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The Southwest Michigan Historic Landscape Project: Exploring Class, Gender, and Ethnicity From the Ground Up

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The Southwest Michigan Historic Landscape Project was initiated in 1994 to examine how the cultural landscapes and associated material culture of the region became transformed since the pioneer settlement of the early 19th century (ca. 1830s). Thus far we have used various methods to investigate four sites in Allegan, Calhoun, and Jackson counties at varying levels of intensity. From these initial efforts we have begun to compile comparative information on the built environment. Here we present the theory and methods used in the project and discuss how class, gender, and ethnic identities are expressed in the material record of the region.

KEY WORDS: historic landscapes; social identity; political economy; southwest Michigan.

Over the past two centuries, southwest Michigan has experienced significant social, political, and economic transformations brought about by local and external processes such as migration, population increase, agricultural specialization, global conflicts, the progressive farm movement, and health reform, to name only a few. In this regard, the history of the region is similar to the histories of other places in America that mirror national trends and trajectories while maintaining their own local flavor. Various sociohistorical factors have had a dramatic impact on social relations and their material expressions in the landscapes and consumption patterns of the region. These structures, in turn, have served to create and

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reproduce the material conditions of social life. As such, physical traces in the region are a useful entry point into understanding the ways in which class, gender, and ethnic identities were experienced and transformed in the past.

While artifacts such as rusty nails, broken glass, lost buttons, and other "small things forgotten" (Deetz, 1977) were implicated in the process of social reproduction, so were the houses, barns, and gardens that comprise the cultural landscape. Though the contemporary materiality of a site may appear static, it is actually a dynamic outcome of the articulation between the built and natural environments. People actively configure space, situate outbuildings, and design walkways and fences to express aspects of their social identities such as class standing, ethnic background, and ideological beliefs. Moreover, changes in social relations can be identified using a variety of methodological tools and interpreted within a theoretical framework that emphasizes the built environment and material goods as the products and precedents of social negotiation. We have found these tenets, elaborated upon below, to be useful in framing historical and archaeological investigations and conceptualizations of several sites in Allegan, Calhoun, and Jackson counties that exhibit physical evidence of 19th-century Euro-American settlement (see Fig. 1).

The sites in this study are generally comparable because they came to be occupied by similar Euro-American populations in the 19th century. Some of the sites were actively involved with agricultural production while others resulted from land

Fig. 1. Map of Michigan and adjacent areas showing the locations of Allegan, Calhoun, and Jackson counties from west to east.

subdivision brought about by agricultural consolidation (see Stewart-Abernathy, 1986). More importantly, all of the sites exhibit evidence of material culture in the form of artifact assemblages, standing structures, or other landscape features that were associated with people who varied by class, gender, and ethnicity. Standing structures constitute a particularly important dimension of our analyses. For example, the dominant feature at the Merriman–Sharp site in Jackson County is a grand Italianate house that was constructed for and furnished by Mary Merriman and her daughter Ella Sharp in the 1850s and 1860s. The site is somewhat atypical of the period since it was owned by two successive women and is now memorialized as a heritage tourist destination (see Nickolai, 1994). The Woodhams site in Allegan County is still occupied. Located on a much smaller lot in a lower middle class residential neighborhood, the house and landscape have experienced significant modifications over the past 120 years, yet there appears to be continuity in the socioeconomic standing of a sequence of occupants (see Rotman, 1995; Rotman and Nassaney, 1997). Our most extensive work has been conducted at two sites in Calhoun County, both in the Cereal City of Battle Creek. We began by conducting an archaeological field school (1996) at the farmstead of the city's first schoolteacher, the pioneer Warren Shepard (see Nassaney, 1998; Nassaney and Nickolai, 1999). The extant brick, Greek Revival house that he had built in the early 1850s, two decades after his arrival, remained in the Shepard family until 1925 when subsequent owners and tenants altered the landscape to express new social identities. The house was abandoned in the early 1980s and has fallen into disrepair. Finally, we examined the site of James and Ellen G. White, the founders of the Seventh-Day Adventist religion, during the 1998 archaeological field school (see Nassaney, 1999). Their modest wooden Greek Revival house, built in 1856, is currently undergoing extensive restoration as part of an effort to recreate the physical surroundings of Adventist life as they may have appeared in the early 1860s. Each of these sites exhibits a material record that testifies to the identities of their occupants and the political–economic transformations they experienced during the 19th and 20th centuries. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the theoretical and methodological frameworks that we used to guide our site investigations and analyses. We then present some of our results and highlight the integration of method and theory. We close by comparing and contrasting the sites in our study to show how the material world reveals important variations in the class, gender, and ethnic identities of the people who made and used these historic landscapes.

INTERPRETING CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

The Southwest Michigan Historic Landscape Project (SWMHLP) was designed and implemented in 1994 to explore the complex social meanings of the built environments of the region. Thus far, the project has focused on using historical, archaeological, ethnographic, and geophysical methods to document the

cultural landscapes of four 19th- and 20th-century homelots in southwest Michigan (see Nassaney, 1998, 1999; Nassaney and Nickolai, 1999; Nickolai, 1994; Rotman, 1995; Rotman and Nassaney, 1997; Sayers 1999a). These and other studies have shown that men and women, rich and poor, native and immigrant, built their cultural environments and organized space in ways that served to assert their identities (e.g., see Delle, 1998; Nassaney and Paynter, 1995; Paynter *et al.*, 1994; Yamin and Metheny, 1996). In historic America, social relations of power and privilege were often codified through the material world. These material texts of social action can be read in ways that differ from verbal and written records and often provide more reliable evidence of actual social relations.

Over the past two decades, landscape studies have emerged as a central concern in the field of historical archaeology (see Kelso and Most, 1990; Leone, 1984; Miller and Gleason, 1994; Mrozowski, 1991; Paynter *et al.*, 1994; Yamin and Metheny, 1996). Approaches to cultural landscapes have been quite varied, and both scientific and humanistic perspectives have been used profitably to identify and explain change and continuity in the built environment through interpretations of documentary and material remains (see Rotman and Nassaney, 1997). The need for historically accurate landscape reconstructions began at sites associated with American elites, but the field has grown to encompass the landscapes of people with limited historical documentation such as laborers, women, minorities, immigrants, the underprivileged, and the emerging middle class (Yamin and Metheny, 1996, p. xvi).

These studies underscore the idea that landscapes were usually designed and created to be seen and experienced by others. Thus, we conceptualize historic landscapes and artifacts as media that symbolically communicate status or other social roles (see Hodder, 1982; Wobst, 1977). The size, shape, location, and condition of fences, barns, gardens, and outbuildings encode messages to viewers about their makers and users, as do ceramic place settings, glass containers, household furnishings, and dietary selections. Actively constructed landscape features and material culture choices may serve to legitimate authority (e.g., Mrozowski, 1991, p. 90), express religious ideology (e.g., Kryder-Reid, 1996), or serve as political metaphors (e.g., Leone, 1984; Nassaney and Abel, 2000). The potential viewing audience for each category of remains will also vary depending on one's social distance. For example, passersby could note the handsome symmetry of a home's elaborate wooden dentils or the opulence of an Italianate cupola, whereas only house guests and intimate visitors would see the fashionable ceramics gracing one's dining room table.

Landscapes, and their study, may also vary according to spatial scale (see Trigger, 1968, on issues of scale in archaeological settlement patterns). For example, at the regional scale, archaeologists have shown how spatial relationships became reconfigured in the Connecticut River Valley of western Massachusetts as this periphery of the British world economic system developed more core-like

characteristics of capital accumulation in the early 19th century (Paynter, 1982). Community studies, for which there are fewer examples, may attempt to explore the meaning of spatial variation and change in the context of a village or a small city (e.g., Hood, 1996; Lewis, 1993). The smallest or microscale of analysis focuses on the house, yard, and associated activity areas of the occupants. The point is that there is no single scale of analysis for the study of cultural landscapes because social relations are reproduced at multiple spatial scales.

In our studies we have confined our analyses to the domestic and agricultural work areas of the homelot to explore change and continuity in the activities and social roles associated with a succession of occupants beginning in the second quarter of the 19th century. We take a political–economic approach to view everyday cultural landscapes as a means to create, reinforce, and alter social relations. Our focus on historical landscapes represents a synthesis of scholarly interest in settlement patterns at the microscale and social organization associated with the development and reproduction of social stratification. By using the material world to codify social relations, humans reproduce the structure of society and/or attempt to alter it. Dwellings and associated exterior spaces are prominent arenas used for social reproduction. The challenge for the landscape archaeologist is to design and operationalize a methodology for the study of land use over time. The approach should be interdisciplinary with a concern for both the generalities of the past and the peculiarities of the case at hand (Beaudry, 1996, p. 4).

Historical archaeology—a study that shares anthropological and historical concerns for understanding the global nature of modern life (Orser, 1996, p. 27)—is well poised to undertake such an interdisciplinary endeavor. Practitioners are able to weave together information on social relations, artifacts, and the built environment from various sources including documents, ethnographic consultants, geophysics, and archaeological remains. In the section that follows we discuss the methodologies used by SWMHLP researchers to collect landscape information from each of these sources. Not all sources were available to explore each of the sites. Furthermore, none of the sources are given priority; each was used as a cross check against the others in an attempt to gain a better understanding of areas of source complementarity and ambiguity to guide further investigations and the development of research approaches. The effort is an ongoing one that continues to confront and juxtapose new information about life and landscape in southwest Michigan.

Class, gender, and ethnicity are not entirely new concerns in historical archaeology (McGuire, 1982; Paynter, 1988; Schuyler, 1980; Scott, 1994; Stine, 1992; Wurst and Fitts, 1999), though practitioners have come to increasingly appreciate the importance of these dimensions for understanding material variation. Simply put, the objects that were made, used, and discarded by men and women, master and slave, native and immigrant, were seldom of the same form, design, or raw material. Moreover, the choices that led to this variation do not merely reflect an

individual's role in society but actively served to create that role through a complex process of symbolic association and social identification (Hodder, 1982). Our study extends this perspective by arguing that artifacts, architecture, and artificial spaces work in tandem to create a social order. The material residue of that order can be studied to define the political–economic contours of everyday life for people of different social standing, including those "without history" (Wolf, 1982).

METHODS OF LANDSCAPE RECONSTRUCTION

As with any interdisciplinary endeavor, information can be derived from a number of different sources. To reconstruct and interpret the landscapes of southwest Michigan, we have found it useful to rely on the following sources: (1) historical documents; (2) interviews with local informants; (3) geophysical survey; (4) observations on vegetation, architectural remains, and other surface features; and (5) archaeological investigations. Not all approaches were equally successful at all of the sites we investigated. However, the data sources are all potentially accessible to the landscape archaeologist and will likely provide complementary as well as contradictory information on the material world and its social meanings.

