APPENDIX E

DAY-TO-DAY ON THE CYPRESS PROJECT
EXCERPTS FROM THE SITE LOG
DAY-TO-DAY ON THE CYPRUS PROJECT

Jack Mc Ilroy

PREAMBLE

Oakland gets bad press, 114 murders in 2003, from a population of 360,000. A challenge for its residents and for those who run the city. On site, we had our share of local inner-urban afflictions, including car theft (both completed and attempted), site offices graffiti-tagged, archaeological features looted for valuable bottles, and offers of drugs and illicit services.

We also met some of the friendliest people you could come across. The crew grew particularly fond of Esther’s Orbit Room across Seventh Street from the sites, near the West Oakland Postal Center.

The research was a team effort. Boundary responsibilities were often blurred. Janet Pape, the Caltrans Archaeology Project Manager, kept the flag flying for the State agency, our client. Dr. Adrian Praetzellis, the ASC’s Director, visited weekly to confer with his Field Director and crew, as in “that one’s too tough for me—Adrian can sort it out.”

After years of planning, fieldwork took 78 weeks between April 1994 and May 1996. The archaeology was often hard, dirty physical labor in the hot, dusty days of summer and the freezing rain of winter. If you had looked out of a BART window as the train passed Market Street in winter 1994, you would have seen a group of dirty and bedraggled characters under the elevated freeway clustered around a fire in a 55-gallon drum as the rain poured down. Not the local homeless, these were the archaeologists.

Wet or dry, bedraggled or not, the crew did an outstanding job. I am particularly indebted to the Assistant Field Director Mike Meyer who, apart from his archaeological skills, covered for me during the many times I had to be off the site to deal with project issues. There is also something to be said for Mike’s size when dealing with construction contractors—somewhere between an NFL linebacker and a Maori rugby player. It grants a certain awe that, despite a grand title, does not necessarily accompany a 5 ft. 8 in., 125-pound Field Director.

Of similar stature to Mike was the designated Prehistoric Sites Monitor, Nina Ilic, who hails from Yugoslavia. Nina was sufficiently bulky to block out the sun for a photo shoot when needed. He monitored numerous deep trenches opened by heavy equipment for construction of freeway columns and placement of underground utilities, looking for soil changes that might indicate prehistoric use of the area. The sides of excavated historic-period features were also examined, and the bottoms of selected features augered to test for prehistoric site indicators. No evidence of prehistoric sites was found during our work, although a site was found later during related construction in the Postal Center.

Other eclectic members of the crew included Mike Stoyka, a Taekwon Do black belt who had worked archaeological projects on Superfund sites (highly contaminated and toxic) in the eastern United States. For music fans, one of our long-term crew was Keith “Monkey” Warren, lead singer for The Adicts, a punkish based European band (www.suburbias.com/adicts). On a similar note, although not musically, was Paula Frazer, who travelled diligently along during the day while scaling musical heights at night (www.paulafrazer.com).

In addition to the above, excavation involved an indefatigable core crew of 10 archaeologists: Anmarie Medin, Bill Stillman, Bryan Mischke, Rick Wolter, Dave Makar, Ginger Hellmann, Richelle Coffin, Pete Messick, Conrad Praetzel and Margo Schur. Additional crew were employed as needed with sometimes up to 20 archaeologists working to a tight schedule imposed by the freeway reconstruction. For the first 28 weeks, we were able to work well in advance of construction on selected blocks.
EXCERPTS FROM THE SITE LOG

8 April 1994

C.J. Vandegrift and her survey team plotted in the comers of the 1889 Sanborn lots on Blocks 36 and 37. She estimates her accuracy at plus or minus 6 inches, which should be good enough for us. Trenches were then marked out on the ground with Scotty Thompson’s help. Jim Quinn organized most of the equipment and we are ready to roll.

FIELDWORK WEEK 1, BLOCK 18
Mon. 18 April

On site with Adrian Praetzellis, a backhoe, a loader, and three Mountain Cascade personnel to begin with. Initial machine clearance shows isolated shallow sheet-refuse concentrations with 20th-century material. Later, picked up fence-line postholes and posts, and possible trash pits.

