7 14

Figure 8. Profile of Soil Against Park Building 35; North Wall Profile of Test Unit 9 16

Figure 9. Profile of West Wall of Park Building 35 17

Figure 10. Profile of Step, facing North in Excavation Unit 12 19

Figure 11. Profile of Soil Against Step in Test Unit 12; West Wall Profile 20

Figure 12. West Wall Profile of Park Building 34A 22

Figure 13. North Wall Profile of Park Building 34A 23

Figure 14. East Profile of Soil Between Park Buildings 34 and 34A in Test Units 11, 13, 16 24

Figure 15. 1894 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 26

Figure 16. 1922 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 27

Figure 17. 1902 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 28

Figure 18. 1907 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 29

Figure 19. 1912 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 30

Figure 20. 1933 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 31

Figure 21. Historical Photograph of the Backyards of Package 116, taken from Loudoun Heights, ca. 1892-1895 32

Figure 22. Modern Photograph of Park Buildings 34 and 35 with Porch, ca. 1955 33

Figure 23. Modern Photograph of Park Building 35 with Porch, ca. 1955 34

Figure 24. Twentieth-Century Shale Support in Test Unit 3 36

Figure 25. Twentieth-Century Shale Support in Test Unit 12 37

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

Archeology by the National Park Service for Package 116, Block B, Lots 2 and 3, in Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, began in late May, 1989, to provide interpretive data for the exterior restoration of Park Buildings 32, 33, 33A, 34, 34A, and 35. Archeological investigations in the backyards demonstrated that Park Building 32 was constructed in 1877 on a previously built foundation. The date of the earlier foundation is unknown. At the entrance to a narrow alleyway between Park Buildings 34 and 35, a shale step and riser were found which date to the McGraw 1891 construction phase. Park Building 34A, once used as a smokehouse, no longer served this function by 1891, as cellar fill and construction debris covered the air intake below the original door sill. This fill and debris overlay an 1870 brick pavement constructed by McGraw, thus blocking the smokehouse intake. As a result, the current smokehouse entry was raised 1.1 ft to its present level. No remains of 1891 porch posts behind Park Buildings 34-35 were found, and they probably never existed, although shale slabs for the footings of early 20th-century supports were located.

INTRODUCTION

The following report summarizes the archeological component of a multidisciplinary study, with historians and architects, for Development Package 116 at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, West Virginia. Package 116 consists of Lots 2 and 3 in Block B and contains Park Buildings 32, 33, 33A, 34, 35, and 36 (Figure 1). Archeological investigations of these buildings and their backyards supplement the extensive physical histories provided by Charles Snell (1959) and Perry Fisher (1989) and aid in the restoration and interpretation of these buildings. Another goal, addressed in a forthcoming report, will be to provide additional interpretive data on 19th-century life in Harpers Ferry. Archeological excavations began on May 24, 1989, and will continue until the end of December, 1989. Six field assistants and two supervisors performed the fieldwork and laboratory analysis is being conducted by five assistants and two supervisors (see Appendix I). This project is sponsored by the National Park Service.

The Archeology of Package 116 includes three phases. First, excavations focused on answering questions related to the architectural and landscape histories of Park Buildings 32, 34, 34A, 35 and the surrounding yard. The second phase investigated the results of a geophysical survey performed in April, 1989. This survey produced data showing areas containing historic features, such as outbuildings, and also helped locate modern disturbances. The third phase will randomly sample the entire site. This sample will provide a non-biased collection of archeological data and a general overview of the material culture and stratigraphy of Package 116, which will be incorporated into a research report and a landscape analysis.

BACKGROUND HISTORY

Following is a brief outline of the physical history and chain of titles for the structures within Package 116. This information relies on the works of Snell (1959) for a pre-Civil War history, and Fisher (1989) for a post-Civil War history. It provides a framework that will help guide the archeological interpretations for the architectural history of these buildings.

Park Buildings 35, 34, 33, 33A, 32

Park Building 35, which originally measured 33 ft x 23 ft, was built in 1812 by Joseph Annin as an apothecary shop and residence. The U.S. government owned the house by 1821 and used it as quarters for the Master Armorer. A kitchen was added to the main house by 1827. By the mid-1830s a smokehouse (Park Building 34A) was constructed behind the structure (Figure 2) (Snell 1959).

After the Civil War, Chief of Ordnance, Bvt. Maj. Gen. A.B. Dyer concluded Harpers Ferry no longer should serve as an arms manufacturing center and recommended all federal lands in the town be sold. In 1869, Margaret T., Catherine A., and James C. McGraw purchased Lot 3 at the government public auction. James McGraw, their father, acted as surety in this transaction. This acquisition included Park Buildings 35, 34, and 34A (Fisher 1989: 9-14).

The disastrous floods of 1870 and 1877 destroyed much of the former federal

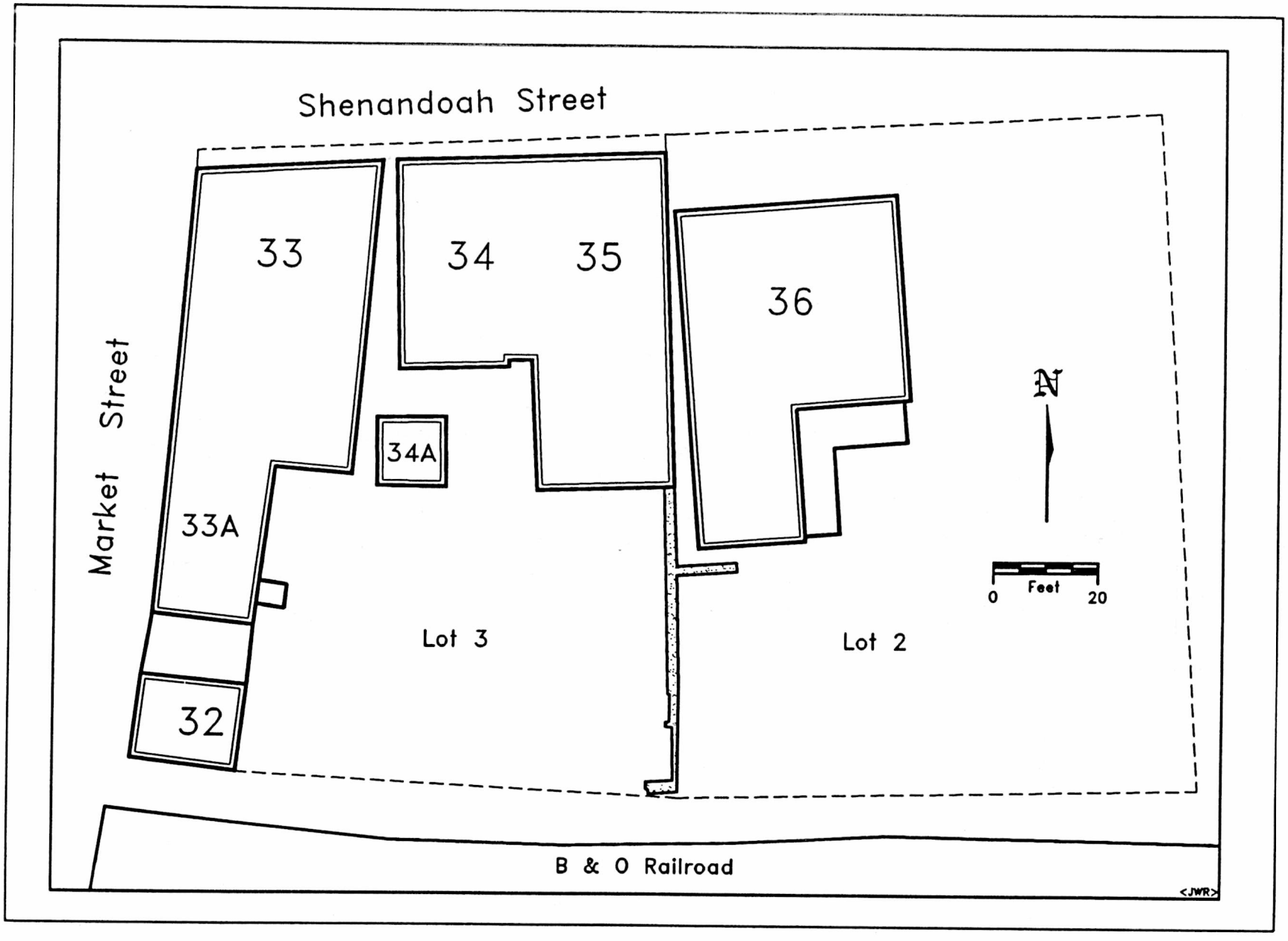


Figure 1. Map of Package 116, Block B, Lots 2 and 3.

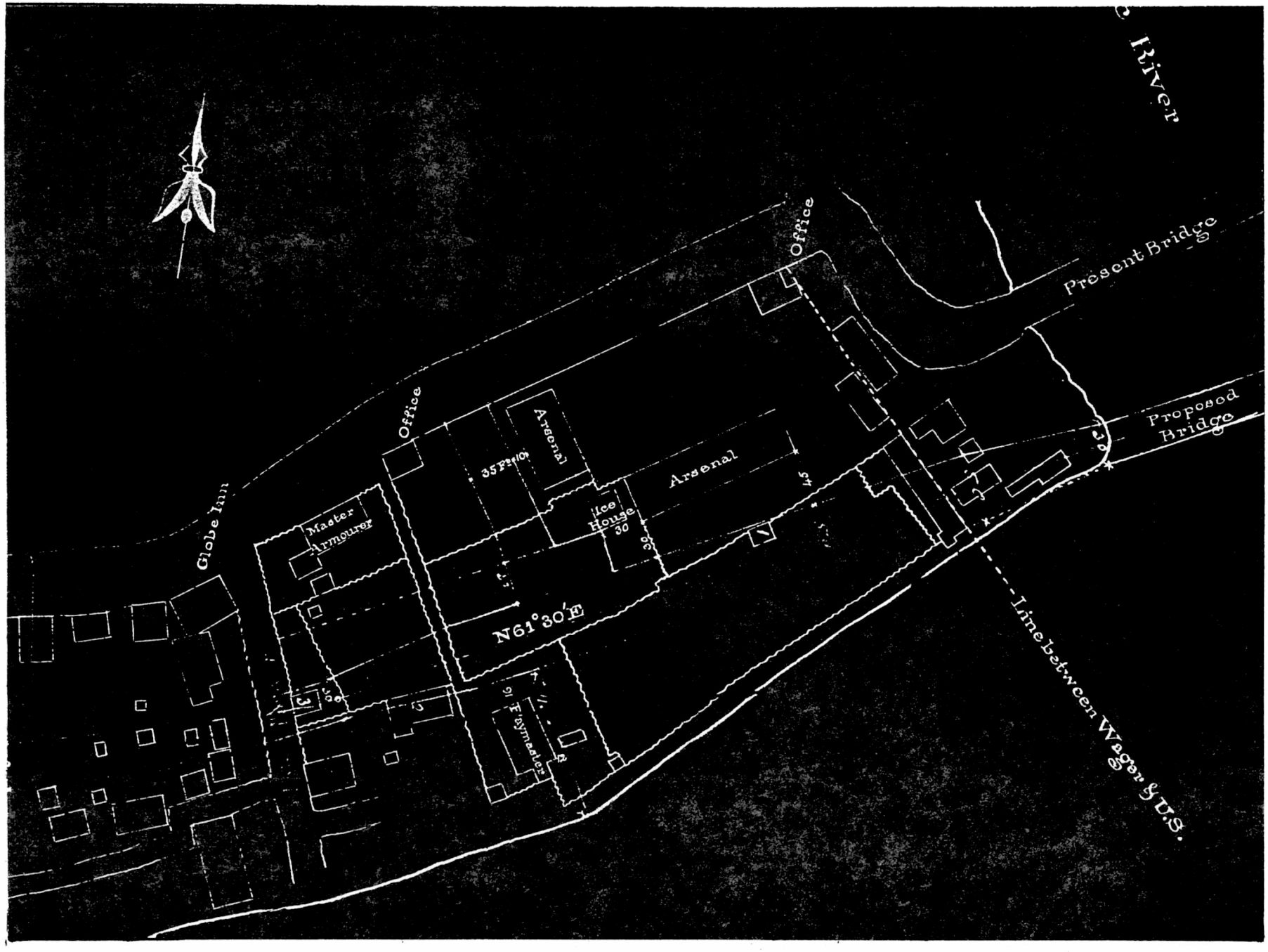


Figure 2. 1835 Railroad Map of Lower Harpers Ferry.

property. Many of the residents on these lands sought relief from the federal government. An 1878 Act of Congress allowed the purchasers of federal lands at Harpers Ferry to make application for abatement. As part of his abatement application, James McGraw stated that in 1877 he spent $600 for the construction of "1 Ice, Carriage, & Coal House", which Fisher (1989:18) believes is probably Park Building 32. Two years later, in 1879, McGraw constructed a corn house and a warehouse for coal and goods. These two-story structures extended across the entire rear of Lot 3 (Fisher 1989: 35). In 1882 the property was conveyed to the father of the original purchasers, James McGraw. That same year McGraw began constructing Park Building 33, which became the new store and dwelling of the McGraw family. Later that year the kitchen addition to Park Building 35, originally built in 1827, was replaced by a 2 1/2 story brick building (Park Building 34) fronting Shenandoah Street, to the same height and depth as Park Building 35 (Fisher 1989: 22). In 1888 McGraw constructed Park Building 33A, a bottling plant with a stone foundation and first story and frame second story. By July, 1891, major additions were underway for Park Buildings 34 and 35, resulting in a massive building fronting Shenandoah Street containing 30 large rooms for boarders. McGraw died in 1893 and his children inherited his estate. Within 4 years they were bankrupt and soon after left town.

The next major occupants of the eastern half of Lot 3 (Park Buildings 34 and 35) were William and Mary Ellen Doran. The Dorans purchased the McGraw estate in 1899 and located their general store on the premises and continued operating the boarding house. The Doran's removed some of the shedding that ran across the rear of the property. On January 1, 1907, Mary Ellen Doran purchased the western portion of Lot 3 (Park Buildings 32, 33, and 33A) (Fisher 1989: 35).

ARCHEOLOGICAL COMPONENT FOR THE HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT

Methodology

A five foot grid was placed over the project area. Each excavation unit was identified by coordinates assigned to its northeast corner (i.e. N 920 E 930) as well as a unit number (i.e. 1.2.3...), assigned in the order in which units were excavated (Figure 3). The units were excavated according to natural stratigraphy.

Excavations were conducted by trowelling and shovel skimming. All of the soil was screened through a 1/4-inch mesh screen. All artifacts were cleaned, labelled and cataloged at the archeology lab in Harpers Ferry NHP. Elevations were taken in relationship to the USGS marker on the southeastern corner of Park Building 36, which measures 275 ft above sea level (asl).

General Description of the Stratigraphy

There are six major historic stratigraphic layers in the backyards of Park Buildings 32-35, although some variation exists within the strata.

Stratum I dates to the 20th century. It varies in color throughout the site from a dark yellow brown (10YR4/6), very dark brown (10YR2/2), and a very dark grayish brown (10YR3/2), and consists of a silty clay, sand, and gravel (Figure 4). Some of this soil is related to filling for a 1960s parking lot.

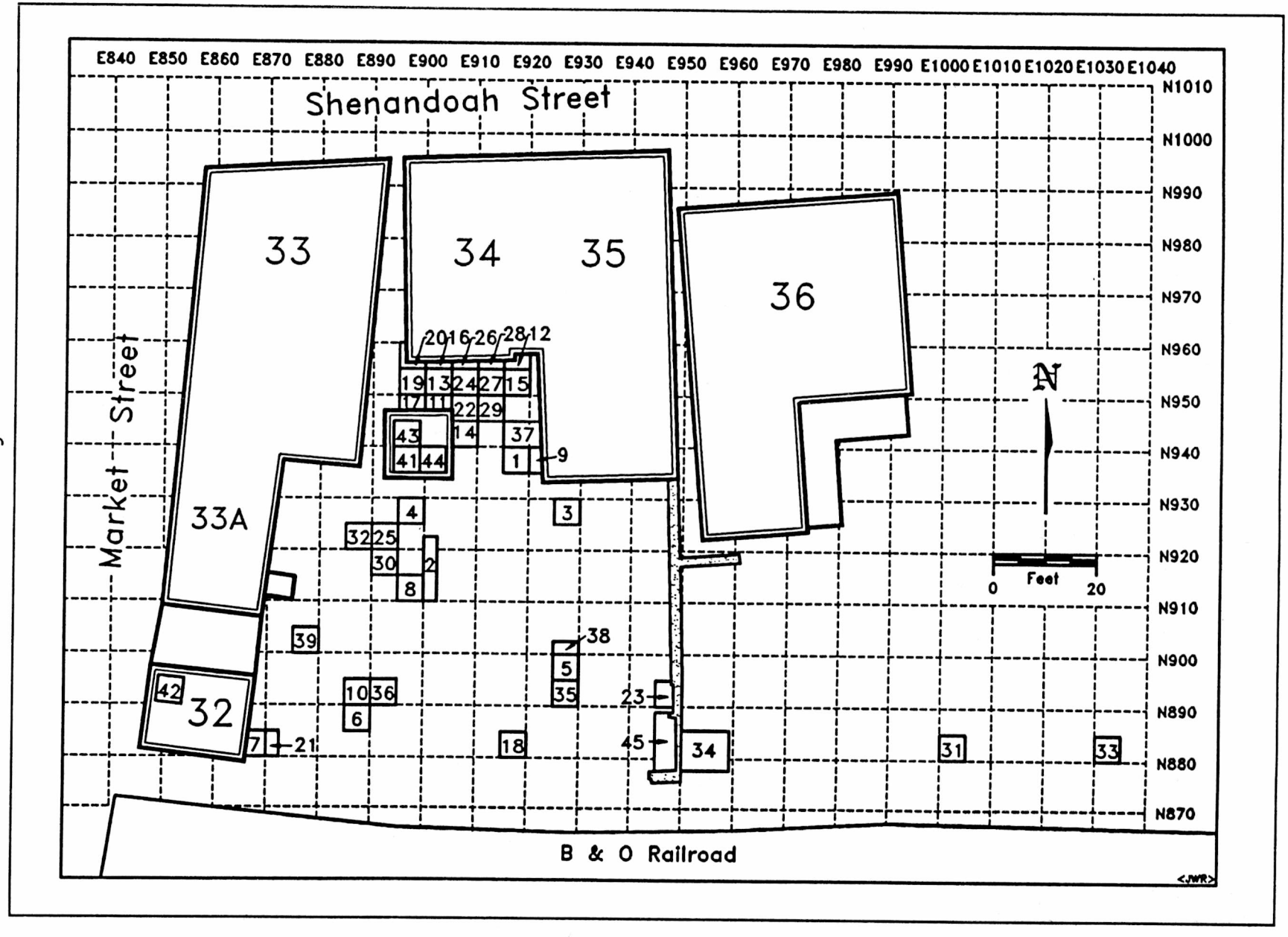


Figure 3. Map Site with Grid Coordinates and Excavation Unit Numbers.