Historical Documents

In a recent study discussing the methodology of landscape archaeology, Mascia (1996, p. 154) suggested that investigations should begin by searching and examining five different document groups, including (1) primary government and legal documents (vital records, census records, tax records, probate records, maps), (2) family or farm documents (personal diaries, farm and/or household accounts, letters, and specific materials unique to the individuals), (3) newspapers and journals, (4) photographs, and (5) any relevant secondary documentary sources (agricultural, town, and family histories).

Each of these sources has been useful to our project in varying degrees (see Table I); as for example, we were able to conduct more extensive archival research for some sites than for others. In the following discussion, we present some examples of the types of landscape information that we have derived from various documentary materials associated with the sites in this study. More detailed site-specific information is presented in the subsequent section as we elaborate on individual case studies (see also Nassaney, 1998, 1999; Nickolai, 1994; Rotman, 1995; Rotman and Nassaney, 1997; Sayers, 1999a).

Government and legal documents included patent records, abstracts of title, and other land transaction descriptions that allowed us to trace ownership of particular parcels of land from initial purchase through to the present. The sequence of owners was linked whenever possible to specific landscape alterations and their social and economic significance. Occasionally, property descriptions in the abstracts

Table I. Summary of the Sources Consulted and the Methods Used in the Southwest Michigan Historic Landscape Project by Site

	Merriman–Sharp	Shepard	White	Woodhams
Historical records				
Primary legal documents				
Abstract of title	+	+	+	+
Census records		+		
Circuit court records		+		
Death records		+		
Maps	+	+	+	+
Probate records		+	+	+
Tax records		+	+	+
Family or farm documents				
Farm/household accounts	+	+		
Letters	+			
Personal diaries			+	
Newspapers and journals				
Agricultural journals		+	+	
Newspapers		+		+
Photographic evidence				
Photographs	+	+	+	+
Sketches/drawings	+			
Secondary documents				
Agricultural histories	+	+		
Town histories	+	+	+	+
Interviews				
Former occupants		+		+
Neighbors		+	+	
Geophysical survey				
Electrical resistivity		+	+	
Ground penetrating radar		+	+	+
Magnetometry		+	+	
Other surveys				
Archaeological		+	+	+
Architectural	+	+	+	+
Botanical		+	+	
Surface		+	+	+

of title made specific references to outbuildings or other features that were useful in landscape reconstruction. Tax records provided comparative information on the owner's economic status and the value of the land. Significant changes in land valuation sometimes indicated that substantial modifications (e.g., house addition) had occurred. Agricultural and population censuses were examined to gauge the nature and extent of farming activities at some of the sites.

The analysis of probate records was important in understanding family dynamics, inheritance struggles, and the nature of personal property for site occupants. Birth, death, and marriage certificates were also consulted. Circuit court records provided information about local events (e.g., flood damage) and site-specific activities (e.g., law suits) that shaped the creation, use, and modification of the homelot.

Various types of maps were also available for examination. While some maps were only detailed enough to show major structures (e.g., houses, barns) and significant topographic features (e.g., a spring, a creek), others were used to document outbuildings (e.g., garages) and associated landscape features (e.g., driveways). Maps must be field-checked since they were often drawn for purposes that did not require measured accuracy. Collectively, primary government and legal documents alerted us to the presence of various landscape features. These data supplemented records created by the site occupants.

Family or farm records were scarce for the sites in our study, with two major exceptions. When James and Ellen White first came to Battle Creek in 1855, they established a printing business to publish the *Herald Review*. This periodical contains original writings by James White that document daily practices in the community. Furthermore, Ellen White was a prolific author and wrote hundreds of pages regarding religious doctrine intended for an ecclesiastical audience. While we have not reviewed these works in their entirety, they will prove to be a valuable source of information on the social and religious context of her teachings.

Battle Creek archival collections have also yielded another important personal record in the form of Warren Shepard's account book. Curated by the Historical Society of Battle Creek, this ledger was used by Shepard from 1843 to 1858 to keep track of labor arrangements with his employees, laborer consumption and spending, and debts owed Shepard by his customers and associates (Sayers and Lapham, 1996). As a detailed statement on farm productivity, agricultural economics, and labor relations, the document can be used to interpret landscape changes, gender relations, and patterns of household consumption, as well as social affiliations and personal convictions (see Sayers, 1999a).

Documents specific to each property provided a critical humanizing element to the landscape. National trends and regional activities had implications for individual landowners, which they interpreted and expressed through their activities. Corresponding modifications to the landscape as well as periods of stasis were viewed as responses to social, political, and economic processes at these multiple scales.

Newspapers and journals provided data that were previously unknown or supplemented historical information gleaned from other sources. For example, we learned about Emily Shepard's employment at a bookstore later in life from a local newspaper. At the Woodhams site, two successive owners were involved in multiple real estate transactions, suggesting that they may have rented out the property. Journals, in particular, provided a broader context for larger issues in regional and local history. Agricultural journals, for example, led to insights into farming trends and economics that other sources lacked (Sayers and Nassaney, 1999).

Historic site photographs were useful in tracing architectural and landscape changes. Photographs were taken for a variety of reasons and often inadvertently

depicted outbuildings, fences, walkways, trees, and other purposeful plantings. Modifications to the houses could be later correlated with changes in the life cycles of the residents (e.g., a bedroom addition) or new consumer choices (e.g., the conversion of a kitchen ell to a garage). Images of people on the landscape were used to date the age of the photos and interpret social status through an analysis of clothing styles.

Secondary sources served to detail the history of the villages, towns, and cities of the region in many diverse ways and situate the lives of the site occupants in historical perspective (e.g., Lowe, 1976). They provided broader social contexts for understanding transformations, as southwest Michigan became increasingly industrialized and populated. Business and city directories contained pertinent information about local economic relationships. County histories offered informative reminiscences of people, events, and politics. One county history (Everts and Co., 1877) contained comparative illustrations of farmstead landscapes, from which we derived a predictive proxemics model to understand spatial organization at contemporaneous late 19th century sites (see Sayers and Nassaney, 1999).

In sum, documentary research can provide important information on changes in the built environment. These sources identify the presence of various outbuildings that once dotted the landscape (e.g., barns, sheds) as well as other facilities required to conduct agricultural and domestic activities (e.g., enclosures, a slaughtering area or building, a smokehouse, root cellars). Moreover, the appearance, disappearance, and replacement of these features likely corresponded with changes in household composition, site function, and socioeconomic status of the occupants as places were transformed from sites of primary production to urban farmsteads (see Stewart-Abernathy, 1986), rental units, and preserved historic buildings. The stories contained in the documents were enhanced through the recollections of people who were associated with or witnessed the landscape under investigation.

Interviews With Consultants

Community members who observed the activities and the landscapes of earlier occupations, or who recall descriptions of them, can provide valuable information to historical archaeologists. Details that seldom appear in the documentation about a site can often be elicited through formal and informal interviews.

For our research, conversations with ethnographic consultants often revealed crucial information about the evolution of the landscape. The descriptions and locations of previous gardens, outbuildings, and other features (e.g., fishponds) enhanced our understanding of how the built environment was organized to accommodate daily activities and reproduce social relations. In many cases, these activities and landscape changes could be linked to larger social, political, and economic phenomena either through corroborating data or directly by the consultants. At the Shepard site, a neighbor voiced her disapproval of the house and

yard modifications that accompanied a change in land ownership in the 1920s (see Nassaney and Nickolai, 1999). In Plainwell, a former resident explained that her family raised chickens for meat and eggs in the 1930s to supplement their diet and generate additional income for the household through their sale to neighbors (see Rotman, 1995). Whenever possible, we attempted to relate landscape information derived from documents and oral accounts with above-ground physical evidence before conducting subsurface investigations.

Botanical, Architectural, and Surface Survey

While much evidence of historic land use lies beneath the surface or gets obscured by subsequent activities of a transformative nature, there are often numerous clues evident in the extant vegetation, architecture, and other surface indications at a site that can be detected by a trained eye. For example, denuded areas, rusty wire fences, and overgrown vines may indicate past landscape practices. Thus, garden historians and landscape architects can often use the presence and locations of plants and arbors to reconstruct how a yard once looked. Likewise, the house itself—as architectural historians well know—is often the largest "artifact" at a historical archaeological site. Original features and subsequent modifications may speak volumes about social class and the aesthetic values of a site's occupants. Other surface evidence may also provide clues to intentional home improvements. For example, remnant foundation walls often indicate where a house addition or outbuilding once stood. A walkover survey may be sufficient to identify, map, and describe these types of features. At each site we observed the vegetation, architectural remains, and surface anomalies for clues that reflect changes in the built environment and associated activities.

We enlisted a landscape historian and an agricultural historian to help us interpret the botanical record of the Shepard and the James and Ellen G. White sites. These experts identified various plants and suggested other vegetation that may have existed at the property in the past. The locations of ornamental and cultivated plant species were mapped. Many types of plants proved to be exotic to the region, indicating that they were culturally introduced (e.g., black locust, white mulberry, day lilies, dame's rocket, and honeysuckle). Garden design and composition have been used historically to assert social status and naturalize economic inequities (Leone, 1984). Consequently, these plants were clues to deciphering social relations. In addition, the popularity of various ornamental plants waxed and waned. Thus, the presence of particular plant species can be useful chronological markers, as can be age estimates of trees. The botanical record can sometimes also be correlated with historic photographs. Finally, because plants respond to different moisture conditions, their presence or size can be indicative of natural or cultural subsurface features such as an old creek bed or a cistern.

Just as styles and distributions of vegetation wax and wane in popularity, many attributes of a standing structure are also chronologically sensitive and were likely constructed, added, or removed for specific purposes (e.g., Adams and McMurry, 1999; Hubka, 1984). While typically the domain of architectural historians, houses are also of interest to archaeologists for the formal and spatial attributes that they present both to viewers and occupants. The house is an aspect of the built environment that reproduces social relations on a daily basis. Thus, we conceive of the standing domestic structures at each site as large artifacts that can provide information about changing vernacular styles and how they reflect and express the class, gender, and ethnic identities of their occupants.