FIELDWORK WEEK 2, BLOCKS 18, 36, AND 37
Mon. 25 April

Block 18. Overnight rain had flooded it. The natural soil, a sandy silt, does not drain well. Aicha Woods discovered that 1726 Pacific was a brothel around 1912.

Block 37 was machine stripped with the backhoe all day. About 15 pits were initially visible. The surface under the gravel is beaten-up, compacted sandy soil from demolition of the houses and parking-lot construction. We are finding fence posts. There were frequent heavy rain showers today.

Wed. 27 April

Janet saw a couple of professional bottle collectors with probes and Sanborn maps working over Block 24. Mike Meyer and Todd Jaffke went over to explain the error of their ways. They said “everybody was doing it, including the firemen from the nearby fire station,” but agreed to leave.

Janet and Mike then went to the fire station but nobody answered the door. This block should be fenced fast.

FIELDWORK WEEK 3, BLOCKS 36 AND 37
Thurs. 5 May

Artifacts from half-sectioned pits were examined by Adrian Praetzellis to assess whether or not to continue with excavation.

FIELDWORK WEEK 4, BLOCKS 37 AND 36
Mon. 9 May

The rain over the weekend has spread sand and grit over a fair part of the site. Block 36 was flooded out.

On Block 37, in one privy there is some newspaper embedded in the lime. It would be interesting if it had a date, but considering what it was probably used for I really don’t want to look.

FIELDWORK WEEK 5, BLOCKS 36 AND 37
Mon. 16 May

Block 37. I’ve introduced the concept of Archaeological AIMS for the project. AIMS stands for: Association, Integrity, Materials, Stratigraphy. If a feature has got all of these, then it’s a winner. The idea is to try and focus the crew’s thoughts in these directions so they can assess the value of what they’re working on. The current major crew evaluation is that I’m not supplying them with enough doughnuts at break time.

Fri. 20 May

Janet contacted Dick McCombe at the Post Office, who allowed us access to the roof of the building so that we could get some good aerial overview photos of the site. The most useful pits in
terms of the research design are likely to be the three privies along the back fence line: Privy 156 at 1726 William; Privy 141 at 1712, although it was partly collapsed by heavy rain after it had been half-sectioned; and the most productive feature of all, Privy 100 at 1708.

**FIELDWORK WEEK 6, BLOCK 24**

**Mon. 6 June**
Dug two test trenches outside the northwest corner of the ASA to check the stratigraphy. First trench showed about 1.5 feet of churned-up soil, then our usual yellow sand. Second trench had more disturbance with about 4 feet of soil above sand. We had a local complain about the dust being stirred up. There was a lot, as it was windy today.

**Tues. 7 June**
The new Portacan finally arrived on site. Unfortunately, it was still padlocked and I was elsewhere with the key. My return was met with crew abuse.

**Wed. 8 June**
Pac Bell/PGE came to check their busted phone cable. They came last night but the guard wouldn’t let then on site and told them to come back during business hours. Apparently they jumped a part of the fence, which was only 3 feet high. We’ve fixed that fence and they probably deserved their reception.

We are finding a number of pits, dating to probably 1930s onwards, at the rear fence line between the trees, where the firemen tell us they found a well and a whole bunch of bottles that they have in their fire station.

**Thurs. 9 June**
We have removed about 12 to 18 inches of soil to expose the archaeological features. We started to clear the east end of the site, where the Pullman Hotel is shown on the 1889 Sanborn at 1802 Seventh Street. It was hot on site.

**Fri. 10 June**
Decided to clear the demolition debris from the rear of the Pullman Hotel at 1802 Seventh. Found a brick-lined well on the back fence line. Mary Praetzellis thought it might be a hotel cistern. Sunk a 3 feet wide hole with the machine to find water table between the walls at 1802 Seventh. It was located at about 14 to 15 feet below current unexcavated ground surface, or 12 feet below the surviving Pullman Hotel wall remnants. The rear wall of the presumed Pullman Hotel kitchen is built
on top of the well at 1802 Seventh. The kitchen first shows up on the 1901 Sanborn. The well isn’t on any Sanborn. One suggestion is that it was an outside well that was later enclosed.