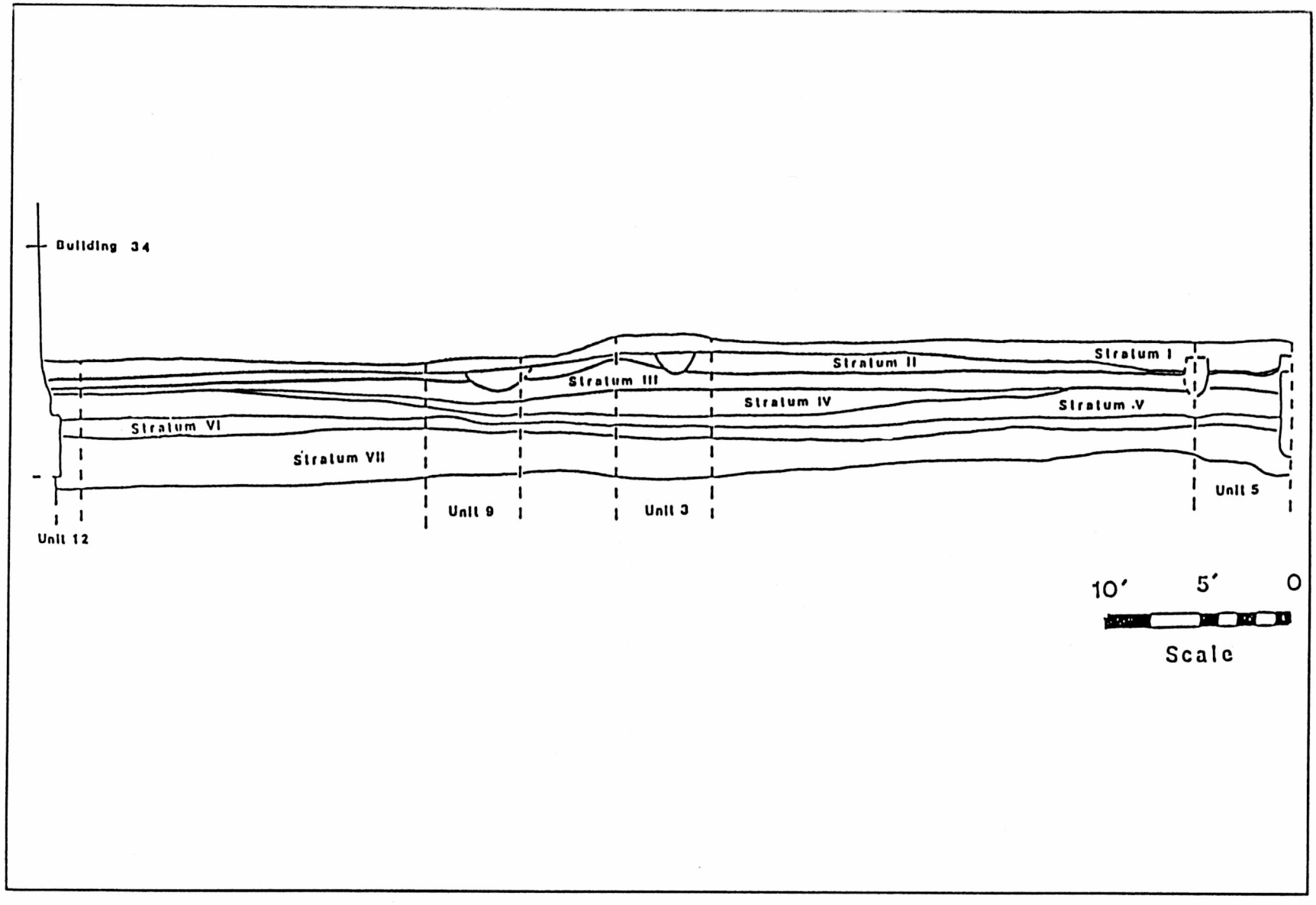


Figure 4. General Schematic of North-South Profile of the Backarea of Package 116.

Stratum II dates from about 1891 to the early 20th century. Some of this soil includes unused sand used in pargeting Park Buildings 34 and 35 in 1891. Excavation Units containing this layer generally lie immediately adjacent to these structures. Very dark grayish brown (10YR3/2) silty clay and very dark gray (10YR3/1) gravel are found in this stratum, which probably relates to a late McGraw (1891-1897) and early Doran occupation (1899- early 20th century).

Strata III and IIIA consists of a series of layers of shale, gravel, and coal and ash attributed to James McGraw and his use of these backyards as a commercial complex (1870-1891).

Generally, Stratum IV is a major flood deposit which probably dates to 1870. Most of the soil consists of a dark yellowish brown (10YR3/4 and 10YR4/4) sandy or silty clay. Inclusions of coal sometimes are found. After this flood McGraw began to commercialize his property which accounts for most of the gravel and coal (Stratum III) found in the above layer. In some cases layers of soil with cultural deposits lie just above the flood layers and below the coal and gravel. These strata may be attributed to some early McGraw activities prior to his major commercial involvement.

A transitional stratum (Stratum V) underlies the flood deposits. Few artifacts are found in this layer, with a minimum number of diagnostic artifacts.

Strata VI and VIA consist mostly of a very dark brown (10YR3/1) and a very dark grayish brown (10YR3/2) silty clay. These strata contain a large quantity of cultural material and faunal remains related to the Civil War era.

Underlying the Civil War layers is historically sterile soil (Stratum VII), with occasional leaching of historic material into the prehistoric layers. Prehistoric materials date from just before European contact to about 3,000 years ago. Remains of hearths, posts (possibly from structures), flakes, and a large number of pottery sherds have been found.

At present, early- and mid-nineteenth-century occupational layers have been found only in the area between Park Buildings 34 and 34A. This may be attributed either to scouring of these deposits by periodic flooding of the Shenandoah, or more probably by the grading of the backyards for drainage or landscaping during the Master Armorer's occupation of Lot 3 (ca. 1821-1858).

Archeological Investigations

Park Building 32. In 1835 the Master Armorer's stable was located in the west central portion of Block B, within the right-of-way of the Winchester and Potomac Railroad (Figure 2). It was moved or rebuilt north of the railroad and fronted on Market Street (Snell 1959: 12). The 1870 flood jarred the building into Market Street. As part of McGraw's expenditures in 1870 he listed the "moving of the stable off the road", probably replacing the stable on its original foundations (Fisher 1989: 18). Later that decade, in 1877, McGraw spent $600 on "1 Ice, Carriage and Coal house" (In Fisher 1989: 18). This probably was the present Park Building 32, although the types and extent of the activities performed in this structure remain unclear.

In 1978, archeological investigations were conducted between Park Building 32 and the retaining wall for the raised railroad bed. Just north and west of the southwest corner of Park Building 32, at 264 ft asl, was a stepped wall, which abutted the railroad retaining wall ten feet to the south. A small stone foundation and a cobble walkway were uncovered (Figure 5) (Powell 1978). Whether this foundation was part of the original stable is uncertain.

The present surface grade adjacent to the east side of Park Building 32 is

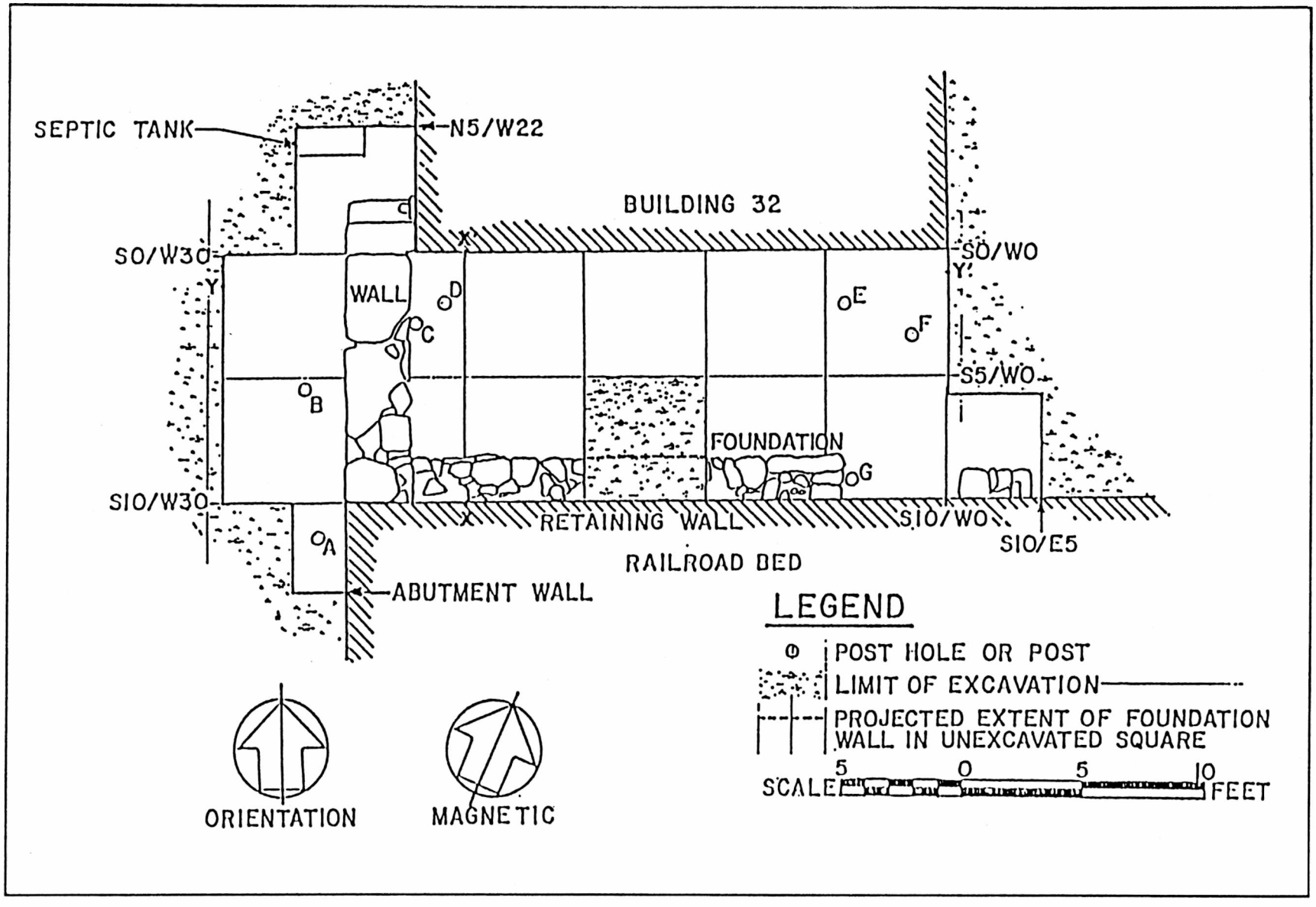


Figure 5. Plan of Powell's 1978 Excavations South of Park Building 32.

about 268 ft asl. In Excavation Unit 7, the base of the eastern wall foundation lies at 262.5 ft asl. It was hoped Excavation Unit 7 would yield trenches filled with construction and yard debris, with artifacts giving some clue as to the date of construction. No builder's trench for the original construction was found, however, making conclusions regarding the early physical history of the building difficult. Apparently, a trench or cellar for the finely-finished foundation was excavated and the stone foundation constructed abutting the soil (Figures 6 and 7). Only the bottom 0.8 ft of the foundation cuts into historic subsoil, while the layers immediately above the subsoil have deposits dating to the Civil War era.

Whether this Civil War layer was cut through or deposited up against the original building is unclear. What is certain is that the base of the 1877 cornerstone (264.2 ft asl) above grade. The soil deposited adjacent to the base of the cornerstone, and for about 2.1 ft (266.3 ft asl) above, consisted of redeposited soils and construction debris, probably related to the 1877 building of the new stable. The rough exterior of the foundation (265.2-266.8 ft asl) cut into these fill layers, and probably was added during the reconstruction phase. This is the only area where a builder's trench was found, which may be related to repointing of the foundation during the reconstruction phase. Within the trench an 1866 penny was discovered, giving a construction date of at least 1866, but probably closer to the 1877 reconstruction period. Most of McGraw's coal, ash and shale deposits were found just above this fill episode and covered the reminder of the coarse exterior wall.

In summary, the bottom 2.7 ft (262.5 to 265.2 ft asl) of the foundation probably related to an earlier building. In 1877 McGraw built his "Ice/Carriage/Coal" house, probably accounting for the coarse building layer above the finely finished foundation he reused. The subsurface features of Park Building 32 were in place by 1877, although several modifications to the above ground walls are likely.

Park Buildings 35 and 34. Park Building 35 was originally built ca. 1812 as a 2 1/2-story brick structure fronting Shenandoah Street and measuring 33 ft by 23 ft. By 1827, a one story brick kitchen measuring 20 ft by 22 ft was constructed on the site of present day Park Building 34. In 1882 a 2 1/2-story brick building (Park Building 34) replaced the kitchen to the same height and depth as Park Building 35. By 1891, McGraw had constructed an addition on the rear of both of these buildings, mainly for use as boarding rooms (Fisher 1989).

The top of the 1989 grade adjacent to the rear of Park Building 35 is 268.2 ft asl. The building's foundations consist of rough, dry-laid shale blocks within a narrow builder's trench cut to a depth of 264 ft asl (Figures 8 and 9). The base of the pargeting lies about 0.4 ft - 0.5 ft below the current grade (Figure 8). A thin layer of sand (Stratum II, see Figure 9) extends from the base of the pargeting into many of the adjacent test units. This was probably waste sand from mixing the pargeting and provides a good terminus anti quem (the date before which) of 1891 for the layers of coal and shale beneath the sand. Therefore, it is safe to conclude the 1890s grade for most of the site lies about 1.0 ft below the current grade.

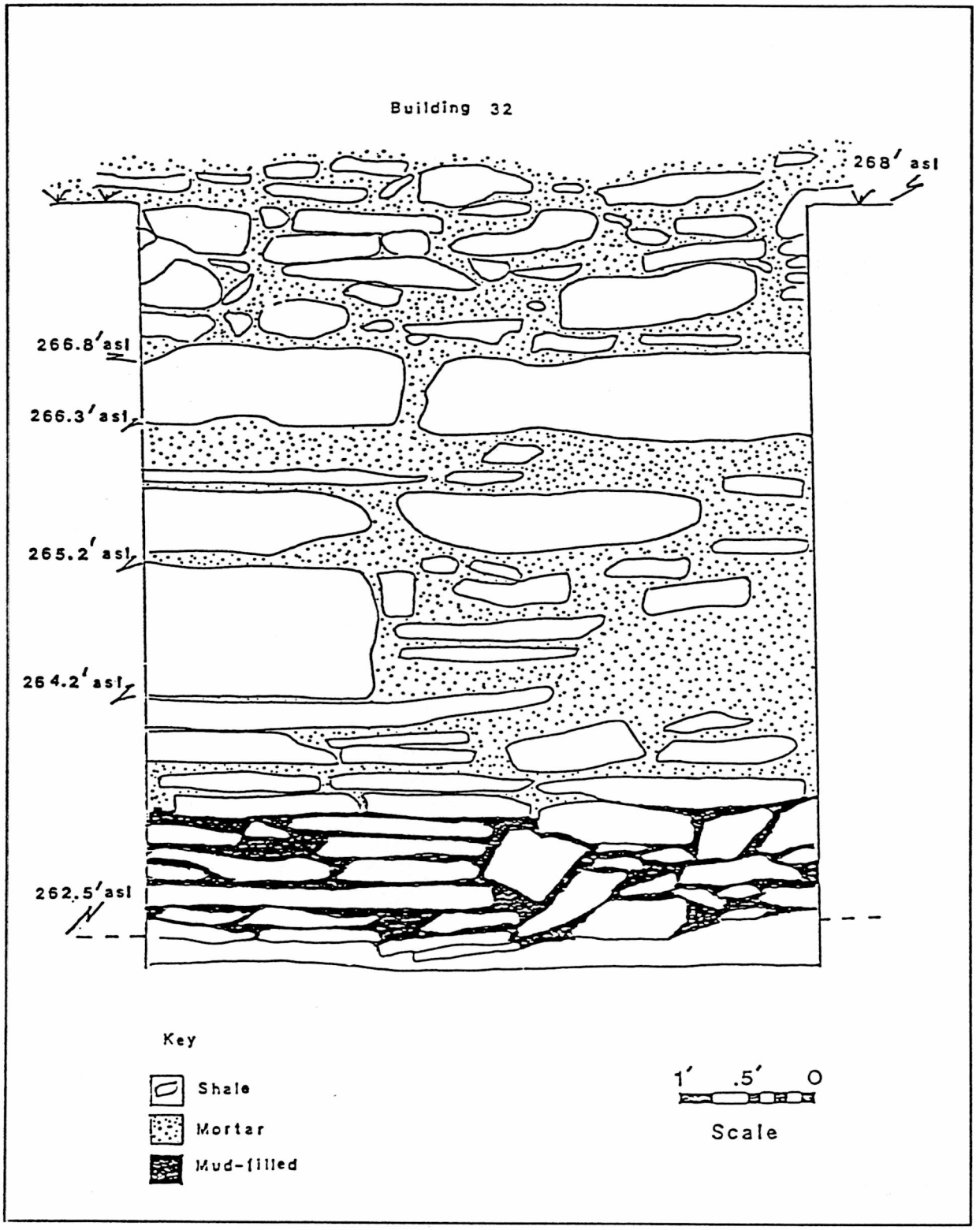


Figure 6. Plan of East Wall of Park Building 32, Test Unit 7.