A number of house attributes have proven to be of interest to our project. The addition of a porch at the Woodhams site using recycled materials suggested that the residents were of lower economic status. The construction of two barns over a short period of time at the Shepard site and the construction of a two-story brick Greek-Revival–style house with elaborate exterior woodwork indicate that Shepard was signaling his upward mobility, if not his identification with the emerging middle class. The removal of the barn at the Woodhams site underscores a changing economic base for the household, as the family moved from agricultural production into industrial wage labor.

Surface remains of standing structures, fence lines, property boundaries, vegetation, and other features were often important clues to former landscape configurations. Many of these areas became the focus of more intensive study through geophysical survey and archaeological excavation.

Geophysical Survey

Recent technological refinements in surveying equipment allow archaeologists to use noninvasive techniques to identify subsurface anomalies that may correspond to historic landscape features (e.g., stone walls, trash pits) and artifact concentrations (Heimmer and DeVore, 1995; Nassaney *et al.*, 1999; Scollar, 1989; Silliman *et al.*, 2000; Von Frese, 1984). These techniques can be particularly useful in a site investigation in which the goals are to identify the locations of subsurface features and artifacts and evaluate their potential significance for National Register eligibility. Features on 19th-century homelots may be relatively rare and dispersed (e.g., wells, privies, barn foundations). Consequently, locating them may require considerable effort using traditional techniques such as hand-excavated shovel test pits. This underscores the potential effectiveness of rapid, noninvasive remote sensing methods. Geophysical prospecting devices were used in a limited way at the Plainwell site. Subsequent site evaluations at the Shepard and James and Ellen G. White House sites fully integrated magnetometry, electrical resistivity, and ground-penetrating radar (GPR). These techniques were used to successfully identify subsurface anomalies in magnetic fields, soil conductivity, or

density that were later tested to determine their correspondence with buried landscape features and artifact concentrations (Nassaney *et al.*, 1999; Sauck, 1998). Geophysical principles and techniques are consistent with the political economic approach to landscape advocated in this project. This combination of theory and method in landscape archaeology provides a valuable means to identify features, a useful research framework for effectively evaluating site significance, and a useful paradigm for interpretation.

Archaeological Survey

Historical documents, oral accounts, surface indications, and geophysical anomalies can help locate potentially significant subsurface remains. However, archaeological investigation is needed to reveal the contextual patterning among artifacts, ecofacts, and features, and assess the functional and temporal significance of that patterning (Sharer and Ashmore, 1993, p. 239).

Standard archaeological techniques were employed at all of the sites except the Ella Sharp house. Subsurface investigations involved the use of small shovel test pits (STPs) (50 × 50 cm) and larger excavation units (1 × 1 m, 1 × 2 m) sometimes placed adjacent to each other to expose larger areas and discern horizontal relationships. All STPs and excavation units were dug to culturally sterile soil whenever possible; excavation in units that encountered features often terminated when a sizeable artifact sample was recovered and/or the feature's context and integrity could be evaluated. These procedures followed from the goals of an intensive archaeological survey, which are to identify the locations of subsurface features and artifacts and evaluate their potential significance. An intensive survey differs from a large-scale data recovery or excavation project because the goal of a survey is not to excavate entirely any of the features or artifact concentrations that are identified, but merely to assess their potential to provide information on the history of the site and its occupants.

In all of our excavations, the soil matrix was removed with shovels and trowels in arbitrary levels (5 or 10 cm) within stratigraphic units and passed through 1/4″ mesh. All artifacts were collected and separated by provenience. Plan views were drawn regularly and observations on the locations and densities of artifacts and their associations were recorded on level sheets. Representative soil profiles were drawn to scale and described using standardized techniques. Photographs were taken of units, walls, and features. All of the documentation and artifacts are currently curated in the Department of Anthropology at Western Michigan University, though they will eventually be returned to their legal owners.

Information from archaeological excavations was essential in landscape reconstruction. Excavation revealed or confirmed the presence of various features (e.g., privies), outbuildings (e.g., barn), and activity areas (e.g., kitchen middens) at the homelots. Moreover, artifacts recovered in association with these features were

critical in establishing the chronology of their construction, use, modification, and abandonment.

In sum, historical documents, oral accounts, surface indications, and geophysical anomalies were employed to help identify locations of potentially significant subsurface remains, followed by excavations to ascertain and record the presence of subsurface deposits and to assess their integrity. Both undisturbed features and artifact concentrations with contextual integrity were identified at the sites we examined, and we suspect that similar features await discovery at the Ella Sharp site. In the following section we discuss select findings at each site and explain how these landscape features provide information on the social identities of their makers and users.

THE SITES

The Merriman–Sharp Site, Jackson County

The Merriman–Sharp Hillside Farm was among the largest and most prosperous agricultural operations in Jackson County in the 19th century (Fig. 2). As such, it is not typical of farms in the county or elsewhere in the region. Furthermore, two successive women owned the site from the 1850s until it was willed to

Fig. 2. Photograph of the Merriman–Sharp house (early 20th century). Courtesy of the Ella Sharp Museum.

the city of Jackson in 1912 to serve as a park and museum. The original property consisted of 400 acres and a small three-room house probably built in the 1840s. Abraham Wing purchased the site in the early 1850s for his daughter, Mary Wing Farnsworth, a widow from Glens Falls, New York (Nickolai, 1994, p. 19). She married Dwight Merriman in 1855 who managed, but did not own, what would become a very successful agricultural enterprise.

Of the Merrimans' four children only Ella (b. 1857) survived to adulthood. She attended Michigan Female Seminary in Kalamazoo and accompanied her mother on two trips to Europe. Ella married a local lawyer, John Sharp, in 1881 and they began managing the farm in 1883 when Ella's parents moved closer to the center of town. Most of the daily farm activities were performed by hired hands; John Sharp maintained his law practice and held several elected offices, including State Senator. Ella involved herself in civic activities associated with child welfare, public recreation, and beautification projects. After her husband's death in 1908, Ella Sharp maintained her interests but became ill and died in 1912. The Ella W. Sharp Park was established in 1916. It consisted of 530 acres, her opulent house and furnishings, and several outbuildings. For nearly 50 years the park supervisor lived in one half of the house and the Sharp possessions were stored in the remaining space. The Ella Sharp Museum was formed in the 1960s to interpret the house and landscape to the public in the context of 19th-century Jackson County history and culture.

The site came to our attention as an example of a well-preserved, prosperous farmstead that was owned and maintained by two women for a period of nearly six decades. While we did not conduct any subsurface investigations, the site exhibits architectural changes, period furnishings, and landscape features that can inform about the social identities of the house occupants.

Mary and Dwight Merriman began to signal their economic prosperity to the community in 1857 by constructing a large two-story Greek Revival addition in front of the old house, completely obscuring the earlier building. Early in the next decade a five-story Italianate tower was added behind the Greek Revival front near the original house. This represents a relatively early use of this style in the region indicating that the Merrimans were consciously using new architectural elements to distinguish themselves from, as well as appeal to, other members of the community. At the same time, the roof of the original house was raised to create three full rooms upstairs. The ground floor featured a formal parlor, sitting room, dining room, office/library, and kitchen, while the second story had space for five bedrooms, and rooms for male and female help (Nickolai, 1994; Fig. 3). According to the 1860 Agricultural Census figures for Jackson County, the Hillside Farm was one of the two largest farms in the township. The *Jackson Daily Citizen* reported in 1865 that the 600-acre farm was one of the best in the state. It grew a variety of crops; supported nearly 3,000 apple, peach, and pear trees; raised a large dairy herd and prized horses; produced 120 pounds of cheese daily; and made wine

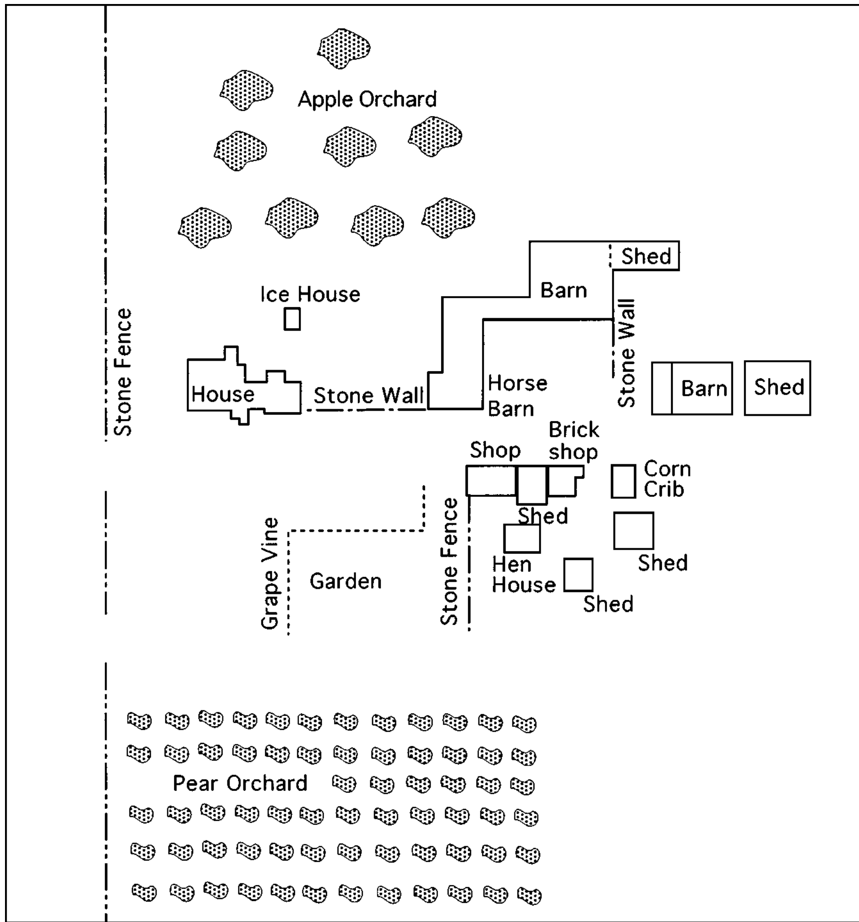

Fig. 3. Plan view of the Merriman–Sharp site landscape showing the locations of the house, outbuildings, and other activity areas (e.g., garden, orchards).

from grapes grown on the property. The value and productivity of the farm clearly indicate that the Merrimans and Sharps were members of the local agrarian elite.