Thurs. 16 June
Many of the pits across the site contain 1930s+ materials, which is a time when we would have expected the practice of dumping in your backyard to be dying out. Unless the houses weren’t lived in for a while because nobody had rent money in the Depression, and a bunch of old drunks crashed there? Or folks from elsewhere used them as rubbish dumps?

FIELDWORK WEEK 8, BLOCK 24
Mon. 20 June
A couple of firefighters told us that Well 599 at the back of the Pullman Hotel at 1802 Seventh had been dug up by bottle collectors, who also dug extensively behind the buildings along Seventh Street. This extensive pot-hunting was to be reconfirmed by a number of local visitors to the site during the week. Block 28 had also been pot-hunted. For now, in the well, we will fast screen only until we are at least 3 feet below the well top. By 4 feet below ground surface (bgs), no whole bottles had been found. We are using 1-foot arbitrary layers for now. Lots of ceramics with makers’ marks are coming up. Mostly we are finding plain white ware, with transfer print and banded items. Elyn Walker and Grace Ziesing are excavating the well.

At 1817 Goss, the bottom fill of suspected Privy 365 contained scrimshaw.

Tues. 21 June
There’s a tree dropping leaves on the site on a regular basis. It screws our photography. Revenge because we cut through some of its roots.

Thurs. 23 June
Aicha Woods was on site arranging site tour for local people with Elyn Walker for next Friday at 10 a.m. Ceramic marks from the Pullman Hotel Well 559: we have Clarke of Burslem, 1880-1887, and Anthony Shaw of England, 1890-1900, among others. This well is finished to 5 feet bgs and we will return to it in October with a machine after fire-station demolition.

Fri. 24 June
Block 24 seems extensively pot-hunted but there are a few places that have been missed. Janet
Pape contacted Don Hines, the Caltrans Safety officer for Cypress. Legally, apparently, we are not excavating wells, we are “cleaning them out.”

I finally got hold of the Dymo, printed out “Grace Ziesing, Project Manager” and stuck it on her hard hat. My new mantra will be, “Check it with the Project Manager.” Grace can now field the public inquiries, drown in paperwork, and boss everybody around. She says she likes to organize, she must be a Scorpio. With Janet running interference as Caltrans Project Manager, I can switch to senior executive mode and lord it around the site, cup of tea and chocolate cookie in hand.

Wed. 29 June

Grace prepared what she calls a concordance—I thought that was something negotiated between the Vatican and the State of Israel—for Block 37. It lists all the contexts on the block in numerical order and indicates the pits where they can be found. As we are filing our context sheets by pit number, this will help locate specific contexts.

Thurs. 30 June

It was decided to scrap work on Block 17. The most interesting part of the ASA along the back of the lot has lead contamination levels over 3,000 ppm according to Caltrans plans. This is found in about 25% of our proposed trench. There are also pockets with levels of 1,600 ppm plus within 50 to 80 feet of the ASA. On this basis, it seems that the entire ASA could contain elevated levels of lead contamination. As the ASA consisted of just over one parcel and a part of the Oakland Pickle Works, we felt its potential importance did not justify having to suit up in the required personal-protective equipment.

Fieldwork Week 10, Block 11
Mon. 11 July

Started to clear Block 11 with the Gradall. Below the modern debris at the southeast corner of the site, where we began, is an 8-inch-thick yellow-sand deposit overlying what may be black, silty marsh sand to around 4.5 feet bgs.

Thurs. 14 July

Set up site benchmark on pavement on north side of gate on Union Street. Reduced height is 11 feet 6 inches AMSL (above mean sea level) to the nearest quarter inch. We shot an elevation to groundwater showing in a test trench the machine had dug. It is at 3 feet 2 inches AMSL.

Fieldwork Week 12, Block 11
Mon. 18 July

Today’s new arrival is Mike Stoyka. From a viewpoint of ethnic origins, this week’s crew now consists of two Germans, one Chinese, one Russian, and one Irishman and it’s 46% women. When it comes to being P.C., we are totally cool.