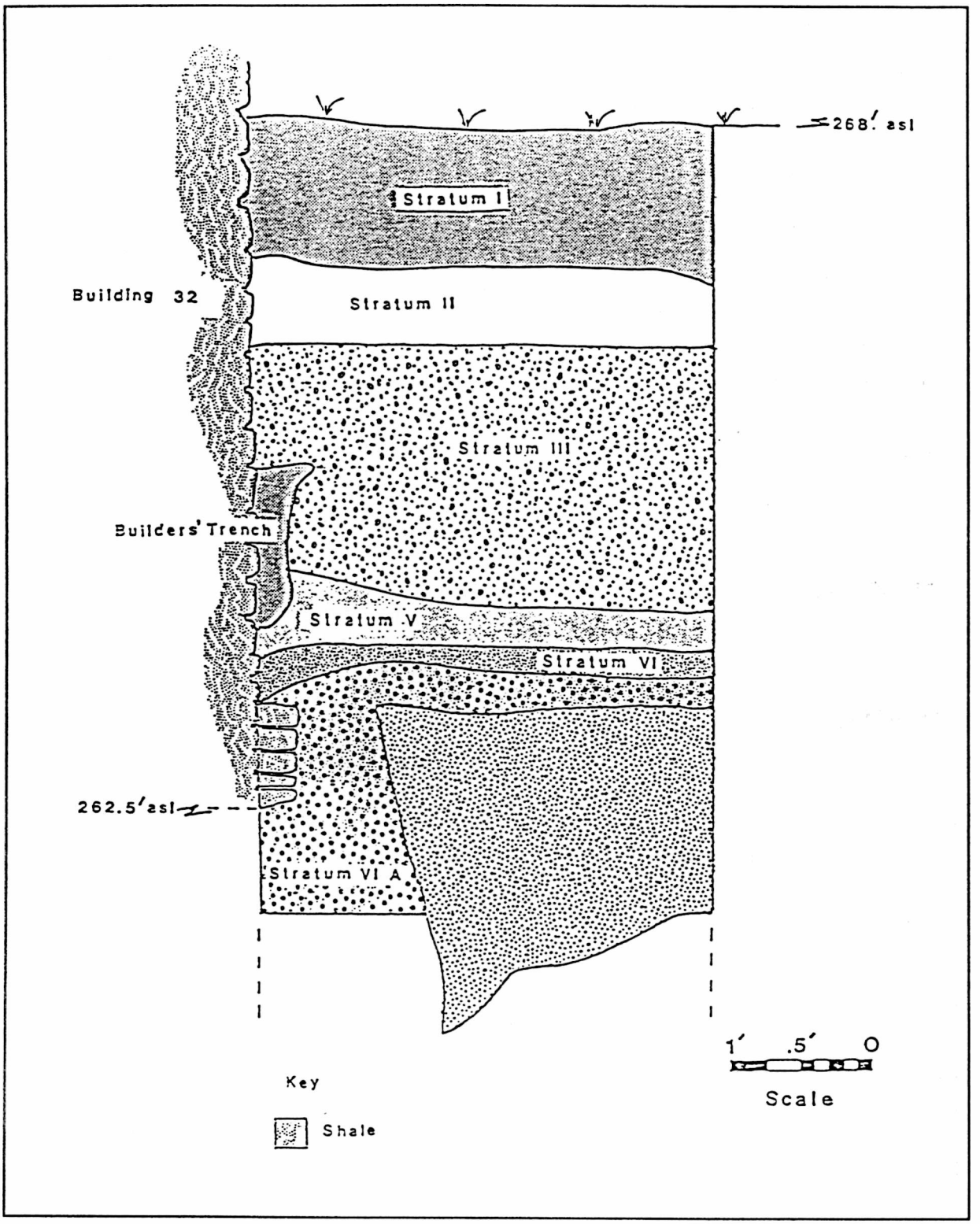


Figure 7. Profile of Soil Against Park Building 32; North Wall Profile of Test Unit 7.

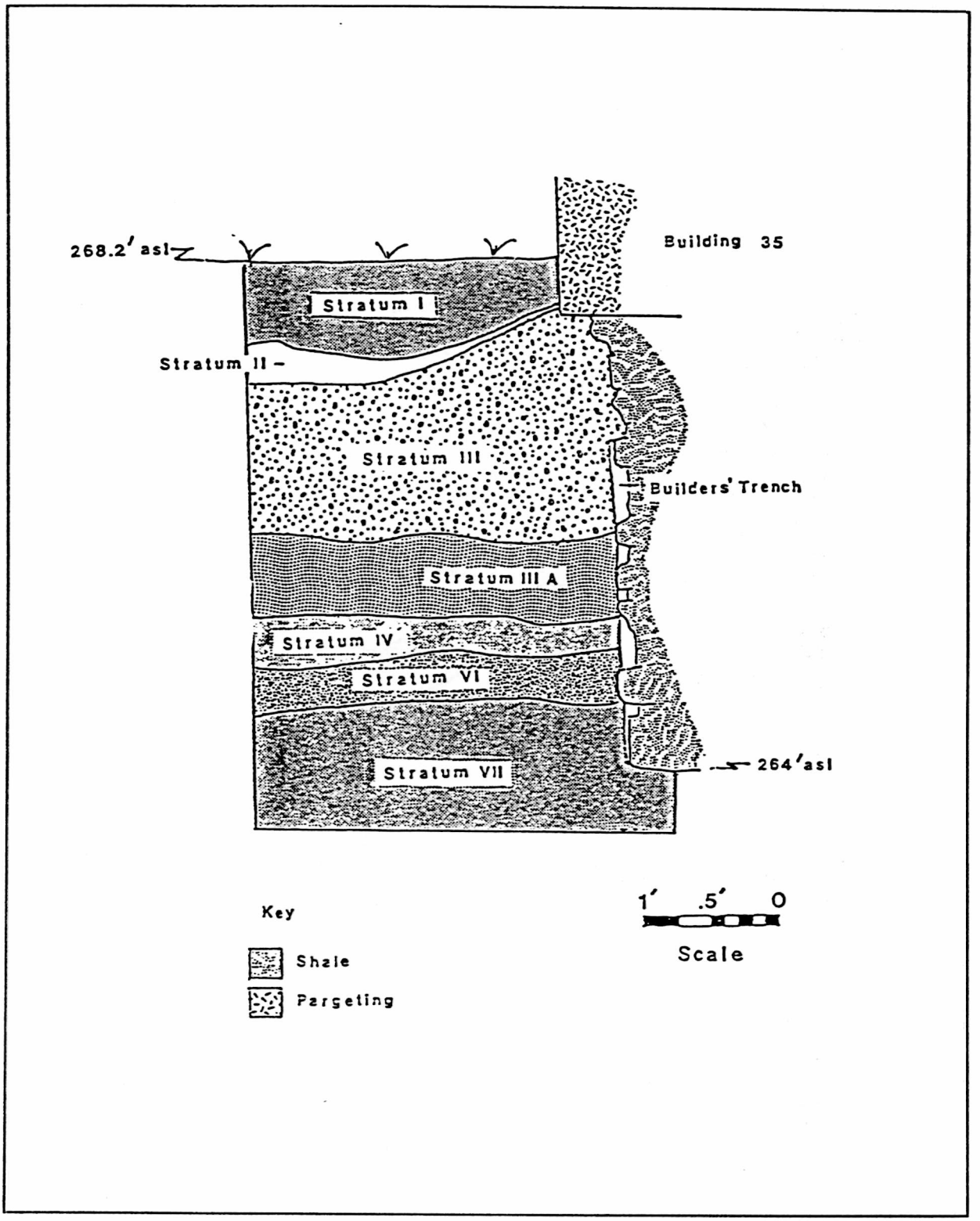


Figure 8. Plan of West Wall of Park Building 35.

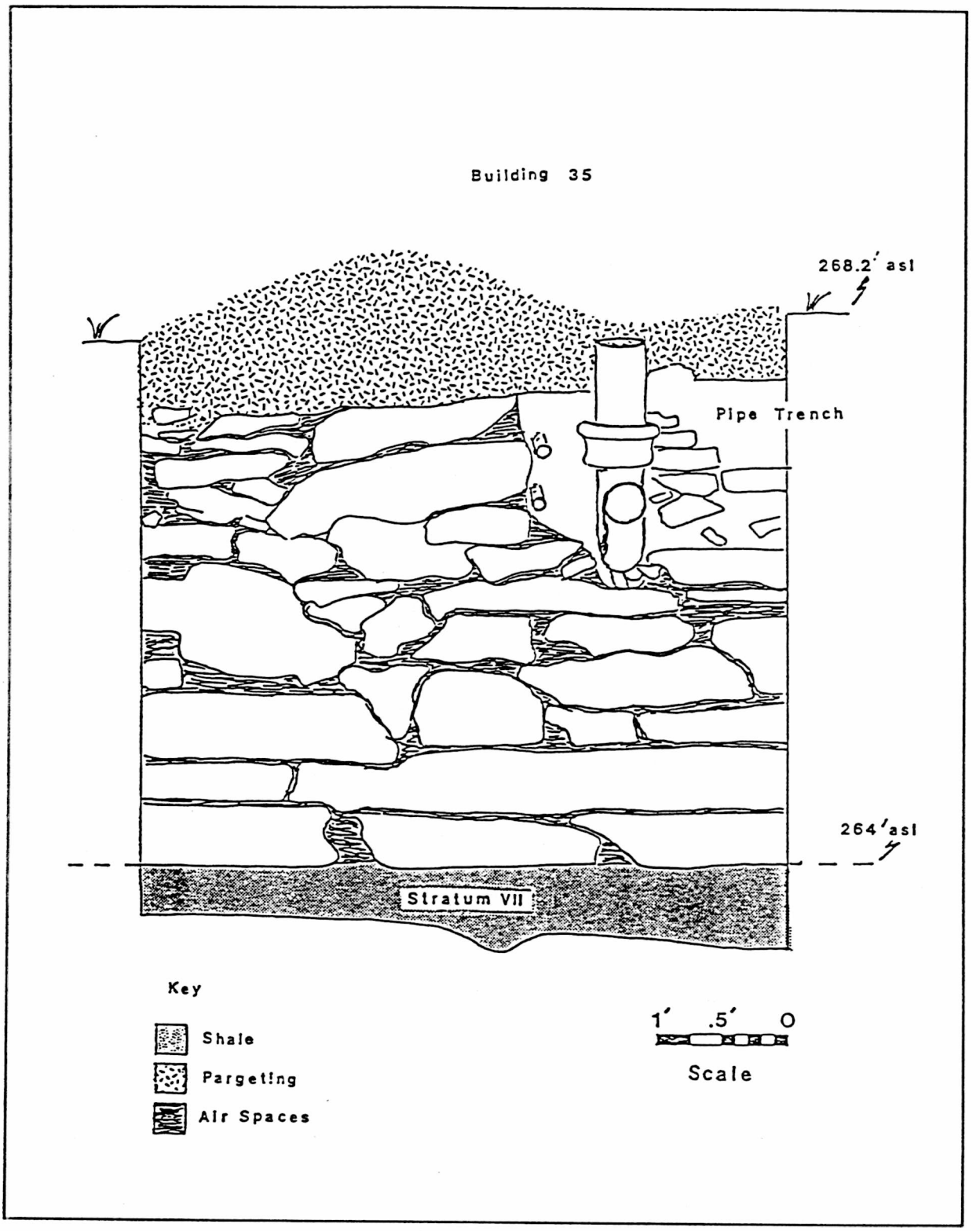


Figure 9. Profile of Soil Against Park Building 35; North Wall Profile of Test Unit 9.

Test Unit 12 was placed along the south edge of the present closed-in areaway between Park Buildings 34 and 35. Uncovered outside the doorway were a riser and two steps separated by 0.1 ft of sand (Figure 10). The riser consisted of two vertically placed shale stones and probably extended the width of the present doorway. The width of the top step was at least 1.6 ft wide and probably extended the length of the risers. The top of the step lay 267.45 ft asl and measured about 0.2 ft thick, while the risers extended 1.0 ft below the base of the step. The top step was probably placed over the lower one after part of the yard was filled, covering the lower step. No builder's trench was found for the feature, although the risers cut into Stratum III, and therefore were probably related to McGraw's 1891 construction of Park Buildings 34 and 35 (Figure 11).

A builder's trench was found for the southern edge of Park Building 34. It measured about 0.7 ft wide. Materials from the trench have not yet been analyzed, but they should relate to the 1891 construction.

Park Building 34A. Park Building 34A was constructed by 1835. It served as a smokehouse for most of the 19th century, but by 1894 was used to store oil (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1894). Excavations around the exterior of the building have revealed previously unknown architectural features.

The current ground level adjacent to Park Building 34A is about 268 ft asl. Pargeting covers all four sides of the building exterior. The building elevation from 0.3 ft to 0.6 ft above ground level no longer has pargeting, and probably defines a splash line (Figure 12). Below current grade the pargeting continues for about 2.2 ft. The foundation then continues, without pargeting, for an additional 3.4 ft (262 ft asl).

On the north wall of the smokehouse the pargeting continued for 2.5 ft below the current splash line to a second splash line (Figure 13). This earlier splash line averaged 0.15 ft wide. Below the elevation of the splashline, between Park Buildings 34 and 34A, was a brick walkway constructed by McGraw after the 1870 flood (see Fisher 1989). The absence of additional splash lines indicates the brick walkway and the current grade existed as ground surfaces for a longer time than the surfaces found between these two grades. Since the pargeting was not found below the brick paving, it is likely the pargeting occurred after the 1870 but before the 1891 construction. It is unusual that the building was pargeted 35 years after its original construction, perhaps after the second and third stories were added. There are no signs of repargeting. Since pargeting served as a decorative technique to deemphasize a building's natural elements and standardize its facade, it is possible unlikely that this outbuilding, originally out of public view, would not have received priority treatment. Once the backyards of Package 116 were commercially and publicly used, McGraw may have considered pargeting the smokehouse in order to standardize the backyard facades.

The soil immediately overlying the 1870 brick walkway was redeposited, probably from the cellar excavation for Park Building 34 in 1891 (Figure 14). The artifacts found within this soil date to the early 19th century and contain many deposits related to kitchen/smokehouse activities. Above this layer were mortar and shale deposits related to the 1891 construction of Park Buildings 34 and 35. Overlying this soil was a thin layer of sand, unused from the pargeting of these buildings.

The base of the present smokehouse door sill lies about 0.2 ft above the current grade. At 1.1 ft below this feature a second sill was found. The portion of wall between these two features was a later addition, as it differed

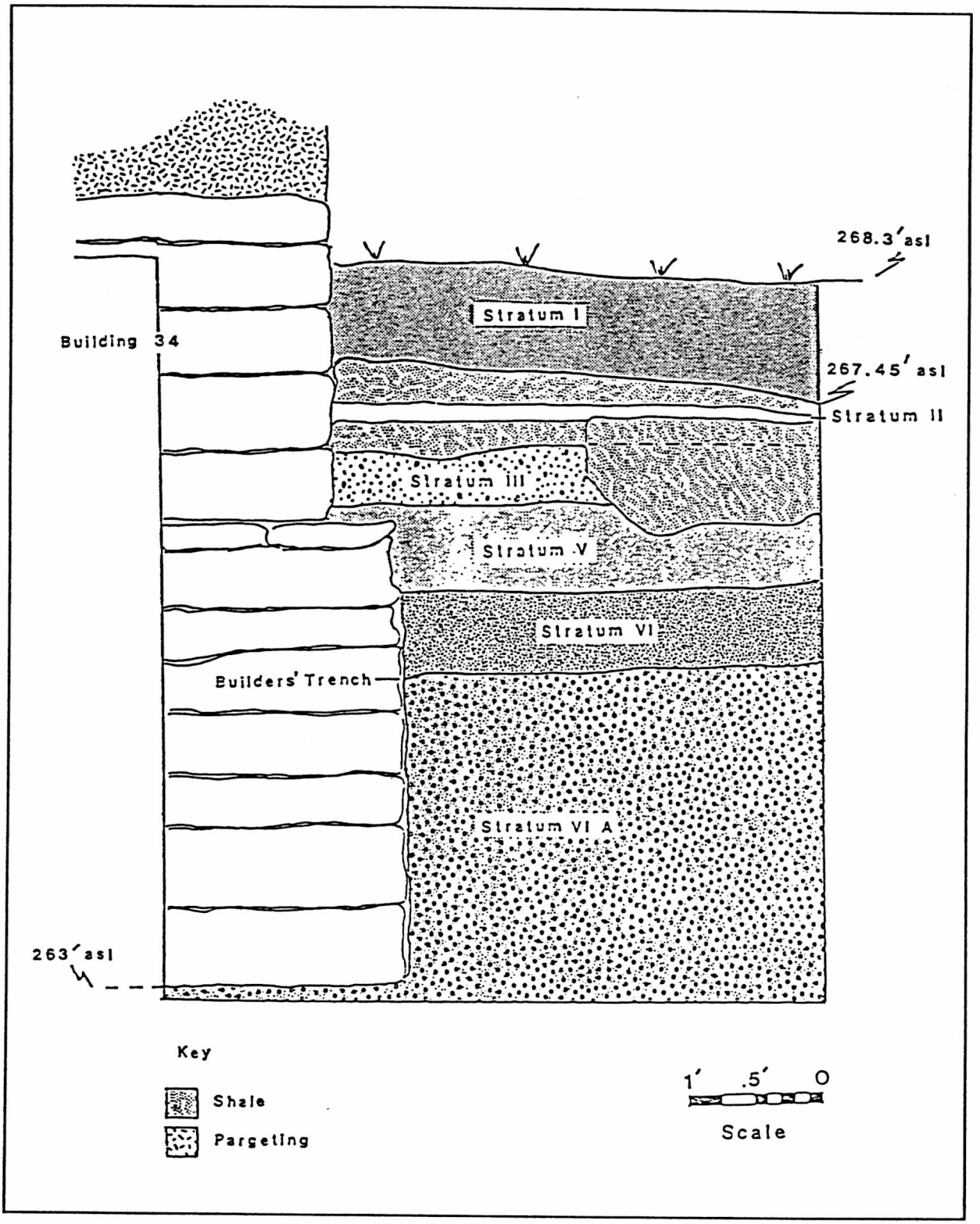


Figure 10. Profile of Step Feature, Facing North in Excavation Unit 12.