In addition to this imposing house, the Merrimans and Sharps used other landscape features to express their status. For example, a New York stone mason was employed at considerable cost to build a stone wall one-half-mile long along the street in front of the house. This dry wall structure was four feet wide at the base, two feet wide at the top, sunk one foot into the ground, and about four feet high. It earned Dwight Merriman a silver medal from the Michigan State Agriculture Society in 1869 (Nickolai, 1994, p. 36). Immediately in front of the house the wall

was mortared, embellished with decorated metal work at the top, and flanked by matching metal gates allowing entrance to the circular drive. A comparison with 258 illustrated properties in nearby Lenawee County (Everts and Co., 1874) showed no more impressive or labor-intensive stone wall or metal work. Visitors were also welcomed by a smooth ride on the two-mile drive from town as Dwight Merriman made road improvements in the 1850s and 1860s (Nickolai, 1994, pp. 37–38). Immediately south of the entrance to the farm were vegetable and decorative gardens that were also designed to impress visitors and passersby.

Ornamental plants were extremely popular and readily available throughout the region in the 19th-century (Lyon-Jenness, 1998). Large, decorative gardens would have symbolized the leisure time of upper class women. In the 19th century, women's roles were often expressed through the organization of interior and exterior spaces (Spain, 1992). For example, male/public and female/private arenas were often separated by the placement of the parlor and the kitchen to the front and rear of the house respectively (e.g., McMurry, 1997; Nassaney and Nickolai, 1999, Fig. 5). This arrangement characterized homes that were large enough to accommodate specialized spaces and those in which occupants engaged in manual production in the household and associated work areas. Such a spatial division does not seem to be rigidly expressed at the Merriman–Sharp site. For example, the vegetable garden and the hen house—arenas that women traditionally would have tended—are located in proximity to male workspaces (Fig. 3). Since vegetable gardening and poultry production were likely the tasks of hired hands and not Ella Sharp, the landscape was not partitioned in a way to create typically gendered spaces.

Social distinctions of class and gender were often created and reinforced through the familiar surroundings of household furnishings. For example, period parlor suites often consisted of a hierarchy of chair sizes representing the household's social hierarchy (Ames, 1992, pp. 115–120); the gentleman's chair would be the largest and most comfortable, followed in size and comfort by the lady's chair and those designed for children and guests. In the Sharp house there are interesting ambiguities in the furnishings that betray a strong female presence. Unlike the typical arrangement, the Sharp's parlor suite has two gentleman's chairs and no lady's chair. These objects send a potent message about the comparable status of John and Ella Sharp within the household. However, another common female symbol, the piano, was present. Women were encouraged to play the piano in order to lead the family in singing hymns to demonstrate their piety and domesticity in the home (Nickolai, 1994, p. 40). The Merriman's had a piano brought to Michigan from New York in the 1850s. This object indicated that the women of the household were suitably refined and upheld proper values and behaviors in the home, despite their roles as landowners and managers.

In sum, elite farmers like the Merrimans and Sharps used material symbols to legitimize their social positions and negotiate their gender identities. Continual

refinements to the house and landscape in the 1850s and 60s were clear symbolic messages that the family had achieved economic prosperity and were active participants in the avid consumerism of the time. Although we lack the archaeological traces that would point to this participation, extant documentation concerning the spatial organization of the farmstead as well as the house and its furnishings attest to the elite social identities of the site occupants. Despite the assumed importance of separate spheres in 19th-century America, class mediated gender relations in defining the social identities of John and Ella Sharp. The material expressions of gender in the household challenge the social expectations of a subordinate wife. Nevertheless, the "cult of true womanhood" (Welter, 1966) had impressed upon the minds of Mary Merriman and Ella Sharp "that whatever they may do outside [of the] 'women's sphere' it was also necessary to fulfill their obligations as dutiful wives and moral mothers" (Nickolai, 1994, p. 42).

The Woodhams Site, Allegan County

The Woodhams site in Plainwell was the second site to be investigated by the Southwest Michigan Historic Landscape Project (Fig. 4). Archaeological and

Fig. 4. Photograph of the Woodhams house (ca. 1938). Reprinted with the permission of the Society for Historical Archaeology.

historical investigations provide evidence for considerable continuity in class and gender relations at this site. In 1879, an Italianate-style home was constructed on a three-lot parcel known as "Woodham's Third Addition," a large tract of land that was subdivided for housing development. Although the house possessed the classic cube shape of the Italianate style, it lacked the elements that characterized an elite, single-family dwelling of the late 19th century (e.g., fireplaces, tall floor-to-ceiling height ratios, and possibly decorative exterior brackets).

Tax records, land deeds, and newspaper accounts indicate that the house was consistently owned and/or occupied by families of modest economic means. Successive residents were employed as a railroad worker, laborer, pipe fitter, teacher, and social worker. Former residents characterized the neighborhood as "lower middle class" (Rotman, 1995, p. 68). In addition, the house may have served as a rental property for nearly three decades, if not longer. Between 1908 and 1935, the landowners were involved in multiple real estate transactions suggesting that the house was not owner-occupied.

The absence of classic Italianate features on the house indicates that the builders of the home either did not possess the economic means necessary or the desire to create a domestic residence that mirrored the elite Italianate aesthetic. Alternately, if the house was a speculative development constructed for sale or rent, it may reflect the developer's perception of an appropriate residence for lower income tenants.

Structural changes are also of interest because the interior and exterior design of dwellings are related to the size and economic status of the resident social groups (Barber, 1994, p. 75; Glassie, 1975; Johnson, 1993). There is no evidence of any major alterations to the house or surrounding landscape between 1879 and the mid-1930s. This is readily expected since tenants are unlikely to expend their disposable income on the physical appearance of a property that they do not own (Mascia, 1996). In the late 1930s, the first confirmed owner-occupant added a front porch to the house constructed of recycled building materials. New construction with old materials by a nonprofessional is consistent with choices made by homeowners of limited economic means. Other modifications to the house include the renovation of the kitchen wing and expansion of a first floor bedroom (1954–1955), followed by the addition of a fireplace (1960s).

While features of the structure provide evidence of social class, the organization of space within the house serves as an expression of gender relations. By the early 18th century, domestic houses were partitioned into public and private spheres, which were respectively correlated with men and women (McMurry, 1997; Spain, 1992; Yentsch, 1991). Such spatial separation is lacking in the Woodhams house (Fig. 5). Single-purpose, gender-specific spaces are combined with multipurpose, sexually integrated rooms (Spain, 1992, p. 127). The redundant and generalized use of many household spaces by men and women is consistent with the complementary nature of gender relations as well as the economic status of site residents, illustrating the intersection between class and gender (Stine, 1992).

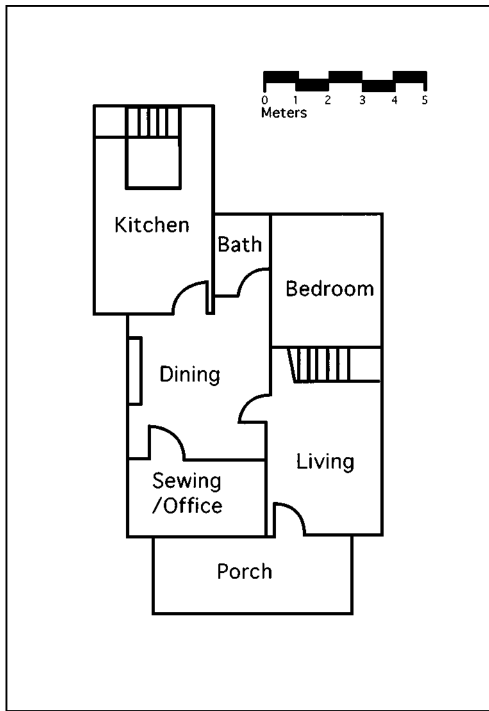

Fig. 5. Plan view of the first floor of the Woodhams house interior. Redrawn from Rotman and Nassaney, 1997, Fig. 5.

In nonelite households, the welfare of the family is often dependent upon the labor of every member, whereas women's contributions to production in wealthy households is less critical for economic stability. Lower socioeconomic status lends itself to increased dependence upon women for household production, which in turn results in higher status for women within those households. Therefore, among working class and lower paid professionals, gender roles may be less hierarchically organized than among elite households (Brydon and Chant, 1989, pp. 151–152).

These social relationships are also expressed in aspects of the landscape beyond the house (Fig. 6). Oral accounts indicate that both men and women utilized a barn on the property, but for different productive tasks. The women raised chickens for household consumption and limited sale to neighbors, while the men used other areas within the structure for woodworking activities and storage. Thus, the barn, which stood until 1958, is an example of another sexually integrated space on the property.

Gardens and orchards are important loci of production. A vegetable garden was present west of the Woodhams house, near the kitchen, for more than 65 years; a

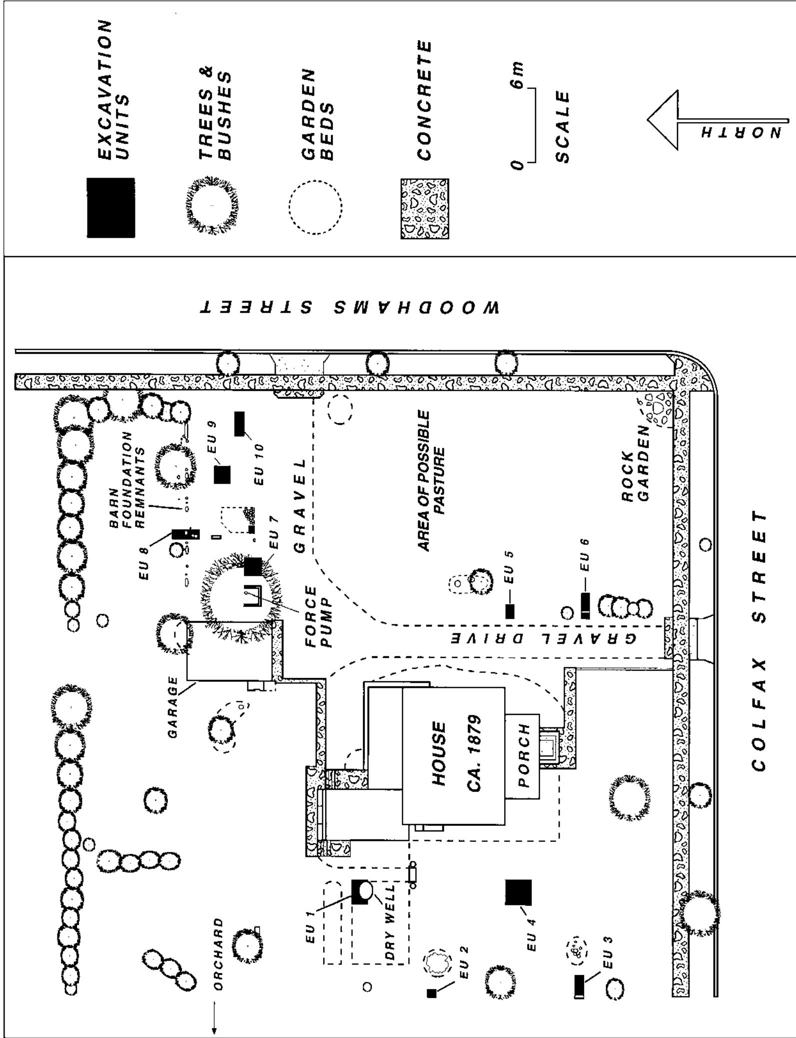

Fig. 6. Plan view of the Woodhams site landscape. Redrawn from Rotman and Nassaney, 1997, Fig. 3.

small orchard occupied the lot to the west until the mid-20th century (Fig. 6). The garden was also an integrated space. According to oral accounts, men conducted most of the gardening activities from the 1930s–1950s, though women and children assisted in growing and processing the produce. In more recent years, the garden has become the domain of the female resident, though her husband and children are not expressly prohibited from using this space. It appears that traditional gender ideals cannot be upheld under the pressures of intensive space use in small arenas like a garden.