Block 11 Summary

It took 9 days to clear the site. We opened an area of about 90 feet x 80 feet and removed up to 3 feet or more of overburden. We identified about 40 pits and 1 privy, and house or other structural remains at 815 and 819 Union Street. Four test trenches were sunk in areas where there appeared to be low potential for destroying hollow/filled features. Three old freeway footings were uncovered. Although there can be areas of disturbance up to 6 feet wide, and sometimes larger, around the footing edges, some archaeological features such as pits and fence posts have survived between the footings. So archaeological materials

Block 24 Summary

On Block 24 we examined 37 features and scrapped 29 of them, mostly due to modern disturbance, late materials, or a paucity of artifacts. I feel we have sampled the site sufficiently and that most of the remaining pits show evidence of late disturbance on their surfaces and do not appear worth investigating. We will be able to compare this site with other recently demolished blocks later in
may have survived on Blocks 1, 2, and 3, where there are many such footings. The test trenches excavated
to examine site stratigraphy show black, silty
marsh sand, except at the eastern end of 815 Union.
Here, test trench 782 was sunk to yellow Merritt
sand, as seen on our previous blocks. It seems that
we may have come down on the edge of the marsh
in this block. The top of the Merritt sand does a
gradual fade into the blacker silty sand towards
the south. There was no evidence of prehistoric
occupation. Two fragments of unworked obsidian,
possibly Konocit, were found in the general fill
deposits over the site.

FIELDWORK BREAK
Fri. 12 August
We have worked on five blocks so far during
12 weeks in the field and we have noted the
following:

1. Preservation was best on Post Office parking
lots sealed during the 1960s—Blocks 37 and
18.
2. Pot-hunting was fairly intense on one block
demolished within the last year—Block 24.
3. Archaeological materials have survived
between footings for the old Cypress
freeway—Block 11.
4. The historic surface remnant has been found
between 1 and 4 feet below current ground
surface.
5. Getting rid of rubbish in backyard pits has
been ongoing through the 1940s and
occasionally later.
6. There has been no evidence of prehistoric
occupation in situ.

FIELDWORK WEEK 12, BLOCK 1
Mon. 22 August
On site with Janet Pape, Mike Meyer, Nina Illic.
About 330 probe holes have been driven through
the asphalt and 17 pits dug by pothunters.
Fortunately, they placed their test grid about 10
to 15 feet north of the back fence line. Below a thin
asphalt layer is a 6 to 12 inch deposit of darker
brown sandy soil, overlying Merritt sand. This
seems to be the historic surface remnant. It fits in
with houses being leveled for freeway construction,
then the entire block being graded and asphalted
over.

FIELDWORK WEEK 13, BLOCK 1
Mon. 29 Aug.
The Gradall was spray-painted over the
weekend. It must have taken several minutes to do
and someone had to climb the fence. So where was
the security guard? Asleep? I contacted the security
company supervisor and he's investigating. I expect
to hear back from him shortly. I spoke with one of
the guards when he arrived for the 4 p.m. shift. He
had been on duty until midnight Sunday and said
nothing had happened before that time. They are
trying to locate the shift on which it happened. The
state police came and took a statement.

Wed 31 Aug.
Finishing site cleaning. Used the Gradall to
clear a safe working space around Well 968 at 812
Castro Street to about 5 feet in depth. We can now
evacuate the well like a chimney. Rest of the crew
cleaning up the new Delphi oracle-style trench
around Well 968.

Thurs. 1 Sept.
Set up a benchmark on site at the base of a
freeway column at 667/663 Sixth Street. The
elevation is 17 feet 7 inches ASL. Dug a rapid Gradall
trench to check ground water, which was found at
minus 3.5 inches ASL. Well 968 at 812 Castro was
beginning to look a little shaky. The fill dried out
and slumped almost 4 inches en masse to the west.
We wrapped it up with a tarp, string, and bungee
cords to you. While removing all the brickwork and
exposing all the fills would make a great photo, the
fill might spill out, so we will proceed bit by bit.