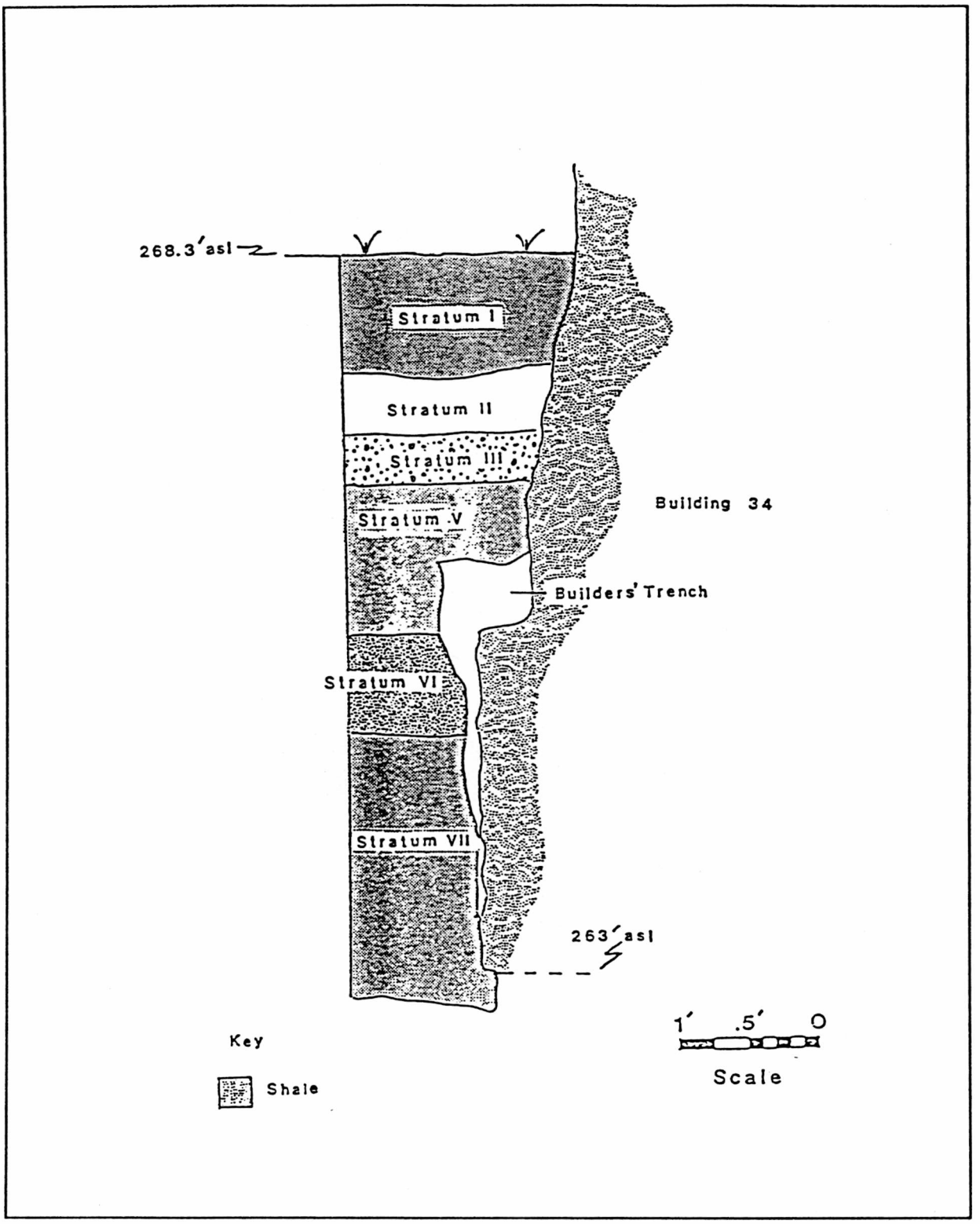


Figure 11. Profile of Soil Against Step in Test Unit 12; West Wall Profile.

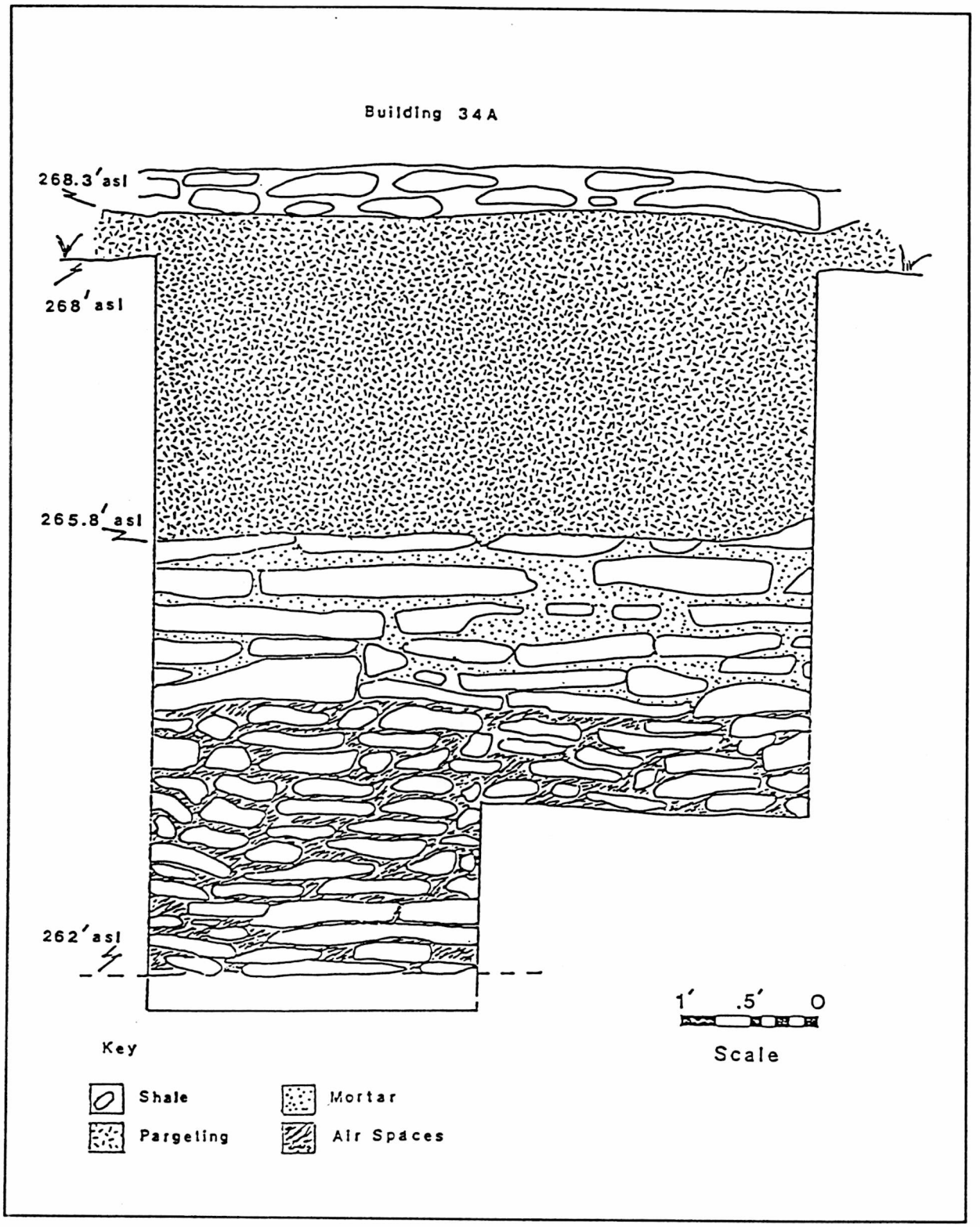


Figure 12. West Wall Profile of Park Building 34A.

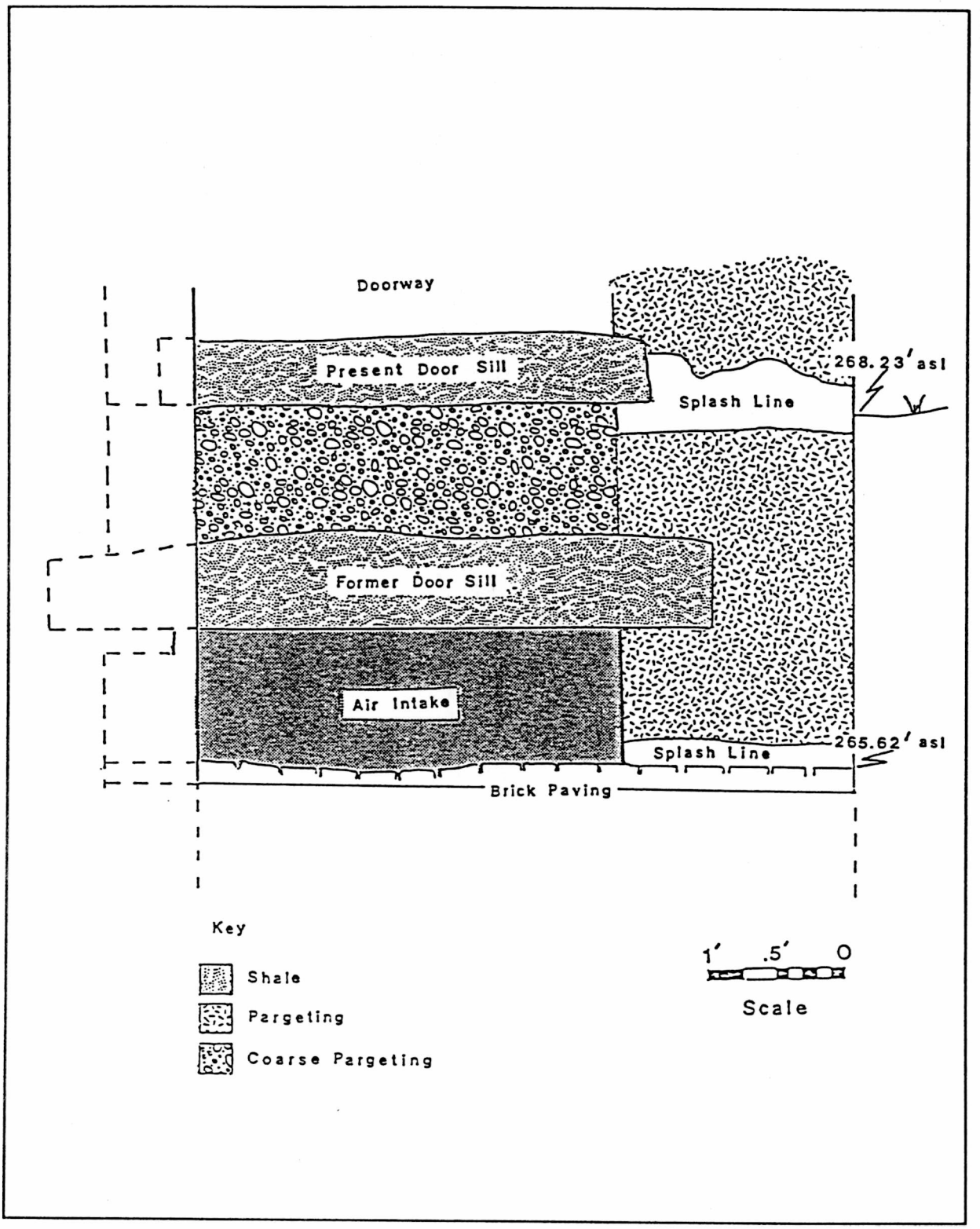


Figure 13. North Wall Profile of Park Building 34A.

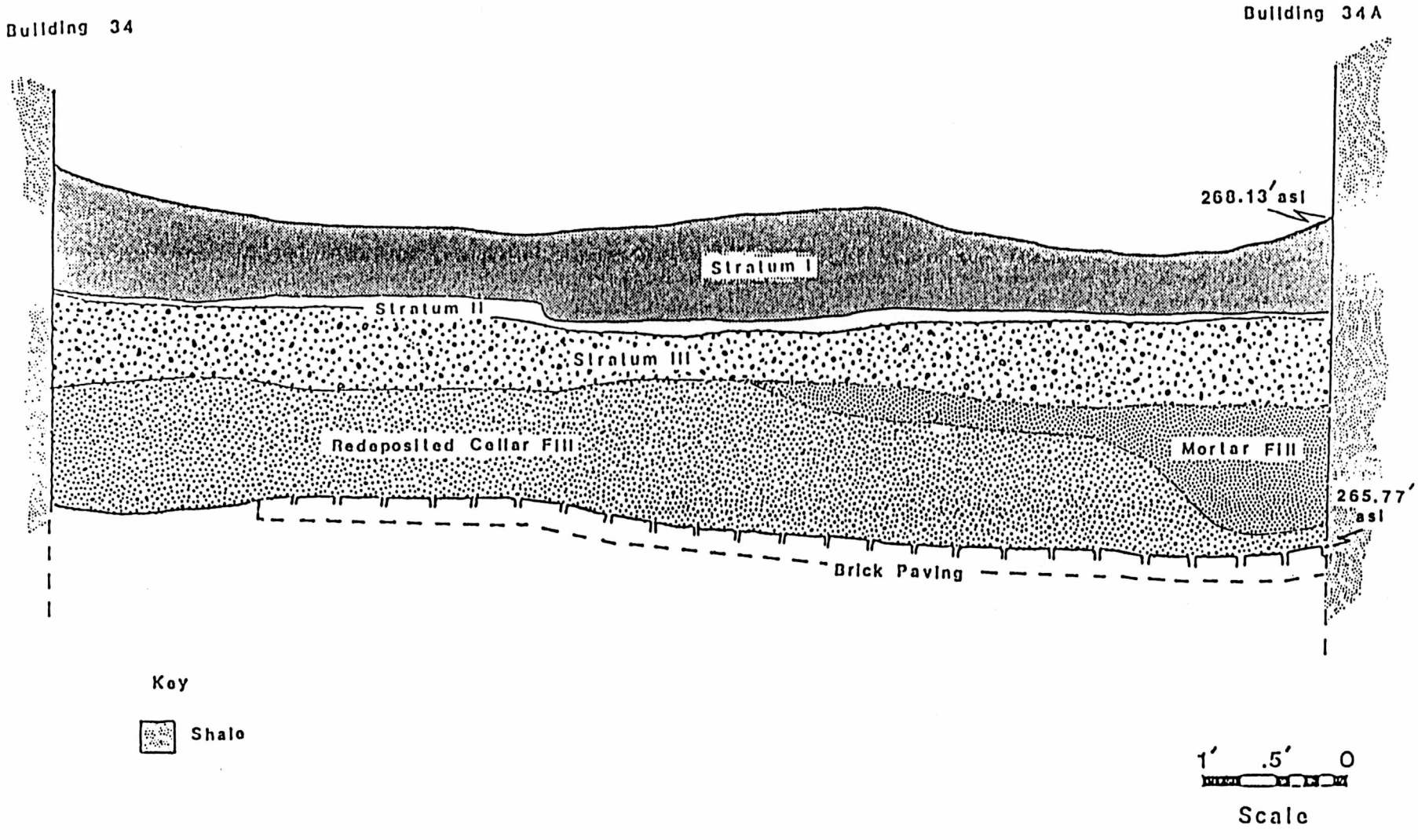


Figure 14. East Wall Profile of Soil Against Park Building 34 and 34A in Test Units 11, 13, and 16.

in construction from the remainder of the building. The original door opening may have been closed when the yard was filled during the McGraw occupation. The upper sill thus served as the new doorway above the grade of the filled yard. Beneath the original sill was another opening and filled with loose gravel, mortar and sand. At this opening the building wall was one ft thick. This opening perhaps served as an air intake or for ash removal from the smokehouse. Ash has not been found adjacent to this feature, however, and the former conclusion may be more valid. The filling of the opening occurred prior to the redeposition of the early 19th-century clay deposits over the brick walkway.

Porch and Stairways for Park Buildings 34 and 35. Concern exists as to whether the ghost of a porch on the rear of Park Buildings 34 and 35 was part of the original construction of these structures. A porch is not present on the 1894 and 1922 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (Figures 15 and 16), but does appear on the 1902, 1907, 1912, and 1933 maps (Figures 17, 18, 19, and 20). The porch appears, however, in an 1895 photograph (NHF 99) (Figure 21) of Harpers Ferry from Loudoun Heights (Fisher 1989). Close examination of this photograph indicates porch supports may not have existed for the original structure.

Several test units were placed adjacent to Park Buildings 34 and 35 to determine the size and shape of the porch and to document and date any changes to this feature. Several modern photographs dating prior to the demolition of the porch in the 1950s guided these excavations (NHF 873, NHF 874) (Figures 22 and 23). From these photographs it was determined the porch width spanned 2-3 ft. If the modern porch supports, which appear to be temporary and may have been placed after the damaging flood of 1936, mirrored the original ones, then evidence of the presence of the original remains would have been easily detected by the selected test units (Test Units 1, 3, 9, 12, 13, 15, 16, 19, 20) (Figure 3).

No archeological evidence for post supports dating to the 1891 construction of Park Buildings 34 and 35 was discovered, although two shale slabs were found in Stratum I, the 20th-century deposits, of Excavation Units 3 and 12. The shale support in Excavation Unit 3 lies 3.0 ft from the southern edge of building 35 (Figure 24). The stone support in unit 12 sits 2.0 ft south of Park Building 34 and 3.0 ft west of Park Building 35 (Figure 25), and most probably represents a support for the posts observed in the modern photograph (Figure 22 and 23). Physical evidence of the above-ground portion of Park Buildings 34 and 35 indicates the porch on the south side of these buildings probably was constructed in 1891. First, there is a lack of major alterations to the pargeting where the porch rafters once existed. Second, it is unlikely McGraw built a boarding house with exterior doors on the second floor without the porch. Third, the possibility exists that the Sanborn surveyors did not record the porch in 1894. Apparently this oversight occurred again in 1922.

No evidence exists for the presence of stoops along the exterior of Park Buildings 34 and 35, although if they were constructed of wood and laid directly on the ground surface, they could have been easily removed, thus leaving no evidence. Historic photographs of the stairway on the west side of Park Building 34A and possibly a stair from the southwest corner of Park Building 34 exist. Excavation Units 25 and 4 were excavated to locate the foundations for this feature. They were not detected as utility trenches between Park Buildings 34 and 35 destroyed most of this evidence.

Archeological investigations did not uncover any information suggesting the early porch supports were destroyed by earth moving or grading of the backyard.