Among the features we excavated at the site was a circular arrangement of bricks and cement that was located within the garden area immediately west of the house, which functioned as a temporary catchment to facilitate the seepage of grey water from laundering, bathing, and washing dishes. This dry well appears to be contemporaneous with the initial construction of the house (1879). The artifacts recovered from inside the feature range in age from the mid-19th century to the 1930s and include construction materials, glass canning jars and medicine bottles, assorted ceramics, and butchered animal bones (Rotman, 1995, Appendix C). The diagnostic ceramics include wares decorated with green transfer printing, flow blue transfer printing, and decalcomania (see Majewski and O'Brien, 1987).

The objects recovered from this feature support our assessment of the socioeconomic status of the site occupants. The ceramics are predominantly inexpensive white wares and utilitarian ironstones that were widely available and easily accessible (Miller, 1980). Based on the contents of the feature and oral accounts, this dry well was in use until the late 1930s, more than two decades after municipal water became available.

The material and historical evidence at this residential homelot confirms that the house was consistently occupied by working class or lower paid professional families. The modest alterations and persistence of features on the landscape—barn, garden, dry well—not only express the economic standing of the residents but also signal continuity in the social relations of men and women. The sharing of landscape spaces associated with the house, barn, and garden is an expression of the complementary nature of gender relations at the property and is consistent with nonelite production needs. Single-gendered spaces are rare at the site and it is unlikely that occupants upheld the ideal gender separations espoused and practiced by middle class members of society (Spain, 1992).

The Warren B. Shepard Site, Calhoun County

The Shepard site is located in Battle Creek Township on land that was purchased by the town's first schoolteacher. We have found it useful to divide the history of the site into several broad periods that are marked by significant changes in economy, land use patterns, household organization, and/or mode of production. We refer to these periods as follows: Pioneer (1834–1850); Progressive

(1851–1896); Subdivision and Urban Farming (1897–1935); Tenancy (1936–1985), and Preservation (1985–present).

In the Pioneer period, Warren B. Shepard was among the thousands of migrants who came to Michigan, driven by the American dream to own their own land (Mascia, 1996). He came to Battle Creek in 1834 not to farm but to tutor pioneer children. Shepard stayed with his students' families for the first year or two until he built his own cabin along the Kalamazoo River on 80 acres of land purchased when he first arrived. He added 40 more acres later in the decade. Shepard's career in education was short-lived. He established a brick-making partnership in the late 1830s, which continued into the next decade; by 1845 he was a full-time farmer (Sayers and Lapham, 1996). Thus, despite his legacy as Battle Creek's first schoolteacher, the documents indicate that Shepard moved from chalkboard to moldboard within a decade of his arrival (see Nassaney *et al.*, 1996).

The location of his original habitation structure remains unknown, but some ceramics that may have been used by the Shepards during this period have been recovered from our excavations (Sayers *et al.*, 1998, p. 86). Shepard may have selected this parcel for its proximity to Territorial Road, a major east–west thoroughfare that crossed the Kalamazoo River immediately north of his property. Soon after Shepard settled on the 120-acre property, he initiated an extensive (vs. intensive) land use pattern that transformed the landscape for subsistence agricultural purposes (see Bidwell and Falconer, 1925).

From this early period, Shepard showed signs of leading an active community and family life. In 1836 he was elected County Assessor and Overseer of Highways, though his political career ended in 1847 when he lost the race for County Road Commissioner. In 1838 Shepherd married a local woman, Almeda Davis; their first daughter, Amanda, was born in 1842. Almeda bore several children in the next decade but only Amanda and Emily (b. 1852) survived their childhood. According to the agricultural census for 1850, Shepard was an average farmer. His activities included the raising and slaughtering of livestock (especially sheep), dairy production (with an emphasis on butter), and the growing of fruits, vegetables, and grains. He sold some of his surplus to various Battle Creek merchants; by the early 1850s, Shepard routinely employed farm hands (Sayers and Lapham, 1996). Some of the farm produce went to compensate his hired help. Mixed farming and home-industry production marked this economic period of the farmstead (cf. Hubka, 1984).

The late 1840s witnessed a transformation from a mixed economy to a more intensive market-oriented commodity production characteristic of the Progressive Period. This period takes its name from agrarian theorists who published house plans and other agricultural advice in various agricultural journals between ca. 1830 and 1900 (McMurry, 1997, pp. 25–49). What defined these agriculturalists as "progressive" was a set of values that "emphasized book learning, innovation, and experimentation" aimed at increasing efficiency and productivity (McMurry,

Fig. 7. Photograph of the Warren B. Shepard house (ca. 1965).

1997, p. 30). The 1850s were a busy decade on the Shepard farmstead. In the same year that Emily Shepard was born, it appears as though work began on the construction of the extant brick farmhouse (Fig. 7). By 1854 a handsome brick Greek Revival house stood on the site and by 1858 a large barn was constructed southeast of the house. This house was clearly oriented to the road frequented by local traffic. Shepard intended the house, with its stylish embellishments, to be seen by all passersby. Pioneer authors of the 1840s and 50s repeatedly stressed the importance of moving from one's first log cabin into a more substantial dwelling. When economics permitted, the progressive farmstead incorporated differentiated spaces that were designed to minimize movement and maximize efficiency. The result "was to divide the house into two parts, one oriented toward the farm, the other to the public" (McMurry, 1997, p. 69).

The spatial organization of workspaces beyond the house mirrored the progressive ideal. Indeed, the transformation of the landscape during this period was an integral aspect of the rise and perpetuation of progressive farming, which was characterized by a shift to intensive land use to produce commodities for market exchange (Sayers, 1999a). Within this landscape of intensified use, a domestic and refined production area (distinguished from gross-agricultural production areas in the fields) emerged that can be called the "nucleated farmstead" (cf. Hubka, 1984).

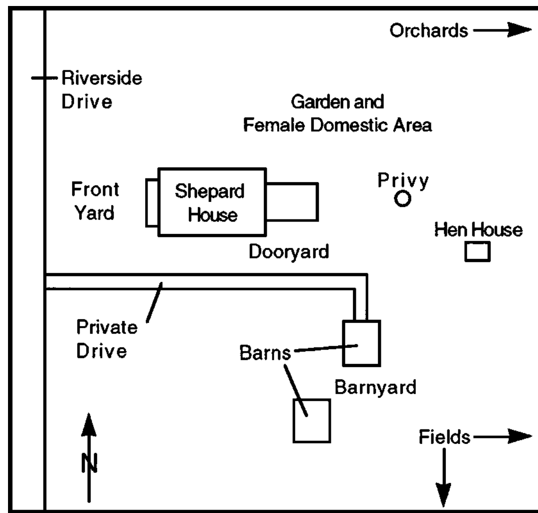

Fig. 8. Reconstruction of the Shepard nucleated farmstead as it may have appeared ca. 1870.

At the Shepard site, the nucleated farmstead was a very compartmentalized living and production area with the extant Greek Revival farmhouse at its core (Fig. 8). Outbuildings were located largely to the southeast and east of the house (a second barn was added between 1858 and 1873), whereas areas to the north and east were likely reserved for domestic activities (such as kitchen-refuse dumping) and gardening. The space in front of the house was designed and maintained for public viewing (Sayers and Nassaney, 1999; see also Hubka, 1984, pp. 70–77). Placing a relatively large percentage of available land at the Shepard site into market production and limiting the area devoted to domestic space created a nucleated land-use pattern. The spatially restricted and intense living area centering on the house had to accommodate a number of individuals who lived and/or worked on the farm after ca. 1854. These included Shepard and his family (largely women and children), extended family or kin, and extra-familial laborers who worked by contract and often lived in the house. The latter group included a variety of itinerant workers as well as African Americans who were likely fugitive slaves or ex-slaves (see Sayers and Lapham, 1996). Although the dynamics of the interactions between these people throughout the era is well beyond the scope of this paper (for an extended discussion see Sayers, 1999b), it is obvious that gender, class, and ethnic dimensions of the political economy coexisted and required mediation and negotiation. The contradictions between those social and political meanings and relations would have been further intensified given the spatially limited landscape of the farmstead where most people spent their time working and living. According to Sayers (1999a), the Progressive use of the landscape, in

restricting the spaces for such often-disparate groups who had to be on the farm at the same time, actually constrained the establishment of true capitalist wage relations between Shepard and his workers. Agricultural activities continued after Warren Shepard's death (1876) through the end of the century. The property was willed to Shepard's daughters who began subdividing and selling the property in 1897, ushering in a new period of land use. The subdivision began with the sale of a small parcel north of the house in 1897, and the purchase in 1902 of the remaining property to the south by the World's Fare Food Company, a concern trying to profit from the booming breakfast cereal business that made Battle Creek famous. Amanda Shepard Goff and Emily Shepard lived in the house surrounded by about 4 acres of land until 1919 when Amanda died and Emily moved to a smaller house. In 1925 the property passed out of the hands of the Shepard family and the new owners began to initiate significant landscape changes.