Fri. 2 Sept.
Well 968 at 812 Castro is looking good. Beneath
about 3 feet of sheet metal and other amorphous
iron are some turn-of-the-century bottles and
 ceramics and we still have 8 feet to go to water table.
The well has been excavated as a standing column.
All the brickwork is removed to expose the
stratigraphy in total. This makes it real easy to
evacuate the fill from the outside.
FIELDWORK WEEK 15, BLOCK 1
Fri. 9 Sept.
Continuing excavation. Privy 900 with Shannon Mahoney and Mary Ellen D’Agostino is finished and has produced a large quantity of pre-1900 good-quality material representing its better-off owners. In Well 968 at 812 Castro, three layers are currently visible. There’s about 2 feet of amorphous sandy fills over brick rubble with a metal crucifix. We also found a crucifix in Privy 900 at 654 Fifth St and another crucifix in Privy 955 at 671 Sixth St. At least three Catholics on this block should have taken better care of their rosaries.

FIELDWORK WEEK 16, BLOCK 1
Fri. 16 Sept.
Richelle Coffin sank the probe to the hilt in Privy 953. That would put the bottom at least 10 feet bgs.

FIELDWORK WEEK 17, BLOCK 1
Thurs. 22 Sept.
East Bay MUD finally turned up to show us where their underground pipes are located. They’re all under the street. I politely turned down their request for a souvenir bottle. But at least they asked first.

Fri. 23 Sept.
It rained for the first time since May.

FIELDWORK WEEK 18, BLOCKS 1 AND 24
Fri. 30 Sept.
The Pullman Hotel well is now down into the ‘wet, smelly stuff,’ to quote its scientifically trained excavators. When the well is finished, we will have examined six wells so far. The way we excavate wells, by digging a wide safety-trench around them is a hit with site visitors. One commented, “It looks like a real archaeological site.” We are damned with well-meaning praise, so to speak.

FIELDWORK WEEK 19, BLOCKS 1, 24, AND 2 MON. 3 Okt.
The Pullman Hotel well on Block 24 was finished at midday. Not a great deal of artifacts. Mike Meyer dates them on a preliminary basis to before 1910.

Tues. 4 Oct
Rain, rain, rain, followed by downpour, downpour. At least the wetness soaked up the waterfall of exhaust fumes that usually pours down from I-80 on our hard-hat heads. Normally by 4 p.m. most of us are as high as kites, unless the sea breeze blows in and sweeps the murk away. Hey, it’s a job.

FIELDWORK WEEK 20, BLOCK 2
Thurs. 13 Oct.
Machine clearance ongoing, possibly seven privies showing up. Noelle from the Gingerbread House opposite the site on Fifth and Brush came over to complain about the dust. I said we’d try and move the excavated soil pile away from opposite her restaurant on Monday with the dozer, which we’ll have then for backfilling Block 1. She’s closed Mondays. She’s dealt with Caltrans on this before when the freeway was demolished earlier this year. She brought us some gingerbread as a peace offering. Not bad, and of gingerbread, I’m a connoisseur.

FIELDWORK WEEK 21, BLOCK 2
Tues. 18 Oct.
Going by the fence posts mostly at the rear of the Brush Street lots, I estimate the correct Sanborn lot boundaries to be 2 feet to 3 feet east and perhaps 1 foot north of our current string layout, which is based on the Caltrans survey crew’s measurements.

Wed. 19 Oct.
I contacted C.J. Vandegrift at Caltrans surveys about the accuracy with which the Sanborn boundaries were shot in with the laser gear. She said Blocks 1, 2, and 3 were a tough call, as there was not as much information available in Caltrans archives as for other blocks. She would not be surprised if the lot lines were a little out.
Keith Warren monitored the Gradall clearance of the overburden on the African American barber’s lot at 713 Sixth Street.

Thurs. 20 Oct.

Two African American soldiers, first lieutenants John Brown and Jacob Smith, were boarding at 812 Brush in 1900.

FIELDWORK WEEK 22, BLOCK 2

Tues. 25 Oct.

Someone had one hell of a party at 712 Fifth Street. Dar Rudnyckyj and Sonny Taemia came across maybe 100 stoneware beer bottles in the bottom of Privy 1409. The occupants we know of have Irish-sounding names, Foley in 1885 and Kelly in 1887.