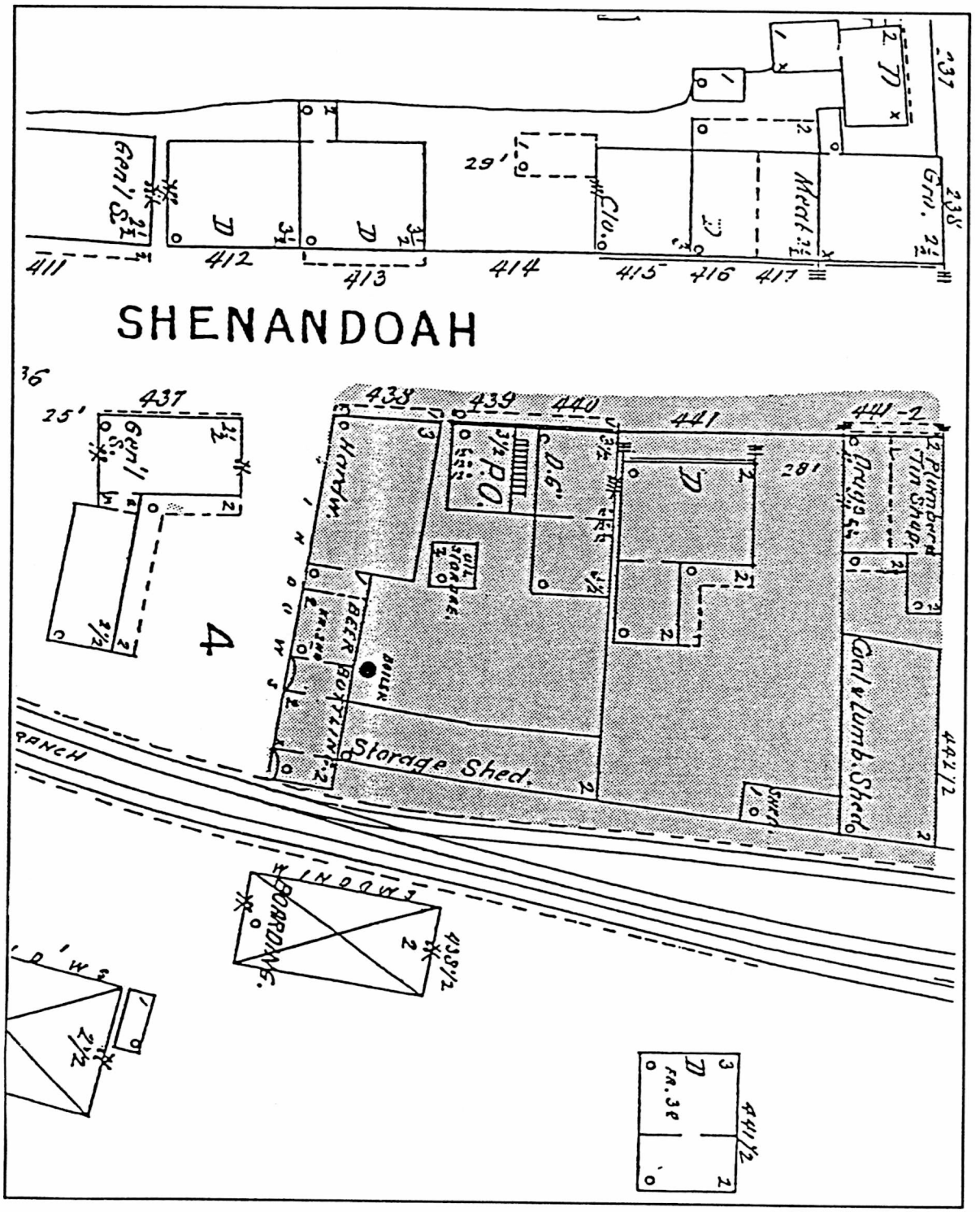


Figure 15. 1984 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

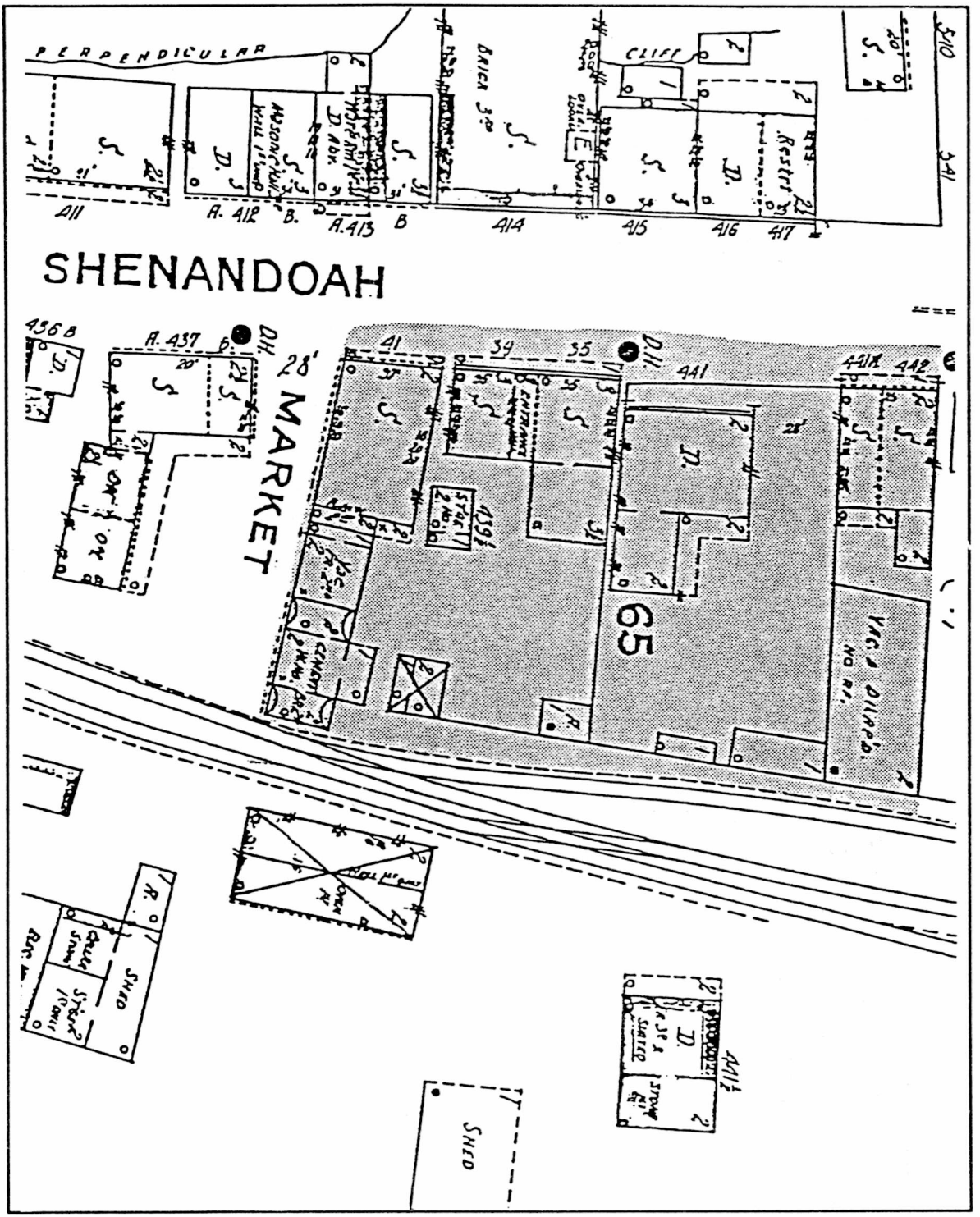


Figure 16. 1922 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

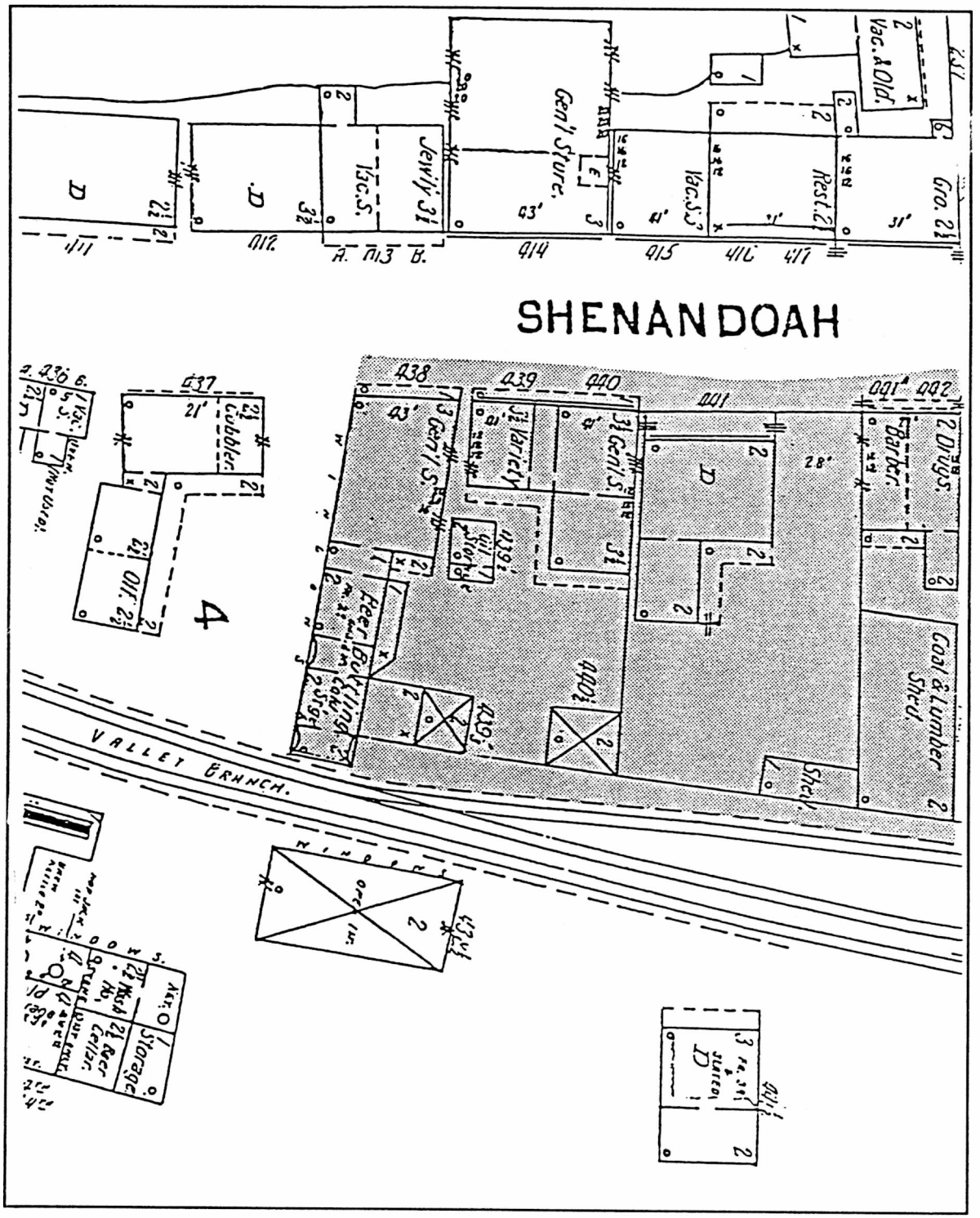


Figure 17. 1902 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

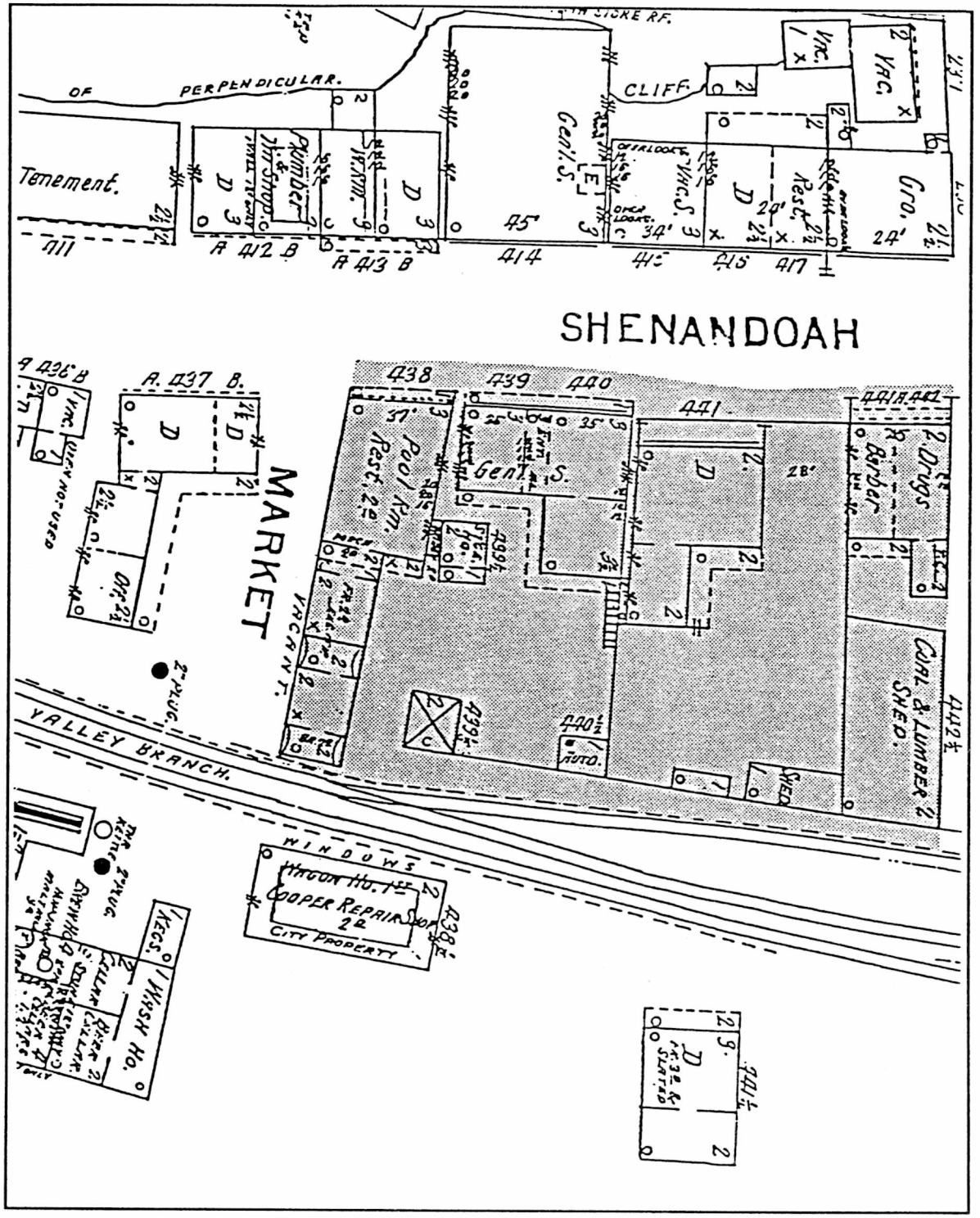


Figure 18. 1907 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

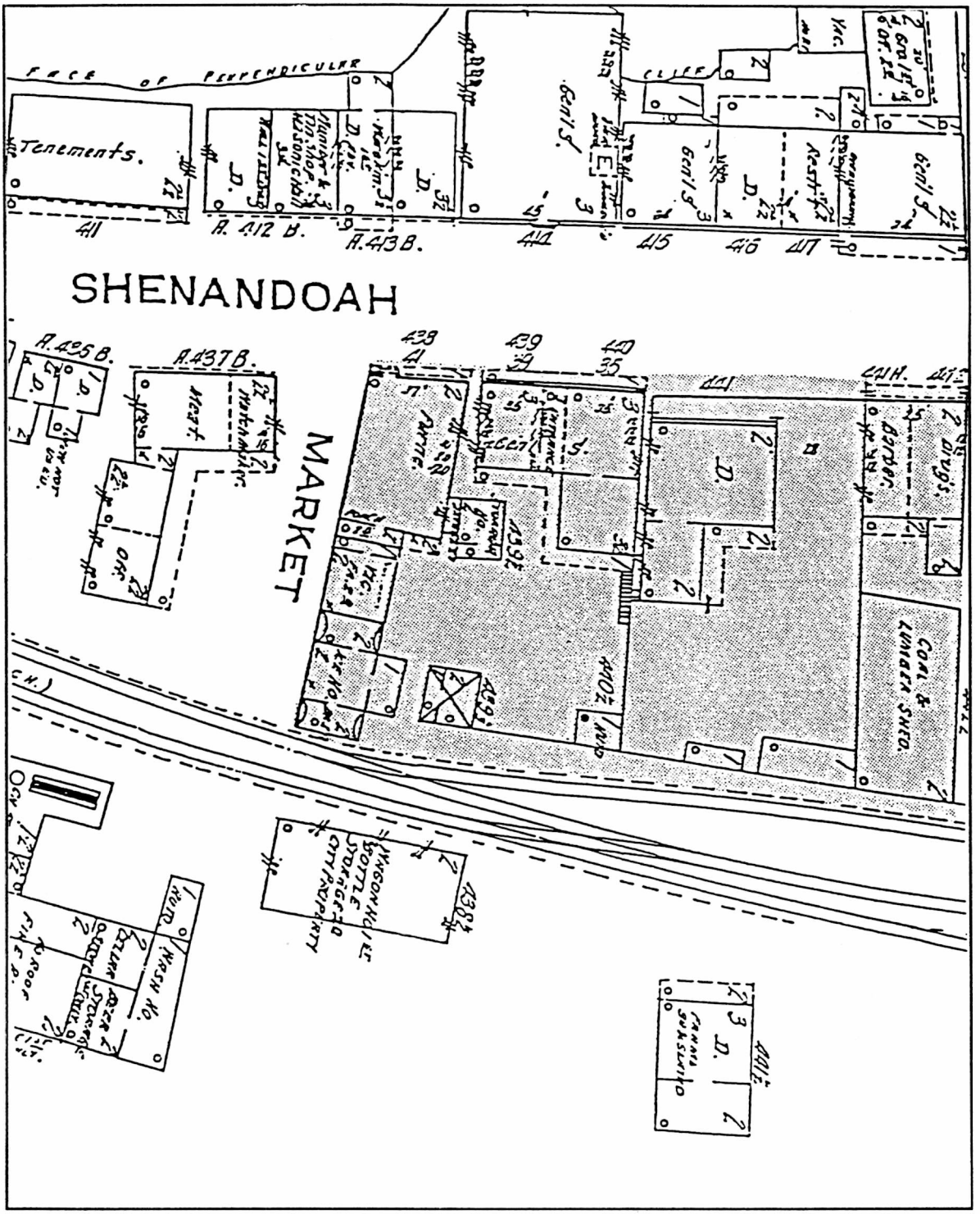


Figure 19. 1912 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

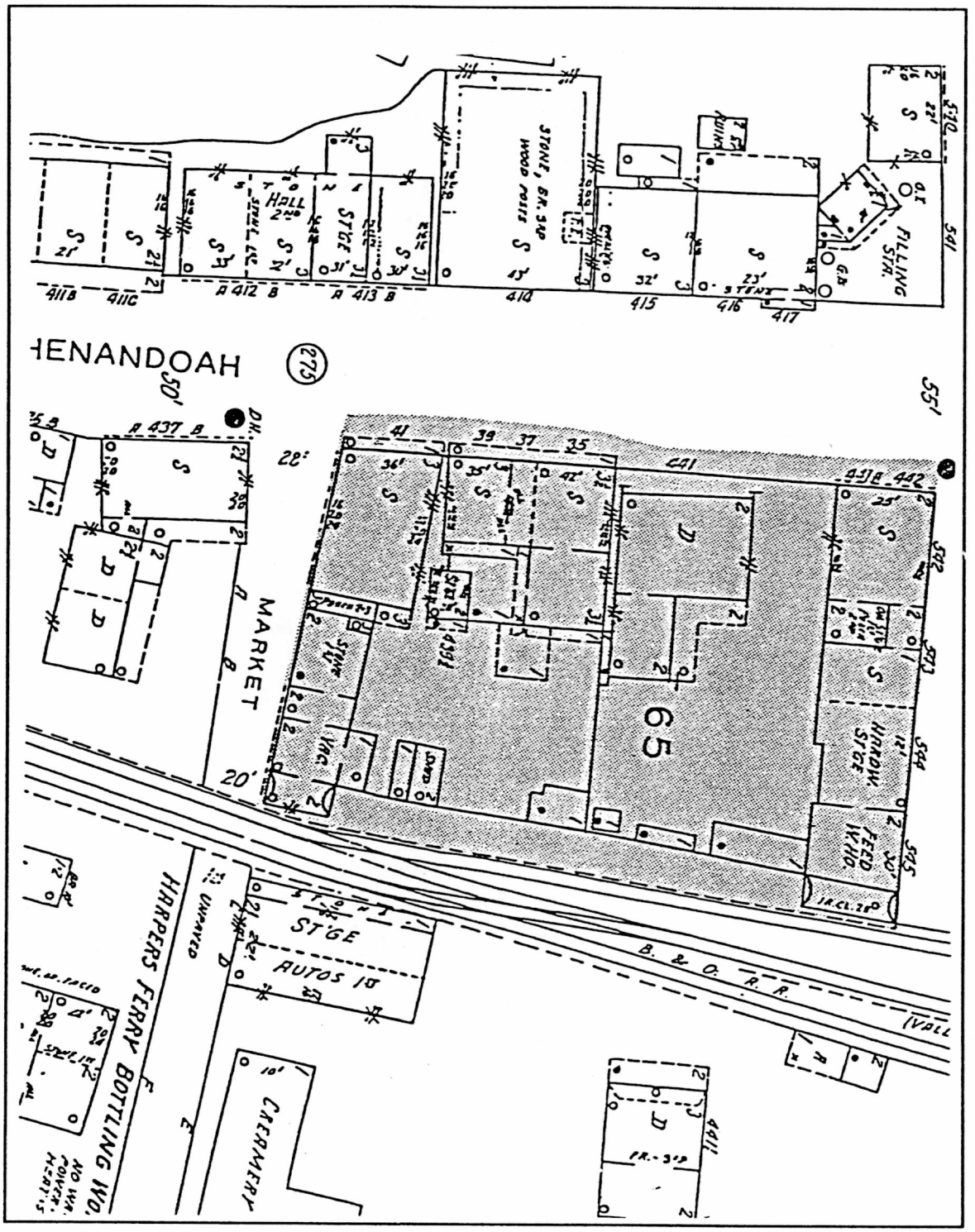


Figure 20. 1933 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.



Figure 21. Historic Photograph of the Backareas of Package 116, taken from Loudoun Heights (ca. 1892-1895).



Figure 22. Modern Historic Photograph of Park Buildings 34 and 35 with Porch, ca. 1955.



Figure 23. Modern Historic Photograph of Park Building 35 with Porch, ca. 1955.

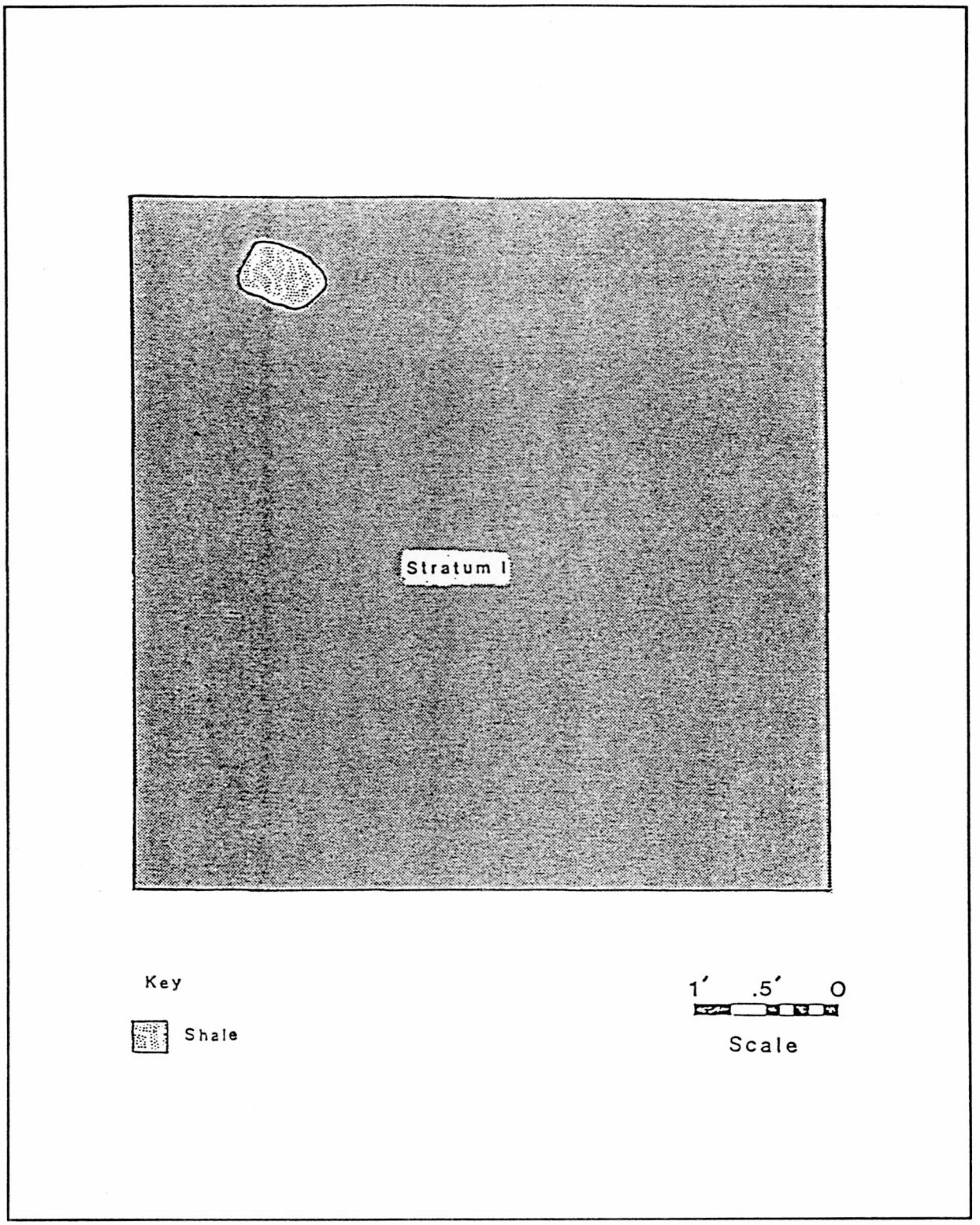


Figure 24. Twentieth-century Shale Supports in Test Unit 3.

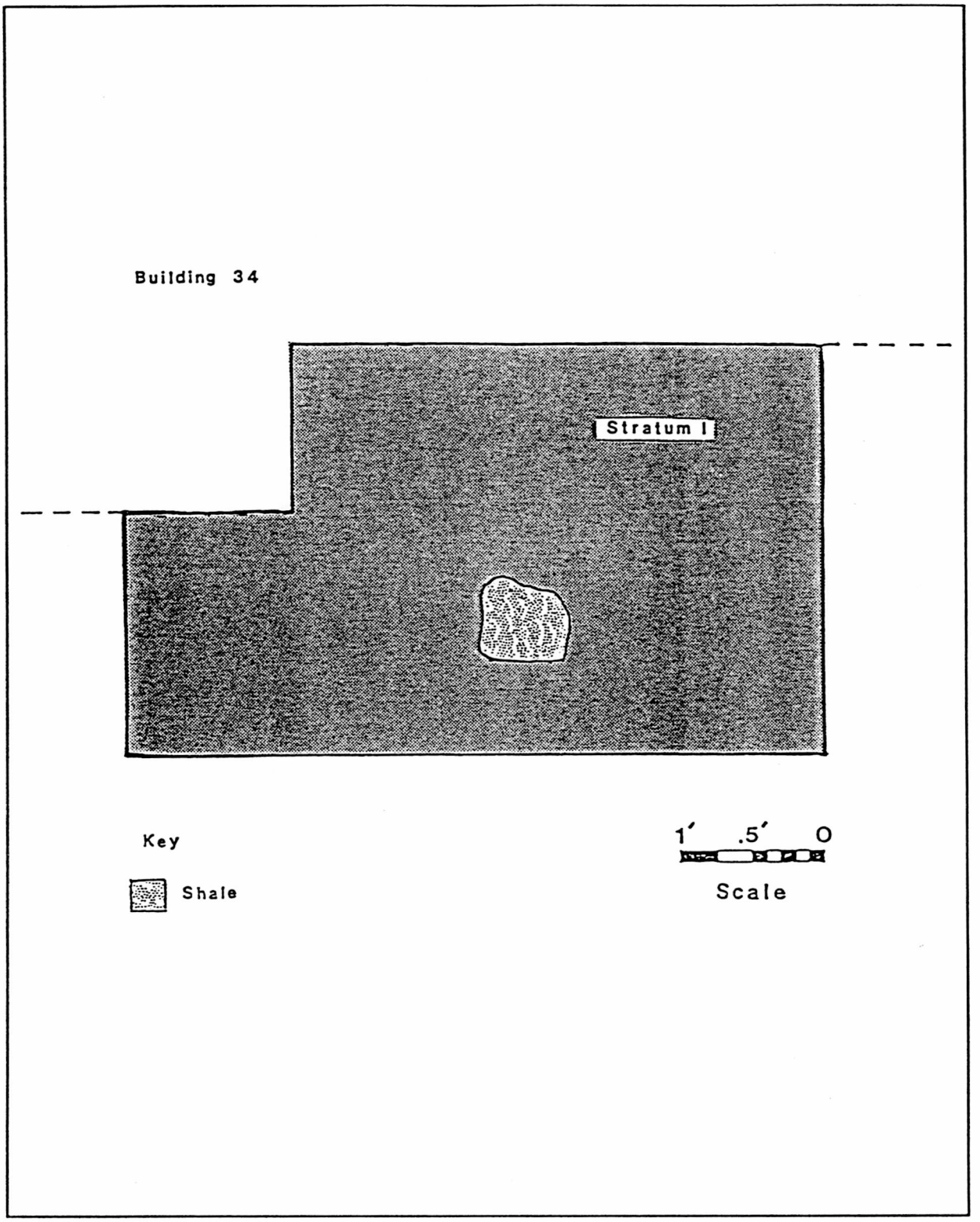


Figure 25. Twentieth-century Shale Supports in Excavation Unit 12.

Rather, a one ft deposit above the McGraw construction/commercial layer uniformly covers the entire backyard. Post molds and post holes would have been preserved in this layer, as well as any patterning of shale slab supports paralleling the buildings. The lack of archeological data for porch supports raises the question as to whether the original porch actually had post supports or whether it was free standing like the porches on the front of Park Buildings 35, 34, and 33. The lack of maintenance and destructive environmental conditions may have necessitated the eventual need to support the dilapidated feature.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report makes some tentative conclusions regarding the physical histories of Park Buildings 32, 34, 34A, and 35. The works of Snell (1959) and Fisher (1989) provide a framework of questions for this archeological investigation. Human and natural conditions have added to the complexity of interpreting many of these structures. Grading, and possibly flooding, may have destroyed most of the archeological record predating the Civil War. The lack of builder's trenches for the structures also has created difficulty dating the original construction of some of the buildings.

Based on the below-ground archeological and architectural evidence, the following may be concluded:

Park Building 32

Park Building 32 had at least two construction phases. Exposure of the eastern foundation wall revealed two different masonry techniques. Archeological evidence indicates the lowest portion of the foundation cuts into the subsoil. Above this subsoil lies a considerable amount of fill, of which part was cut into, in the form of a builder's trench, during the McGraw building phase of 1877. McGraw likely rebuilt his stable on a previously constructed foundation, but had to add several feet of foundation wall to keep the building above the later 19th-century grade.

Park Buildings 34 and 35

The southern portions Park Buildings 34 and 35 were constructed in 1891. Along the south edge of the closed in area between these buildings is a step. Archeological evidence has demonstrated this feature was constructed during the McGraw 1891 construction phase.

Park Building 34A

Excavations around Park Building 34A indicate an earlier doorway sill existed 1.1 ft below the present sill. Immediately below the former sill is an opening, probably an air intake for the smokehouse.

Porch and Stairways

No evidence for 19th-century porch supports exists. Shale slabs lying about two to three feet from Park Buildings 34 and 35 were found in 20th-century