Since the mid-1920s, the house has variously served as a family dwelling, a multifamily residence, and a rental unit. Emily sold her father's house in 1925 to Sylvano Meacci, an Italian immigrant, who lived in the house with his sister's family for nearly a decade. According to oral accounts, the Meacci family altered the property and made structural changes to the house (see Nassaney and Nickolai, 1999). For example, they planted two rows of grapevines surrounding a bocce court to form a gendered space where men would gather for Old-World–style recreation and merriment. We also suspect that their consumer tastes differed considerably from those of the elderly Amanda and Emily Shepard, the previous occupants. The new occupants probably remodeled the house into a duplex with a separate entrance to an upstairs apartment. They also kept chickens and rabbits in an outbuilding and enclosure east of the house, maintaining the site as an "urban farmstead" (see Stewart-Abernathy, 1986). Our excavations revealed a concrete foundation wall in this area, which may be the remains of the aforementioned structure. The recovery of eggshell fragments in this location may attest to the function of this building as a hen house.

The house was sold again in 1935 and was used as a rental unit. Either during or immediately after World War II, the 4-acre parcel associated with the house was sold and a few smaller, inexpensive wood-frame houses were built behind the Shepard house, to the east. An east/west access road to these houses was also established a few meters south of the Shepard house. The house remained occupied until the mid-1980s when a new owner began restoring the old house. Unfortunately, his plans were never completed, though he made major modifications to the property and house, including some land leveling and removal of the north porch and rear addition. In 1990, the Historical Society of Battle Creek purchased the Shepard house and its small homelot. This organization has made various attempts to preserve the house including our well-publicized archaeological investigations, public dissemination of the site's history, and community discussion of the current importance of the site to Battle Creek. Although the site is eligible for listing on the National Register, it remains unoccupied and in a state of disrepair.

The James and Ellen G. White House Site, Calhoun County

The last site to be discussed in this study is the James and Ellen G. White house, also located in Battle Creek. The house and surrounding landscape are currently the focus of a major heritage tourist restoration project aimed at recreating the neighborhood as it appeared ca. 1860 to showcase the history of Seventh-Day Adventism to pilgrims and the public. James White purchased two small wooded lots (ca. 1.5 acres) in 1855, less than a year after he and his wife moved to Battle Creek from Rochester, New York. With some financial and labor assistance, the Whites erected a modest wood-framed house on one of the lots in 1856 at a cost of about $500 (Fig. 9). Much of the land was soon cleared to make way for gardens, orchards, and necessary outbuildings; a small grove of second-growth oak in the northeast corner of the property served as a retreat for James White when he retired for prayer.

The Whites' home is a simple, Greek-Revival–style house with the gable ends oriented to the road and backyard, respectively. The southern wing of the house is part of the original construction (Crawford and Stearns, 1998); a north wing was later added to create a symmetrical appearance. A crawl space separated the floorboards from the ground surface, as the house lacked a true basement. Other components added in the early 1860s include an expanded

Fig. 9. The James and Ellen G. White house under restoration (2000). Photograph taken by Michael S. Nassaney.

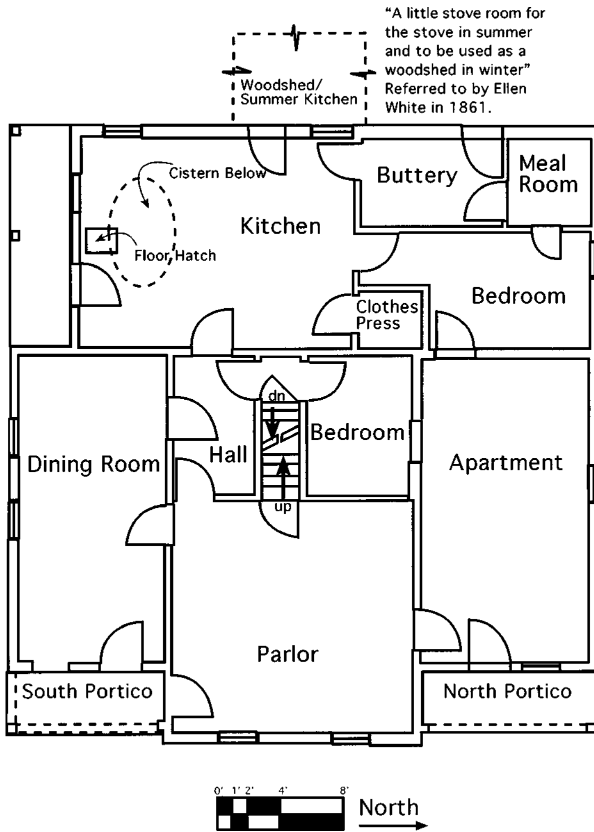

Fig. 10. Plan view of the James and Ellen G. White house interior (ca. 1861).

kitchen, dining room, large bedroom, buttery, and pantry (Fig. 10). Even with these additions, the floor area of the house was less than 1,000 square feet. The Whites occupied the house until 1863 when Robert Sawyer bought it for $1,480.

By the late 1860s, George W. Angell, also a Seventh-Day Adventist, owned the property. He was listed as a farmer in the 1871 Battle Creek City Directory. He probably owned or rented other parcels of land in the vicinity, since the original site was much too small to support a farm. By the late 19th century, the lot was subdivided and other residential structures were built immediately to the north and south. These houses were modest dwellings typically occupied by middle class owners. By the 1920s, the landscape was completely transformed into a suburban neighborhood with garages replacing barns. These modifications suggest general prosperity; the residents owned their homes and could afford garages for their

automobiles. Other neighbors began to construct additions to their houses further increasing property values.

A decline in the upkeep of the landscapes associated with the houses occurred in the middle of the 20th century when owners abandoned houses in this neighborhood and absentee landlords rented to tenants. Outbuildings such as garages and final remnants of the older agricultural landscapes fell into disrepair. Several owners and/or residents were cited for numerous environmental health (e.g., improper garbage disposal) and housing code violations (e.g., lack of down spouts).

In the mid-1970s, the Historic Adventist Village purchased the James and Ellen G. White house. They found a suitable tenant to occupy the northern wing of the house, and the remainder of the building housed artifacts, documents, and furnishings associated with James and Ellen G. White. As part of these recent preservation efforts, Western Michigan University was invited by the Village to conduct an intensive archaeological survey to identify material deposits and evaluate their significance.

Numerous artifact deposits and features were exposed and investigated in various areas of the site, some of which illuminate the social identities of the 19th-century Seventh-Day Adventists. About 30 m behind the house we exposed a cistern, constructed of cement plastered directly on the ground. Unfortunately, the artifacts in the fill were limited to some construction debris (nails), nondiagnostic glass, and a few small fragments of blue transfer-printed ceramics. It is difficult to determine the precise age of this feature since we only recovered a limited artifact sample. The construction technique suggests that it could date to the 1850s–60s, however it may have been constructed later in the 19th century (see Schroeder 1991, pp. 108–109). Since it was located a significant distance (ca. 30 m) away from any residential structures, it was probably not used for human consumption. This type of cistern may have been constructed beneath or adjacent to a barn and may have been used to either water the Whites' cow and horse or irrigate the garden.

In the area between the cistern and the house we identified an old ground surface (buried "A" horizon) that was relatively undisturbed. The surface exhibited a "sheet midden" (Moir, 1987) with scattered 19th-century objects, including several different powder blue transfer-printed ceramic patterns manufactured in the 1840s and 1850s. Other types recovered include several pieces of flow blue and a rim from a dark blue molded shell edge plate. Based on the age, stratigraphic context, and proximity to the house, these objects were likely used by the Whites when they lived at the site. The diversity of the ceramic assemblage in use during the 1850s and 1860s suggests that the Whites used unmatched ceramic sets. Mixed sets would have been much less expensive and consistent with consumers who shunned the latest styles and fashions.

Adventist lifeways are expressed in several other artifact categories that were present or conspicuously absent from the site assemblage. For example,

we recovered a small fragment of a paneled bottle (ca. 1880–1913) embossed with the word "Homeop . . ." indicating that the bottle probably held a homeopathic medicine. Homeopathy was an alternative medical practice that arose in the 19th century in response to the health reform movement that was sweeping the country. It is estimated that between 10 and 12% of all medical schools were homeopathic in the 19th century (Sayers *et al.*, 1999). Unlike "orthodox" medicine with its emphasis on large doses of powerful drugs, homeopathy's emphasis on less-is-more drug therapy was completely consistent with Ellen White's health reforms, although we do not have any direct evidence that White or the subsequent occupants were involved in homeopathy. Another fragment of an embossed panel bottle, probably manufactured between 1865 and 1915, contained sewing machine oil. Sewing was a common female household activity in the 19th century. William White (1936, p. 7) recalled that his mother engaged in "sewing, mending, knitting, (and) darning" among her afternoon activities. While much of this was probably done by hand, Singer sewing machines were being marketed throughout the East by the 1850s and were available to, and possibly adopted by, Ellen G. White and other Battle Creek women by the 1860s.

Women were also involved in food preparation and preservation activities as indicated by the numerous glass fruit jars and jar lids recovered from our excavations. Although these objects were found in several areas of the site, there was a concentration in a feature located immediately behind the house. The contents of this feature (possibly a privy) suggest that it was in use by the 1880s and possibly earlier. These jars, along with the milk glass lid liners and zinc caps, probably date to the late 19th century, although earlier deposits may be present (Toulouse, 1969). Fruit jars were used to preserve an assortment of fruits and vegetables in the home until commercially canned, and later frozen, fruits and vegetables became widely available. Although canning is not a distinctively Adventist practice, James White (1867) explicitly recounted the use of two-quart glass Mason jars to preserve red raspberries. Home canning was a logical solution to the Whites' storage needs that also expressed their frugality and dietary consciousness through daily practice.

Among the health and dietary prescriptions of Seventh-Day Adventism were the avoidance of coffee, tea, alcohol, meat, and tobacco. Fragile clay tobacco pipes are ubiquitous on 19th-century sites in America; for example numerous fragments were found at the Shepard site (see Sayers *et al.*, 1998). In contrast, the James and Ellen G. White site yielded only seven pipe stems and bowl fragments. Their low frequency is consistent with the occupation of the house by Seventh-Day Adventists throughout the 19th century. Evidence of alcohol consumption is also conspicuously lacking at the site. No definitively 19th-century alcohol containers—be they for wine or spirits—were recovered. Finally, all of the faunal remains recovered probably derive from the 20th-century occupants of the site; none are associated with 19th-century deposits. This is not to say that such remains were unexpected at the site, however. Although Ellen G. White upheld strict prohibitions against eating

meat, the shift from an omnivorous diet to a vegetarian one occurred gradually. Until suitable protein substitutes for meat could be found in the 1870s and 1880s, we might expect that the Whites' and other Adventists' diets would have resulted in discarded animal bones, including some that survived in the archaeological record.