Privy 1321 at 812 Brush, with possible African American associations, has a brick floor about 18 inches bgs with artifact-rich fill layers above. We will go through all these brick floors next week when all the site tours are over.

About 3.5 feet of fill deposits in Well 1300 slumped outwards real fast while we were removing brickwork to expose the stratigraphy. I tried holding it back along with Nina Ilic, while Mary Huffman went for a tarp and rope, but it was too heavy. We gave all the slumped material one context number and commenced stratigraphic excavation again at a height of 4 feet 10 inches AMSL, the bottom of the slumped material.

Sewerage plans—as opposed to sewerage pipes actually being put in—were adopted in West Oakland in 1875, as advertised when lots were being sold near Peralta. I have a copy of the seller’s advertisement on the wall at the lab. Presumably anything found under a brick-floored privy with an associated sewer pipe is earlier than ca. 1875.

Tues. 1 Nov.

It’s pouring down rain but Nina Ilic is happy because he’s working under the overhead freeway ramp. If my brain had functioned better, I would have dug Block 3 after Block 1, so we could have had a freeway ramp to dig under on Block 2 when it’s wet in December.

Wed. 2 Nov.

Rain, rain, rain and it was chillier than the stable at Bethlehem today. We now have an on-site fireplace in a 55-gallon drum we can retreat to when it all gets too much. Morale soars. BART passengers whizzing past the site must think we are a bunch of bedraggled hobos. Today’s highlight was a visit by a 6-year-old archaeological reincarnation and his mum, a friend of Cheryl Cook. He’s been digging up his backyard and recording everything he finds since the age of three. Damn, more competition years down the road.

Thurs. 3 Nov.

Oakland was a cold city this morning. Jack London was right, it’s a good place to start from. I told the crew they didn’t have to wet screen until the sun shone above their knees, so their feet don’t get too cold. Compassion is my middle name. A sewer contractor owned the lot at 814 Brush in 1887. Maybe he did the sewerage job on the brick-bottomed privies on the site.

FIELDWORK WEEK 24 BLOCKS 2 AND 3

Mon. 7 Nov.

Early morning was spent pumping out the site after the weekend’s winter storm dropped 6 inches of rain on San Francisco and the same on us. Mike Meyer laid out the ASA on Block 3.

Wed. 9 Nov.

The heavens opened and poured forth rain. Flash photos were in vogue all through this overcast day to match the flash floods. Nina Ilic and Rick Wolter had to concentrate on flood control all day, keeping water out of where we’re digging and manning (sorry, staffing) the pumps. All hands to the pumps, the site’s awash. But we were able to erect shelters over our major privies and keep going.

FIELDWORK WEEK 25, BLOCK 3

Wed. 16 Nov.

There was a rainstorm all day, but the backhoe kept working and Mike and Nina kept monitoring.
Thurs. 17 Nov.

Heavy rain in the morning, but it stopped later. Will Spires visited and someone broke into his truck, which was parked on Brush Street. The guy ran off when we came out of the site office. Nothing was stolen.

Fri. 18 Nov.

It was full moon in Oakland last night, which may explain a lot. Graffiti artists hit the site again. They sprayed the inside of our fence, the freeway columns, and the Portacan. They were socially responsible enough not to tag the backhoe or the site hut. While I think the graffiti actually improves the appearance of our black polythene fence, the point, I suppose, is, where was the guard? Asleep? The guard who did the midnight to 7 a.m. shift said it was there when he arrived. The guard who arrived for duty at 1:30 p.m. today was the same person who did the 4 p.m. to midnight shift yesterday. He said it didn’t happen on his shift. Where is King Solomon when you need him?

We had everybody available blitzing Well 1700. Current measurements place it pretty much at the intersection of three lots: 772 Fifth, 774 Fifth, and 810 Market. Mike whipped the crew into a frenzy and they took out the first 5 feet by early afternoon. Good stratigraphy and a lot of artifacts. The latest ceramic mark so far has been 1891. This is potentially the best well yet. The backhoe then started to excavate a deeper safety trench around the well.