deposits and may be related to the propping up of the porch after many years of neglect. No evidence exists for the presence of stoops along the exterior of Park Buildings 34 and 35. Evidence for a stairway between Park Buildings 34 and 35 may have been destroyed by utility trenches and were not found in Excavation Units 25 and 4.

Much of this analysis has provided data on below-ground remains. It is essential this information be tied to the existing above-ground data, via an architect and/or architectural historian, to strengthen and build upon these conclusions. It is hoped this multidisciplinary approach may document the evolution of these buildings during the course of the 19th and 20th centuries.

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1902 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. On file at Harpers Ferry Research Library, Harpers Ferry, WV.

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1933 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. On file at Harpers Ferry Research Library, Harpers Ferry, WV.

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1955 Modern Historic Photograph of Park Buildings 34 and 35 (NHF 873). On file at Harpers Ferry Research Library, Harpers Ferry, WV.

1955 Modern Historic Photograph of Park Building 35 (NHF 874). On file at Harpers Ferry Research Library, Harpers Ferry, WV.

APPENDIX I: PROJECT PERSONNEL

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Research Archeologist: Paul A. Shackel

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Asst. Research Archeologist: Ellen A. Armbruster

Asst. Laboratory Director: Eva J. Harris

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Andrew Schenker
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Cari Young-Ravenhorst

Laboratory Technicians:

Janet Blutstein
Brett Burk
Jill Harris
Dennis Scott

Diane Fenicle and John Ravenhorst performed the drafting for this report.

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Part II

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT: ARCHEOLOGICAL COMPONENT

PACKAGE 116: BLOCK B, LOTS 2 AND 3, PARK BUILDINGS 32, 33A, 33, 34, 34A, 35, AND 36
SHENANDOAH STREET, HARPERS FERRY NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK,
HARPERS FERRY, WEST VIRGINIA

ADDENDUM - PARK BUILDINGS 32 AND 34A

ELLEN A. ARMBRUSTER
ASSISTANT RESEARCH ARCHEOLOGIST

APRIL 1990

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

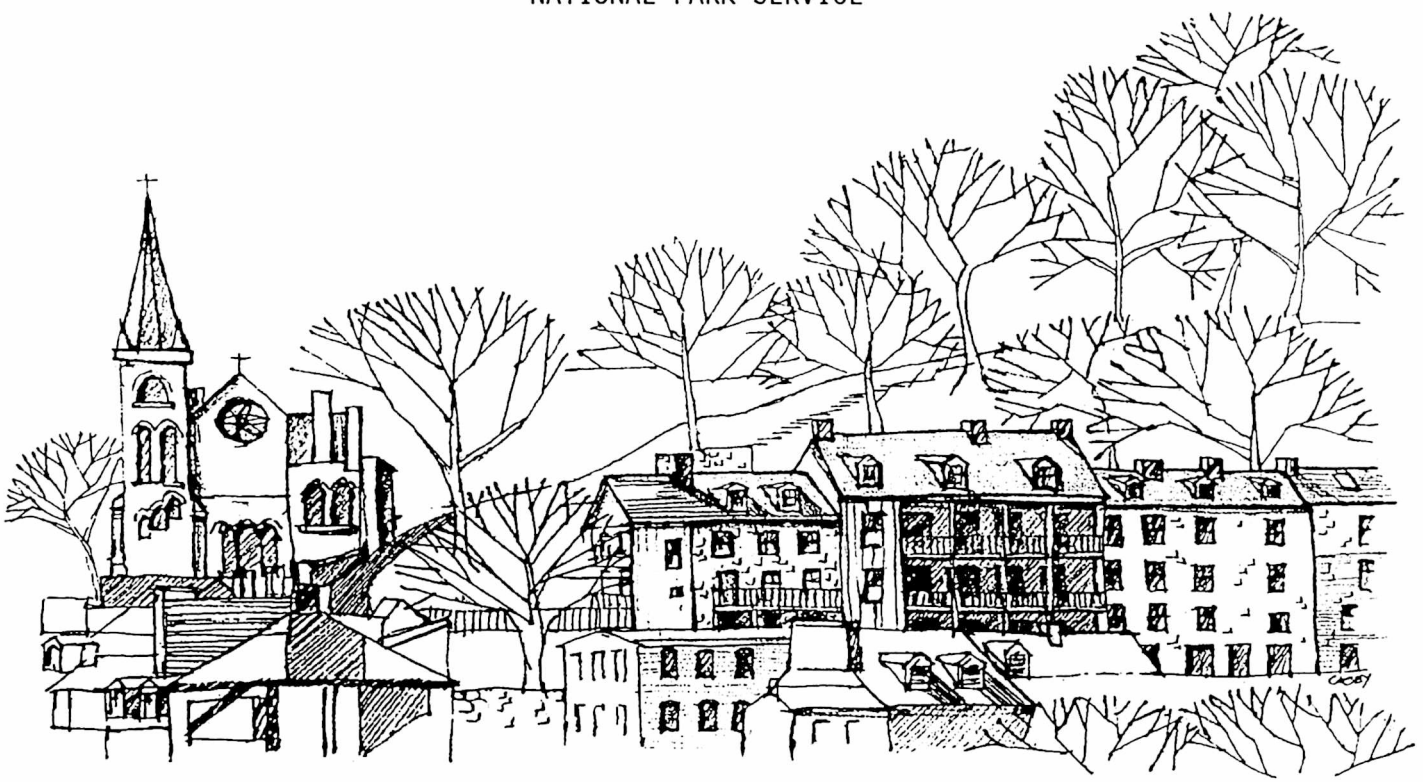


TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures i

Introduction 43

Park Building 32 44

Park Building 34A 50

Conclusion 56

References Cited 57

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 26. Map of site with unit numbers, after final excavations . . . 45

Figure 27. South profile of Excavation Unit 42 showing stratigraphy abutting interior west wall of Park Building 32 46

Figure 28. West profile of Excavation Unit 42 showing interior west wall of Park Building 32 47

Figure 29. Plan view of Excavation Unit 42 showing top of Feature 129 . 49

Figure 30. East profile of Excavation Unit 41 showing stratigraphy, including succession of floors abutting south interior wall of Park Building 34A 51

Figure 31. North profile of Excavation Unit 43 showing interior north wall of Park Building 34A 52

Figure 32. Plan view of Excavation Units 41, 43, 44 showing Features 125 (macadam flooring) and 131 (iron pot) and pits 54

INTRODUCTION

This addendum reflects work done after completion of the first section of this report. These additional excavations occurred between September and December 1989 inside Park Buildings 32 (stable) and 34A (smokehouse), and contributed architectural information on the physical histories of Park Buildings 32 and 34A.