In sum, the material world of James and Ellen White exhibits some subtle differences from the assemblages of other 19th-century households in the region. The religious philosophy espoused by Ellen White influenced her economic decisions regarding dress, food consumption, and household activities, to name only a few domains that were implicated. The active avoidance of certain consumption practices (and the way the landscape was maintained) constitute choices made by James and Ellen G. White that served to create and display their social identities and distinguish them from their non-Adventist neighbors.

CLASS, GENDER, AND ETHNICITY IN SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN

It is clear from the previous discussion that the people of southwest Michigan chose to mark different social identities at different historical moments throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Although it is difficult to generalize about the population of an entire region based upon limited investigations of a sample of four sites, this limited sample does display some potentially interesting similarities, as well as variation, in landscape and material-culture patterning that is closely connected to the people who created and occupied these spaces. The material records of these sites provide us with some information to begin to explore how class, gender, and ethnicity are expressed in physical remains of the region and how these dimensions of social identity are interrelated.

Class Distinctions

Class distinctions are perhaps most apparent at the sites that we examined. In 19th-century America, wealth and social status were consistently expressed in patterns of conspicuous consumption, represented in architecture and other forms of material culture. The construction materials, style, and size of one's house, outbuildings, and other landscape modifications were important material symbols that communicated information about social class. Space limitations do not permit a detailed analysis of the architectural forms and interior spaces of each site, but some general observations are in order. The elite and emerging middle classes were architectural trendsetters who tried to stay abreast of current designs. Even though those of lesser means could not afford ostentatious displays, they often used attenuated Greek Revival or Italianate architectural styles to emulate the upper classes (Hamin, 1944). The elite were able to legitimate their tastes and positions of social standing by encouraging others to mimic their building choices, albeit in a scaled-down manner.

Patterns of commodity consumption were also means of expressing status. The ubiquitous ceramics that litter 19th-century archaeological sites have been linked to status display in numerous studies (e.g., Majewski and O'Brien, 1987; Miller, 1980). Although we did not recover any ceramics from the Merriman–Sharp house, the other three sites all yielded ceramics that revealed the economic standing of their users. Of particular interest are the matched ceramic place settings of the 1840s and 50s that graced the table of the Shepard family. These stand in marked contrast to the inexpensive plain white forms of the late 19th and early 20th centuries associated with the elderly Shepard sisters who were living on a diminished land base. The 19th-century ceramics recovered from the Woodhams site were also inexpensive varieties consistent with the expectations for tenants living in a modest-sized house. Although the collection of ceramics from the White site that date to the mid-19th century is rather small, we are struck by the diversity of types, suggesting the use of unmatched place settings. This may reflect the Whites' economic standing. However, the Whites' otherworldly concerns may have also deflected their attention away from the current styles in dinnerware and other fashionable amenities.

The analysis of ceramics could logically extend to subsistence remains that should exhibit patterning that supports social status. A sizeable collection of animal bone was recovered from the Shepard site (Sayers *et al.*, 1998, pp. 99–110). Although similar species are present in the 19th- and early–20th-century deposits there, we observed important differences in the elemental composition of pig, cow, and sheep over time. Whereas the earlier remains represent large cuts of meat such as hams (pig), roasts (cow and sheep), and legs (sheep), individualized cuts for chops (pig and sheep) and steaks (cow) are more common in the 20th-century deposits (Sayers *et al.*, 1998, p. 107). This indicates that earlier occupants of the site were cooking large meals, perhaps reflecting the larger size of the household, the need to feed hired hands, or more economical preparation practices. Furthermore, animal butchering was probably seldom practiced on the site after 1897, requiring that meat be purchased. Faunal remains from other sites in the region should be examined with questions of diet and status in mind.

Prior to the early 20th century, households (except in some highly urban settings) were required to dispose of their own refuse. Although such deposits were common features on the landscapes we investigated, purposeful constructions like barns, driveways, or fences and their visual appearance are equally telling of social class as are middens and trash pits. Nineteenth-century homeowners made certain assumptions about how their landscapes should look. Refinements were likely to be placed where they would be visible to the general public: a strategy referred to as "frontality" (Hubka, 1984, pp. 133–134). For example, dressed or cut stones were used on the front and sides of the Shepard house foundation and left unmodified at the rear. Front yards with appropriate ornamental plantings were also popular embellishments on most sites beginning in the mid-19th century. Obviously, the larger one's property, the more space one could devote to visual displays in front

of and adjacent to the house. This practice is best exemplified by the Merriman–Sharp farm that sported an award-winning stone wall with a wrought iron fence and a large vegetable and flower garden adjacent to a circular drive, none of which could be easily ignored by even casual visitors.

Driveways provided access to a home and often connected to working areas of a site. They are another class of landscape feature with political–economic implications. We do not know how the driveway of the Merriman–Sharp site was surfaced, though it seems unlikely that it was covered with coal slag (clinkers), a material that was popular at the Shepard, White, and Woodhams sites in the later half of the 19th century. Whereas Shepard sought to socially distinguish himself from other farmers through architecture, he may have been content to join them in using clinkers for his driveway. On the Woodhams site, the driveway linked the house and the barn. At the Shepard and White sites, the driveway led past the house to the barn at the rear of the property.

Barns were obviously significant buildings on 19th-century farmsteads. They served a variety of functions, perhaps the most important of which was to shelter animals and store agricultural equipment and fodder. The size and number of barns on a farm were closely tied to agricultural productivity and, hence, wealth. Each of the properties in our study was associated with at least one barn. These structures are good surrogate measures of the social standing of their owners. Both the Woodhams and White barns were relatively small structures used to shelter only a few animals or store a carriage or wagon. Shepard had two barns by 1873; although we have not been able to identify either of these on the ground, they were significant enough to appear on a county atlas (Beers, 1873). It is not surprising that one of the most productive farms in Jackson County—the Merriman–Sharp farm—had perhaps the largest barn and the greatest number of outbuildings among the sites in our study. Of course, many buildings related to agriculture disappeared from the landscape as farms declined and were subdivided for housing. Whereas the Shepard site experienced such a transformation and acquired the characteristics of an "urban farmstead" (see Stewart-Abernathy, 1986), the Woodhams and White sites were products of the subdivision process. Interestingly, these three homelots are currently similar in size and appearance, yet they are actually the result of very different landscape development processes. Had Ella Sharp not willed her home to the city of Jackson, it, too, may have been subdivided and come to resemble the Shepard site.

Most 19th-century landscapes were associated with gardens for herbs, vegetables, and flowers (Lyon-Jenness, 1998). Apparently, only the very rich used gardens for ostentatious display; others depended on the produce their gardens provided and took pleasure in growing a particular type of rose, day lily, or other ornamental plant. Gardening was generally viewed as a female activity in the 19th century, although men were involved with ancillary tasks (e.g., tilling the soil, selling and purchasing seeds and plants). It would seem that for some women

gardening was an economic necessity (e.g., to produce foods that would embellish an otherwise bland diet), whereas others chose to work in their gardens raising mostly flowers in keeping with beautification movements of the period. Again, social class came into play; women of means who worked in a garden were likely displaying the luxury of leisure and refined tastes.

The placement of gardens is just one way in which space was partitioned to reinforce gender roles in 19th-century society. An examination of the roles of men and women and the spaces in which their activities took place can provide insights into the changing nature of gender relations and the relative status of men and women in the region. Gendered spaces are not confined to the home but extend beyond the dwelling to activity areas on the landscape. We begin by discussing the organization of space in the home and move to exterior spaces.

Gendered Spaces

During the 19th century, men and women's spaces in the home, work, and in public settings became increasingly differentiated (Spain, 1992). While it is beyond the scope of this paper to enumerate all of the factors that led to these social changes (see Coontz, 1988, for a detailed discussion), we can say that spatial divisions linked to a gender-based division of labor are evident in the earliest landscapes of our study and continue to the present. These divisions did not take the same form throughout history and were not homogeneous across class lines, as gender and class are inextricably linked social dynamics.

By the 1850s, progressive farmsteads were designed to separate male/public and female/private activities (McMurry, 1997). The most costly household furnishings would be placed toward the front of the house in the parlor, which served as a male and public arena. The dining room was a buffer between the parlor and the kitchen, which was predominantly a female space. The kitchen was typically placed at the rear of the house to keep the sights, sounds, and smells of food preparation away from guests (McMurry, 1997). These were ideal rather than absolute patterns and tendencies for spatial use, as, for example, hired male hands might wash and eat in the kitchen, whereas women could use the parlor for teas or socializing with other women.

Our research suggests that the idealized separation of male and female spaces may not have been fully actualized in southwest Michigan. For example, poorer households did not always have the luxury of creating numerous interior partitioned spaces. As a result, spaces were more sexually integrated. This corresponds with the complementary nature of male and female roles in the working class in which women often contributed (and were recognized for their contribution to) the economy of the household (see Rotman and Nassaney, 1997). This seems to be the case at the Woodhams site. It appears that the spaces in the Whites' home were also sexually integrated, although Ellen White apparently did her writing,

sewing, and other domestic activities in her own bed chamber—separate from her husband's—on the second story (Stan Hickerson, personal communication, 2000). The fact that Ellen White had a separate space apart from the kitchen may testify to the importance of her role beyond the household in the church or her success in negotiating space within patriarchal mores and class structures.

A model suggesting rigidly separate gendered spaces may be too simplistic for even the elite households in our study area. The Merriman–Sharp house was clearly large enough for partitioned and specialized interior spaces. But Ella Sharp (and her mother before her) could avoid the domestic tasks that were performed by hired hands; she was a manager charged with overseeing daily activities. Her legal ownership of the property, level of education, and management of the farm provided her with a level of status that most women of the period lacked. Her relationship with her husband and possibly other men was considerably different than that of the female laborers she hired.

Gendered spaces extended from interior rooms into the surrounding landscape. Just as the house is divided into public and private domains, so too can the house be seen as a private/domestic place in contrast to the public sphere of the fields and other exterior workspaces. Agriculture was understood as being a male activity, which included tending most animals, planting fields, harvesting crops, and general repair of buildings and other landscape features. These activities kept men away from the farmhouse for most of the day, except during meal times. Women, in contrast, did many of their chores indoors, though some activities required them to work outside. Most of the female tasks performed outdoors occurred in proximity to the house, often opposite the male spaces (see Sayers and Nassaney, 1999). Many kitchen activities naturally spilled out into the dooryard (see Hubka, 1984) including such work as laundering, soap making, and butter production. Vegetable and flower gardens were located nearby, as were hen houses tended by women. Nineteenth-century landscapes exhibited spatial order to increase efficiency and at the same time reproduce gender roles in society.