Because analysis of the archeological data is not yet complete, this addendum will refer to the stratigraphy by the original letter designations by which the layers were excavated. These will be converted into their interpretive "megastrata" in the final excavation report. Megastrata link similar layers from different units, showing depositions which occurred at approximately the same time. This provides consistent identification of major depositional episodes without the distraction of minor fill deposits common to urban sites.

PARK BUILDING 32

In December, 1989, a 5 by 5 ft unit labelled Excavation Unit 42 was excavated in the interior northwest corner of Park Building 32 (Figure 26). It was hoped that the excavation would reveal information regarding the early use and construction of the structure.

The present ground surface along the exterior east side of the building is approximately 268 ft amsl and along the west side, 267 ft amsl. The top of the interior concrete floor was 269.04 ft amsl. This floor was the uppermost of three concrete floors laid one on top of the other (Feature 126, Figure 27). Beneath these floors were three layers of fill (Layers A [shale], B, C [silty clays]) which totaled 1.81 ft thick. These layers rested on top of a mortared or very compact surface (Feature 128), which no doubt represented an earlier floor (266.61 ft amsl). This compact surface had a base of shale fill (Layer D). Beneath the shale fill was a layer (Layer E) of large river cobbles, six to eight inches long, possibly put down for drainage. Underneath the cobbles were more fill layers of sand and clay (Layers G-1, G-2, H) and at 264.10 ft amsl, the interior pargeting of the walls ended and the foundations were exposed (Figure 28).

The present building's foundations rested on an earlier jumbled shale and brick foundation, possibly the original foundation for the Master Armorer's stable (Figure 28). The artifacts in the fill at the level of the original foundation (Layer G-2) dated to around the Civil War era. Since the earlier foundation was insubstantial it probably did not support more than a frame structure. Fill Layer I continued until 263.04 ft amsl, below which the rough foundation extended another foot into sterile subsoil. This filling occurred on the north side of the shale wall, Feature 129, and did not appear in the south profile of the excavation unit (Figure 28). As with the other structures on Block B, there was no evidence of a builder's trench. The builders dug a large, rectangular hole and constructed the foundation up against the walls of the hole. However, the builders encountered the remains of an earlier wall resting on sterile subsoil (Feature 129, Figure 29) and extending northeast to southwest,

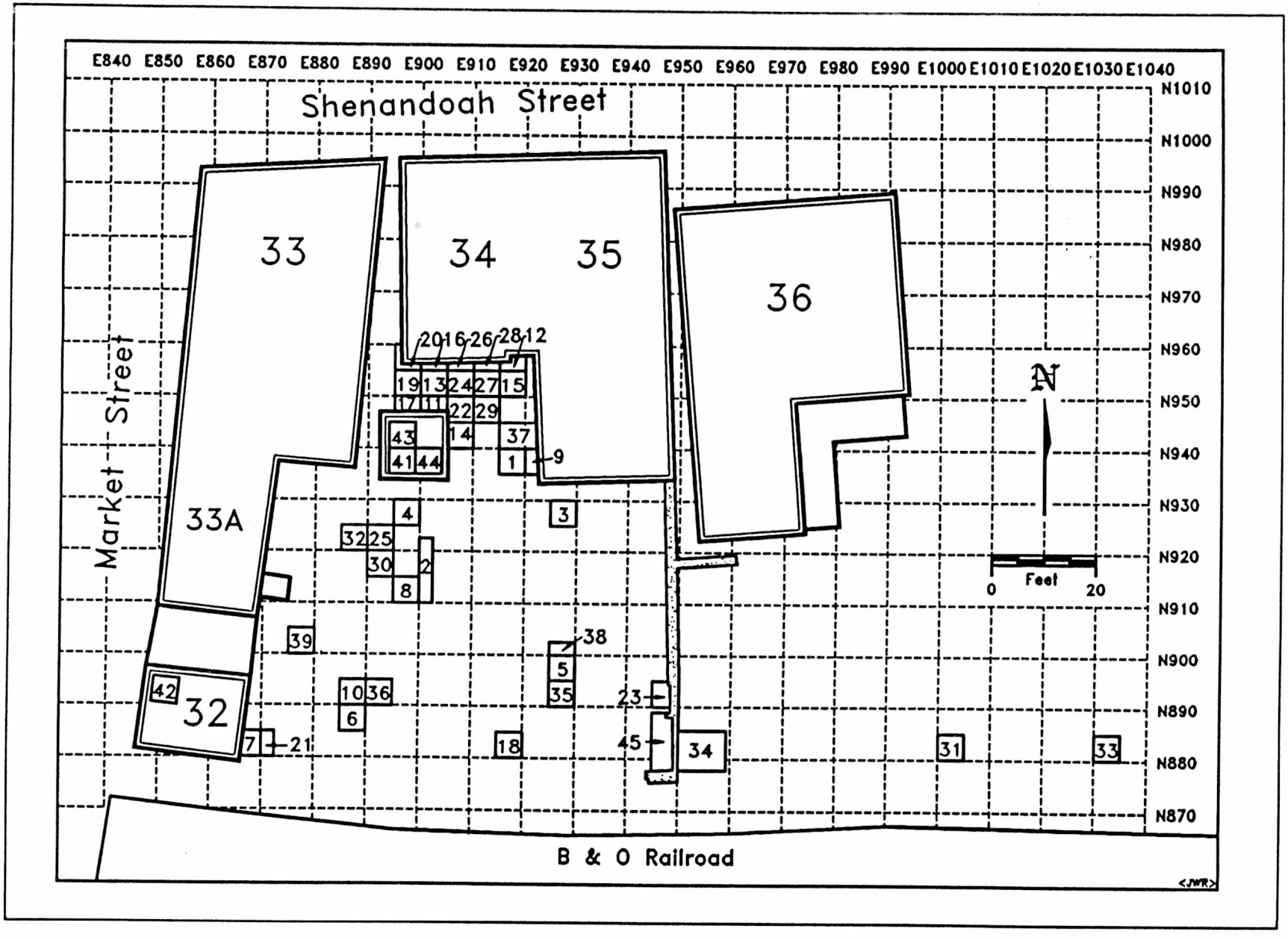


Figure 26. Map of Site with Excavation Unit Numbers, after Final Excavations

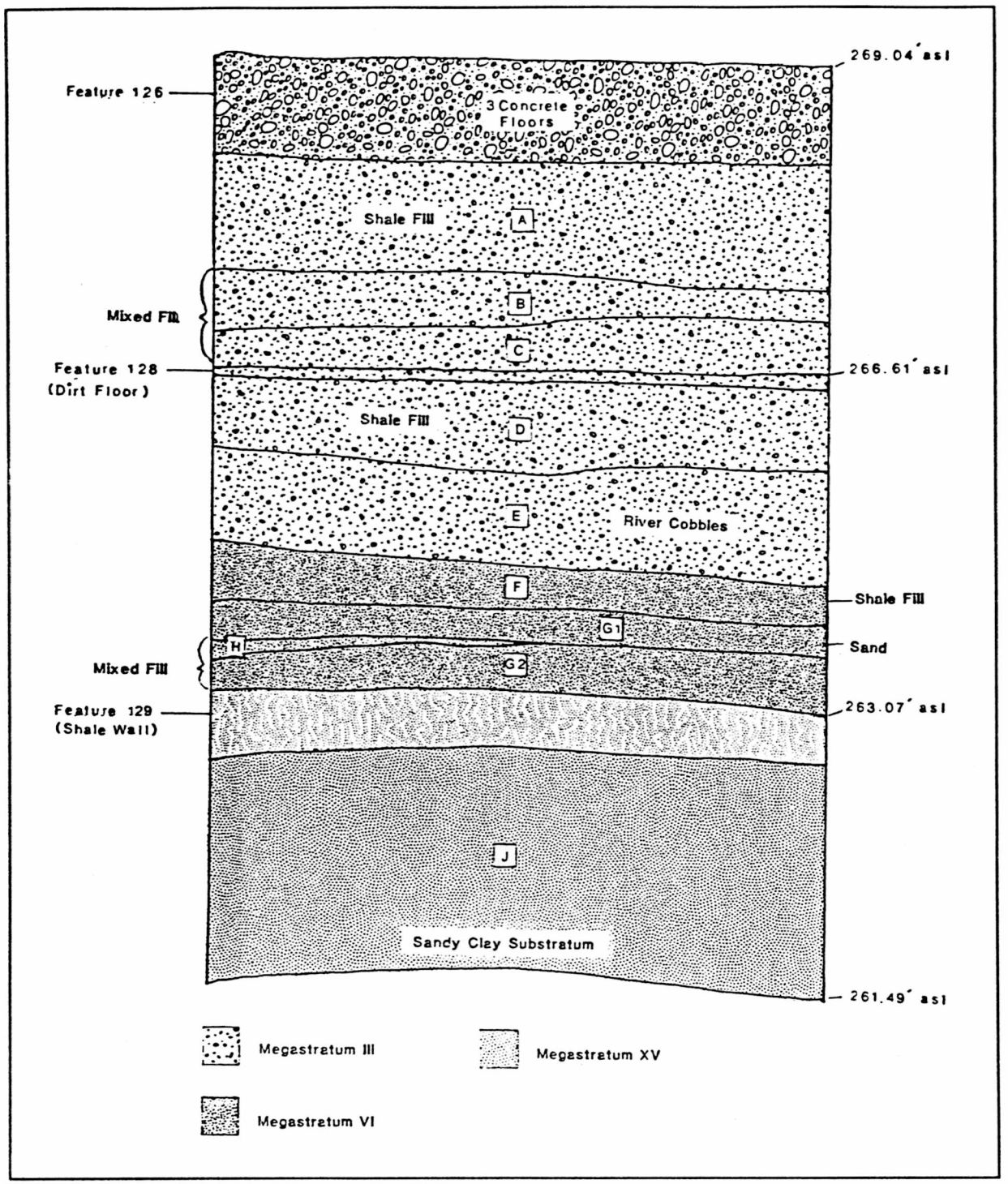


Figure 27. South Profile of Excavation Unit 42 Showing Statigraphy Abutting Interior West Wall of Park Building 32.

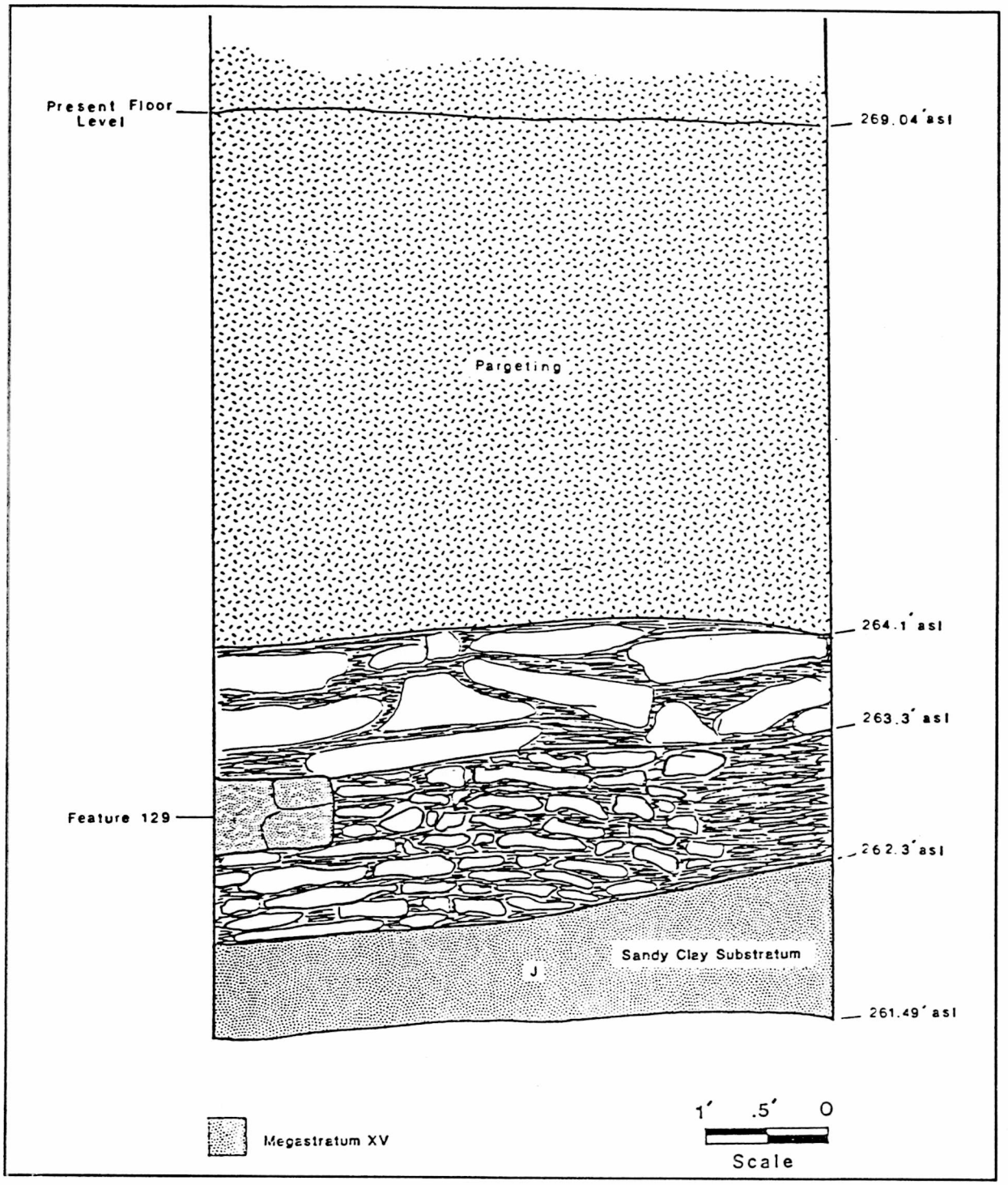


Figure 28. West Profile of Excavation Unit 42 Showing Interior West Wall of Park Building 32.

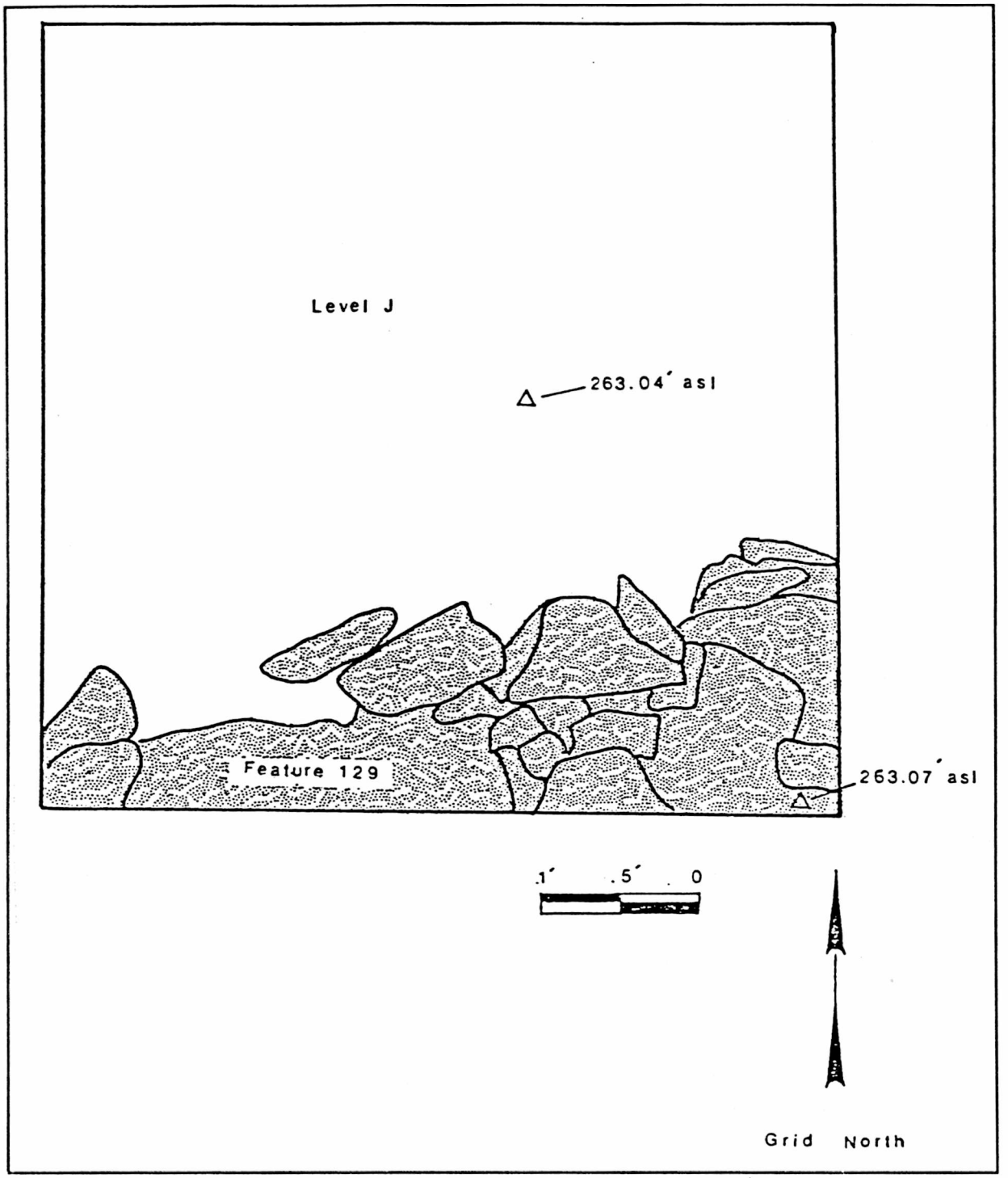


Figure 29. Plan View of Excavation Unit 42 Showing Top of Feature 129.

which they broke through to build the foundation. The earlier wall (Feature 129) was one to two courses high, made of shale slabs, and similar to the one found in Excavation Units 36 and 38. This wall probably divided the Master Armorer's yard from the stable area.

In summary, the foundation hole was excavated, the low wall broken through during construction of the foundation, the foundation laid, and a frame stable constructed. The frame stable was probably built in the late 1830s following construction of the Winchester and Potomac Railroad. The 1870 flood jarred this stable into Market Street. The second foundation, probably built by McGraw in 1877, was constructed on top of the earlier foundation. The original floors to both the earlier stable and McGraw's "ice, carriage, coal" house may have been wooden and thus no longer exist. These earlier wooden floors would explain why no occupation levels and artifacts associated with the use of the structure were found. The first packed, mortared floor (Feature 128) appeared approximately two feet (266.61 ft amsl) above the bottom of the pargeted walls (264.41 ft amsl). Since the builders would not have finished off walls that were not going to be exposed, the pargeted portions were originally meant to be seen. The "ice, carriage, coal" house received various fill layers, including large river cobbles, up to 268.40 ft amsl, where it was capped by three modern concrete floors to 269.04 ft amsl. Based on the artifacts found in the fill layer, most of this filling occurred during the McGraw era (1870-1896).

PARK BUILDING 34A

In December, 1989, three 5 x 5 ft units (Excavation Units 41, 43 and 44) were excavated inside Park Building 34A to look for evidence of its early use as a smokehouse and early architectural features. These three units occupied 75% of the interior floor space.

The present exterior ground surface is 268.2 ft amsl. The most recent floor surface inside Park Building 34A (Figure 30), was a concrete pad covering the whole interior at approximately 269.12 ft amsl, flush with the present door sill. Underlying the concrete pad was almost a foot of shale (Layer A) used to raise the floor level. This fill corresponded to the rough-mortared shale section between the middle door sill and the present door sill (Figure 31). Below the shale fill was a second concrete floor (Feature 122) at approximately 267.45 ft amsl which was in use at the same time as the middle door sill (Figure 30). Beneath the second concrete floor was a 0.3 ft fill layer of shale (Layer B-1), and approximately one foot of sand with small river shells and sand with broken bricks and river cobbles (Layers B-2, B-3, Feature 124 and Layer C). These shale and sand layers filled the "air intake" shown in Figure 6, and may represent construction debris from the second and third brick stories of the smokehouse erected during McGraw's occupation.

Underlying the sand and brick rubble, at 264.95 ft amsl, was a macadam-like, hard-packed surface which was probably the original floor of Park Building 34A (Feature 125). This surface corresponded to the level of the lowest door sill, the bottom of the "air intake," and the brick paving on the north side of the building. The interior walls of the building consisted of mortared shale pargeted down to the original floor level, with dry-laid, unpargeted shale below it.

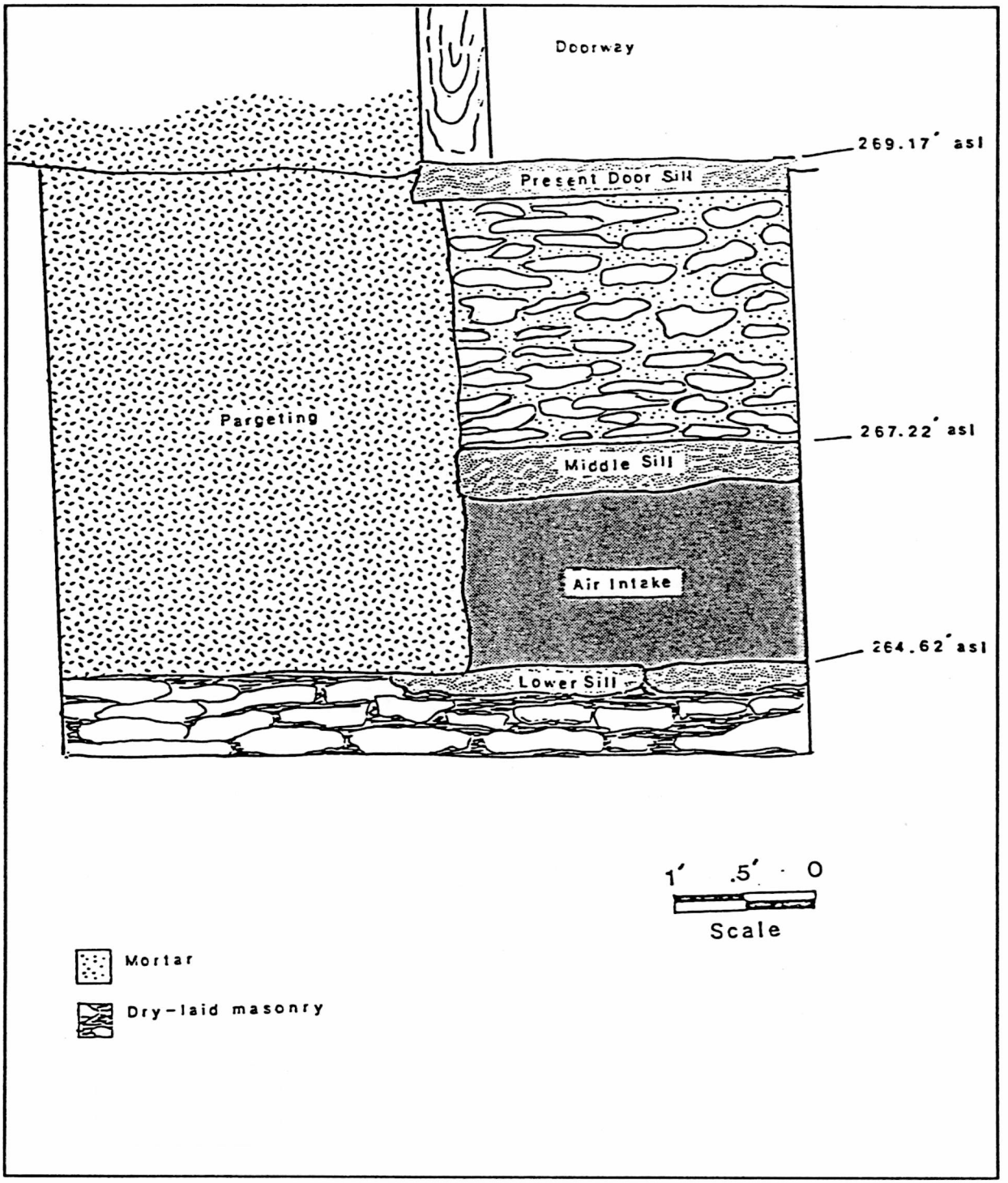


Figure 30. East Profile of Excavation Unit 41 Showing Stratigraphy, Including Succession Floors Abutting the South Interior Wall of Park Building 34A.

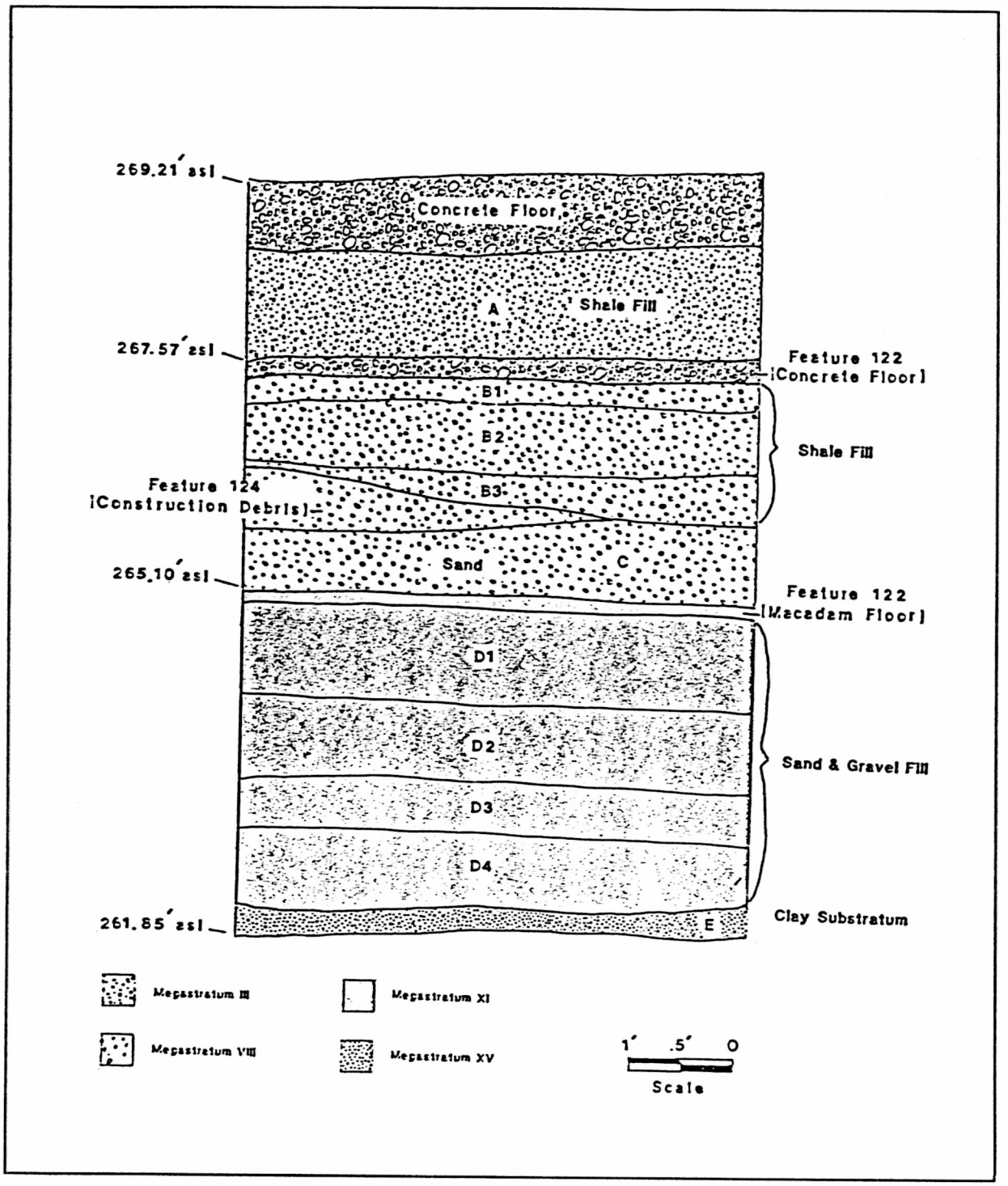


Figure 31. North Profile of Excavation Unit 43 Showing Interior North Wall of Park Building 34A.

In the center of the building, imbedded in the original floor, was a three-legged kettle or cauldron 1.2 ft in diameter. This object may have been used as a "smudge pot" for smoking meats. Although no other pots were found during the excavations, roundish holes cut into the original floor in each excavated corner of the smokehouse may have held similar pots (Figure 32). This hypothesis is very tentative!

The original macadam-like floor was constructed on top of approximately 2.75 ft of shale fill (Layers D-1, D-2, D-3, D-4), which extended to the base of the building's dry-laid shale foundation (262.15 ft amsl). No builder's trench was evident; rather, the builders dug a large, square hole into the sterile subsoil and constructed the foundation against the walls of the hole. Why 2.75 ft of foundation was constructed for a one-story smokehouse is not known. There was no evidence that the half-basement was ever used for storage, a buttery, or other uses. In addition, no indication of a lower floor (i.e., hard-packed surface or joist pockets for a wooden floor) was uncovered. Also puzzling was the fact that the artifacts from this shale fill and macadam dated to around the 1840s, later than the construction date of the building.

In summary, the foundation hole for Park Building 34A was excavated, the walls for the one-story shale structure laid, the hole filled with shale spalls up to the original door sill and a hard-packed, macadam-like interior surface laid down. The building was pargeted inside above the original floor level and outside above the original ground surface. While these surfaces were in use a brick pavement was laid on the north side of the building. Around the same time as redeposited soil from the cellar excavation of Park Buildings 33 or 34 in 1882 covered the brick pavement outside, a foot of brick rubble and sand (construction debris from the erection of the second and third stories of the smokehouse) filled the interior and covered the original door sill and floor. The ground surface thus was raised both inside and out to approximately the same level and a second door sill and floor constructed. This resulted in the "air intake," which was probably not an "air intake" (as interpreted in the November, 1989 Historic Structures Report), but simply the space resulting from raising the original door sill (Figure 13 in the November 1989 HSR). Notches are visible on either side of the smoke house door where the original lintel sat before it was subsequently raised along with the sill. The floor and sill were raised a second time, to the present level, with mortar and shale layers covering both the floor surface inside and the redeposited cellar soil outside. The space between the present and middle sills was filled with mortared shale, indicating the surfaces inside and outside the building were raised at different times or different rates. Since McGraw rebuilt Park Building 32 in 1877, built Park Building 33 in 1882, added to Park Building 34 in 1882, constructed Park Building 33A in 1888, and built the back addition to Park Building 35 in 1891 (Fisher 1989), the shale layers inside the smokehouse could have been deposited at various times during the last quarter of the 19th century.

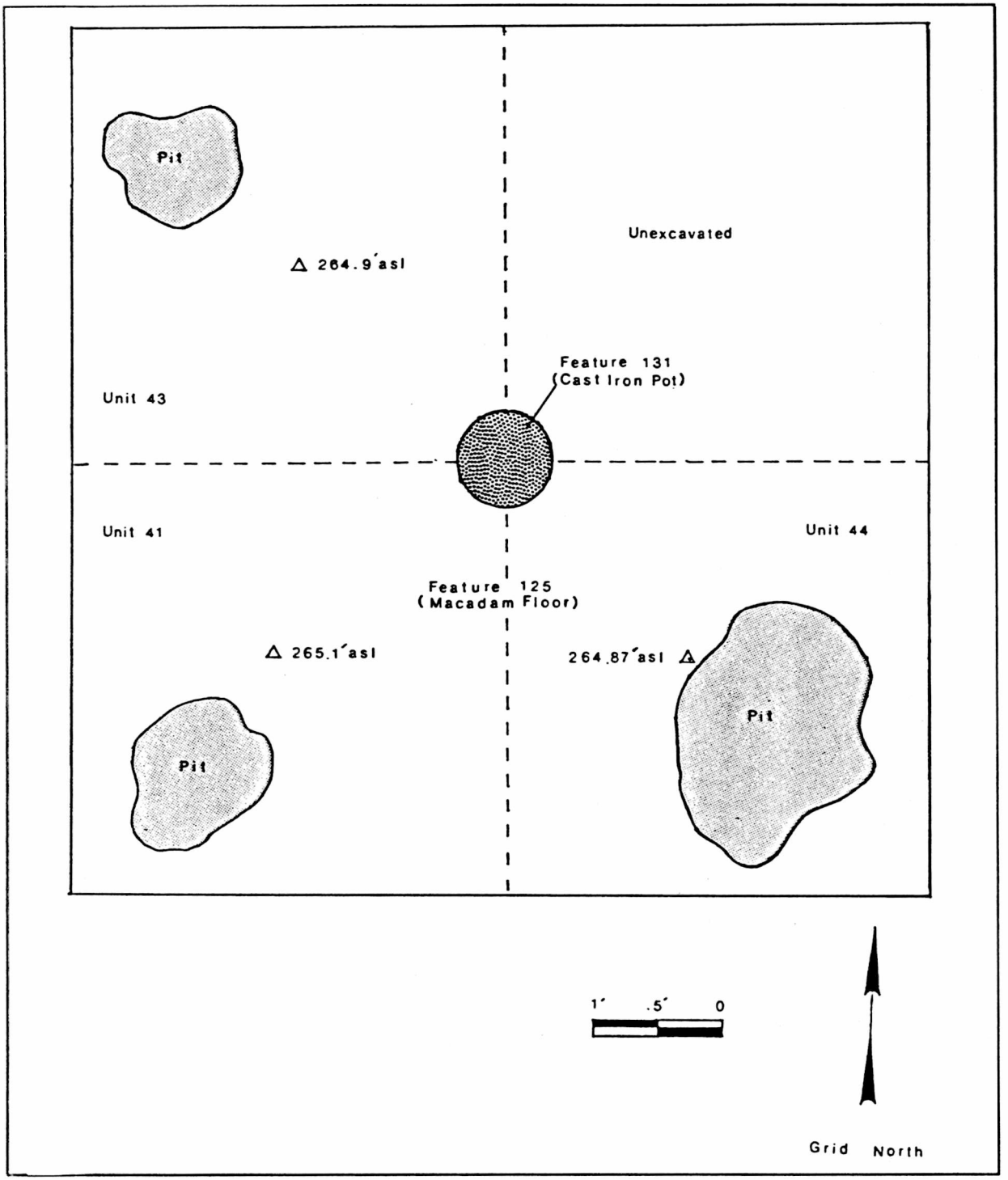


Figure 32. Plan View of Excavation Units 41, 43, and 44 Showing Features 125 (macadam flooring), 131 (iron pots), and Pits

CONCLUSIONS

Construction of Park Building 33 and the back additions to Park Buildings 34-35, as well as fill layers added as a result of McGraw's commercial activities in the backyard, raised the ground surface outside of Park Buildings 32 and 34A several feet during the course of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

This, as well as the continued use and reuse of Park Buildings 32 and 34A for a variety of purposes contributed to the extensive fill and floor sequences seen inside both buildings. For instance, in Park Building 34A the shale layers B and C above the original floor (Feature 125) and beneath the middle floor (Feature 122), and the middle floor itself, were laid in response to the rise in ground level outside the building. This occurred when backdirt from the basement excavations for the Park Building 34 addition was deposited in front of the doorway of Park Building 34A. As the ground surface outside the building continued to rise, a layer of shale (Layer A) was brought in and a concrete floor laid to keep the floor flush with the ground surface. The sill and lintel of the door were raised each time the floor was raised. The second and third of the three modern concrete floors, however, were no doubt added in response to continued use of the building.

Likewise, inside Park Building 32, Layers E (cobbles) and D (shale) were laid as a base for Feature 128 (dirt floor), which was probably put down when the stable was rebuilt upon its earlier foundations after the 1870 flood. Overlying this floor were fill layers of silty clay and a layer of shale, capped by the three modern concrete floors.

Corresponding modifications to the above-ground portions of the structures reflect the subsurface changes in floor levels.

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