For men and women who were not intensively involved with agriculture (or who had the means to hire laborers), exterior space was not as rigidly partitioned along gender lines. At the Woodhams site the chicken lean-to was adjacent to the barn and the garden was available to all household members. The pump well was also placed in convenient proximity to both male and female activity areas. The location of features such as a well that both men and women relied upon is often a contentious issue; thus its placement can be an indication of how such a struggle is resolved (see Borish, 1995; Rotman and Nassaney, 1997). At the Merriman–Sharp site, hired hands performed traditional female activities in proximity to male workspaces. In some ways, this suggests that hired hands were not subject to the same gendered principles as their employers. The various ways in which gender was expressed and recognized in the 19th century at the sites in our study demand that we integrate any discussion of gender with class. Whereas gender ideals may

have existed in the prescriptive literature of progressivism, the productive needs of individual households impacted the extent to which these ideals were actualized.

Ethnic Expressions

From the previous discussion it is clear that men and women of different social classes populated the landscapes of southwest Michigan and used spatial organization, the built environment, and other material goods to assert their identities. Absent from the discussion thus far has been a consideration of the relationship between landscape and ethnicity. Did landscapes serve as a medium of ethnic expression and if not, why not? Migrants from central and western New York settled much of the region by the mid-19th century. From all accounts, they seem to have been an ethnically homogeneous group that was eager to share the American dream of land ownership and economic prosperity. Moreover, the only groups who could contest their claims and from whom they might differentiate themselves were the Native Americans who were being rapidly removed in the 1830s and 1840s. In her study of ornamental plants in 19th-century Michigan, Lyon-Jenness (1998) found that the concept of the ornamental plant was adopted across class, gender, and ethnic lines; plants served to transcend some of these social differences as instruments that promoted solidarity. In the face of urbanization, immigration, industrialization, and social differentiation, an ideology of plant use served as a means of social integration while political and economic life in America was becoming increasingly fragmented. This ethnic subversion stands in contrast to other regions in which, for example, German, Swedish, or Dutch farmers continued to use particular building types, land-use patterns, and plants.

Obviously, we would like to examine a larger sample of sites, including those associated with individuals from clearly different ethnic backgrounds, to make more definitive statements about ethnicity and material expression. For example, Battle Creek was home to a significant African American population beginning in the 1840s and 1850s. Although we recognize that race and ethnicity are not isomorphic (see Orser, 1998), it would be informative to examine an African American homelot that was contemporaneous with the sites in this study to compare and contrast landscape features and consumption patterns. Furthermore, ethnic identity may be apparent at a different spatial scale that our study of homelots has not fully addressed. For example, members of ethnic groups likely settled near each other and formed neighborhoods that exhibit shared architecture and other landscape features that distinguished them from other groups (see Rotman *et al.*, 1998). This seems to be the case with the neighborhood surrounding the Whites' house where numerous Adventists lived after the mid-19th century. The practice of using the landscape to signal ethnicity continues to this day in the gardens, orchards, and religious symbolism among recent immigrants to New England. For example, the Catholic tradition of yard shrines, in the form of lawn statues depicting the

Blessed Virgin and other saints, is prevalent in Italian and Hispanic neighborhoods (McDannell, 1995, p. 46), as is the planting of fruit trees and vegetable gardens in places where lawns might be expected. Of course, material expressions of ethnicity are often exceedingly difficult to identify archaeologically (Stine, 1990).

Since the 19th century, conditions that might promote ethnic expression have emerged in the region. Mass migration to provide labor for local industries increased in the early 20th century; many migrants were foreign-born. Foreign migration reached a peak in the 1910s and 20s, when predominantly southern Europeans came to America by the millions. While it may have been the desire of many of these immigrants to assimilate, it was often a gradual process that took more than a generation.

At the Shepard site we have identified a number of landscape changes that we think represent the ethnicity of new site occupants. An Italian immigrant purchased the old farmstead from Emily Shepard in the 1920s, ending nearly 75 years of occupancy by the Shepard family. For various reasons, it appears unlikely that the elderly Amanda and Emily Shepard had made any significant modifications to the site (with the exception of subdivision), particularly the house, over the previous several decades (see Nassaney and Nickolai, 1999). Thus, when Sylvano Meacci and his family bought the property in ca. 1925, it was probably in need of renovation. The Meaccis began by removing the wooden Victorian porches from the north and south sides of the house. Since these were probably erected in the 1880s, they were likely in an advanced state of decay. Photographs from the 1930s show the house surrounded by an agriculturally denuded landscape. To create more familiar surroundings the Meaccis planted two rows of grapevines and between the vines designated an area for bocce, a recreational ball game. The vineyard surrounding the court would have lent a private, Old World atmosphere to the male bocce players as they enjoyed each other's company on a Sunday afternoon. This haven separated the newcomers from their "foreign" neighbors and the sounds and activities of the outside world. Evidence of the vines can still be seen today along the edge of the wooded lot immediately north of the house. In addition, this small vineyard was probably established to produce grapes for homemade wine during the Prohibition Era of the 1920s and 30s. The fragmentary base of what appears to be a wine bottle was recovered from our excavations in a temporal context that would support this interpretation. Thus, changes to the interior and exterior of the house, as well as new landscape features and consumption patterns, were just some of the ways in which 20th-century immigrants asserted their identity in southwest Michigan.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this paper we have argued that social identity influences patterns of consumption that are, in turn, reflected in the built environment, which consists of houses, barns, gardens, fences, and other landscape features. These physical traces and their spatial configurations are material expressions of the class, gender, and

ethnic relations of their makers and users. Men and women, natives and newcomers, of all social backgrounds create their cultural environments and organize space in ways that serve to assert their identities. The Southwest Michigan Historic Landscape Project is a multidisciplinary initiative aimed at exploring the social meaning of the material world. Over the past several years we have used historic, ethnographic, geophysical, and archaeological methods to explore physical remains at four sites in the region and the material lives of their occupants. Our studies show that there is considerable variation in the spatial organization of the artifacts, features, and ecofacts that comprise the landscapes of one region of historic America. Identifying that variation is an important first step in understanding the social, political, and economic conditions that gave rise to and reproduce the modern world (see Orser, 1996).

The sites selected for our study are associated with people who were active agents in making consumer choices and creating their social identities. Although four sites are not representative of an entire region, they nevertheless can be used to interpret the articulation of local and global processes and the relationship between structure and action. Whereas people experience large-scale processes like migration, population increase, agricultural specialization, economic recession, and global conflicts, their responses often take local forms that are mediated by their social class, gender, and ethnicity. Moreover, it seems likely that one or another of these dimensions may be more prevalent at a given historical moment, though never completely divorced from the others.

For example, one of the more dynamic aspects of human social life has been the changing relationship between men and women in American society over the past 200 years. However, gender cannot be understood in southwest Michigan or elsewhere apart from the growing disparities in wealth that provided the capital for the creation of the built environment. In the mid-19th century, when southwest Michigan was relatively sparsely populated, our research shows that class was a more important defining characteristic than ethnicity. Success in the production of lumber, agricultural commodities, and manufactured goods required a labor force that led to a more rigid class division, with clear material consequences for land owners and their hired hands. From the sites we have examined, ethnicity only emerged as a dimension of social differentiation in the early 20th century, long after social classes were well entrenched. Further research may show that race and ethnicity were implicated in the process of status differentiation in the mid-19th century, since the region was apparently more socially diverse than our site investigations indicate. A variety of new ethnic groups migrated to the region, beginning in the 1850s with western Europeans (e.g., Dutch, Germans, Irish), followed by eastern Europeans (e.g., Poles) and later southern Europeans (e.g., Italians). A sizeable African American population was also attracted to the region both from the East and the South. One of the nationally renowned African Americans of this period, Sojourner Truth, settled in Harmonia in 1857, six miles west of Battle Creek. Southwest Michigan became home to a significant African American

community throughout the pre–Civil-War decades (Sayers, 1999b; Wilson, 1985). Several communities, including Battle Creek, were famous "depots" on the Underground Railroad and were considered by many escaped captives to be safe havens. Strong abolitionist sentiments coupled with political action in southwest Michigan had a significant impact on the demographic composition and socioeconomic relations in the region. Yet despite the willingness of the local population to accept African Americans, these migrants were usually absorbed into the working class and generally had to struggle to own land (Sayers, 1999b). The church became a means of social integration for these former captives and other African American migrants as early as 1840, when an African Church was established in Battle Creek (Brown, 1998).

The older Christian denominations (e.g., Baptists) were the first to appear in the 1830s, followed by new religious orders and sects in the subsequent decades. One sect that had a profound influence on the social history of the region was the establishment of the headquarters of the Seventh-Day Adventist church by James and Ellen G. White in Battle Creek (Sayers *et al.*, 1999, p. 27). Seventh-Day Adventism, which has since become an international movement, espoused a naturalistic philosophy that stressed healthy lifestyles (e.g., vegetarianism), abstinence from vices like tobacco and alcohol, and general self-reliance. To the Adventists, materialism had become central to peoples' lives and thus was weakening the connections between humans and the Divine. They promoted values that were in marked contrast to the emerging middle class that embraced consumerism and other symbols of modernity and upward social mobility. More important for this study, their beliefs had direct implications for everyday practice that can be interpreted from material remains.

On one level, the purpose of this analysis is to explore these material expressions of class, gender, ethnicity, and ideology at a particular time and in a particular geographical place. But by now we hope that the reader is well aware of the broader implications of the approach that we espouse. Landscape archaeology should go beyond the search for building foundations and garden beds to reconstruct the lifestyles of the rich and famous. No segment of society should be excluded from this type of analysis, and the perspective that we advocate is consistent with the broader agenda of understanding the history of the modern world and the people who are underrepresented in the documentary record (Orser, 1996; Wolf, 1982). The conditions that gave rise to the development of the modern world and its social consequences are amenable to investigation through the material record. The bearers and creators of culture used artifacts and artificial spaces as metaphors in daily practice to rationalize the global processes in which they participated (Nassaney and Johnson, 2000, p. 22). Finally, this is not to say that the theoretical framework and methodological tools proposed here are only applicable to an analysis of the past. In contemporary life, people are constantly partitioning space and selecting objects from a myriad array of choices to express

their identities and create meaning in a world that is simultaneously homogenized and socially divided. The activities associated with the creation of present landscapes and their material manifestations are also entry points for understanding the social relations of class, gender, and ethnicity from the ground up.

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