**FIELDWORK WEEK 26, BLOCK 3**

**Mon. 21 Nov.**

This block is being run by Mike Meyer as part of his Master’s thesis. I get to hover in the background.

**Tues. 22 Nov.**

Zipping along with Well 1700. The artifacts still look early.

**Wed. 23 Nov.**

The well got finished with artifacts right down to the bottom wet-screened silt deposits. A short week, it is Thanksgiving. I’m going to catch up on Block 2 paperwork, as I’m a heathen foreigner who doesn’t celebrate this holiday.

**FIELDWORK WEEK 27, BLOCK 3**

**Wed. 30 Nov.**

Trench 1755 at 768 Fifth St. cuts an earlier pit that contains a cow (deceased), apparently not butchered. On this site we have now uncovered a cow, a candle, and a chicken. There are dark murmurings of voodoo about. New site mantra—If you see the sun rise on your way to work, you’re late.

**Thurs. 1 Dec.**

The second half of a small Pit 1753 at 768 Fifth St. contained many artifacts, including about seven cylindrical stone objects that could be fishing weights, or possibly charmstones. Perhaps someone was raiding middens back in the last century. Nina Ilic is not sold on the charmstone idea. The pit previously produced a Chinese coin, so quite a cultural mix in this one.

**Fri. 2 Dec.**

The bones of Daisy, the deceased cow, have been boxed up by Elyn Walker and we are none the wiser as to how she got there.
FIELDWORK WEEK 28, BLOCK 3
Mon. 5 Dec.
Elyn Walker is digging what we are calling the sand well, 1703, at 812 Market. No brick or wood lining. There are few artifacts, but we will excavate the second half, stopping at our current 3 feet depth. The probe sinks in up to its hilt, but this well is unsafe to dig. There's no structure to support a 'chimney' if we dig around it with a machine. The 4-ft. probe didn't reveal any brickwork or other lining to about 6.5 feet bgs.

Fri. 9 Dec.
We are finishing up the excavation today. The weather was sunny, but real cool. Just like us. Over and out on the 1994 fieldwork.

FIELDWORK WEEK 30, BLOCK 28
Mon. 17 April 1995
The 1995 fieldwork season begins after a four-month break while Caltrans and the construction contractor discussed how to remove the extensive fill material west of Market Street. On site at 7 a.m. with Janet Pape. Crew consists of Keith Warren, Rick Wolter, Nina Ilic, and Richelle Coffin.

Tues. 18 April
We established a site temporary benchmark (TBM) at exactly 13 feet AMSL on the concrete pad immediately west of the house lot on Pine Street. Also met the occupant, Vivienne, who brought the crew coke (ah, that's cocoa-cola) and orange juice. I asked her to let me know if dust or anything else bothered her.

We dug a test trench with the backhoe outside the ASA to look for stratigraphy and check the water table. The trench was about 8.5 feet deep. Ground water seeped in at a depth of 6 ft. 5 in. bgs. Relatively clean Merritt sand is at about 2 feet bgs in this area.

FIELDWORK WEEK 31, BLOCK 28
Mon. 24 April
Continuing machine clearance with two backhoes. The 710 John Deere arrived at 7:40 a.m. The operator is Peter, who says he's actually a crane operator. The house at 1825 Short was burnt on Friday night. The guard apparently did not put it in his report as Burns Security came by to investigate it. You'd think he would have put it in for the sheer entertainment value. The Fire Dept. also arrived. The house still stands but is a bit of a shell from the outside.

Wed. 26 April
Richelle Coffin checked and corrected the construction contractor, MCM's, bill for security that I have to sign off on daily. The security guards work 15 hours a day from 4 p.m. to 7 a.m. MCM had it figured as 11 hours. I asked MCM how they managed that. They said 4 + 7 = 11. These guys are building the freeway...

Fri. 28 April
Only one backhoe arrived. After waiting a reasonable time, Richelle did battle over the phone with MCM (she says they left her on hold for nearly 10 minutes, they said they got cut off). They eventually sent an emissary around to fill us in and/or ameliorate us. It's lucky I was there as Richelle was ready to fill him in. The story is the new backhoe operator didn't show up at their yard until 9 a.m., then they had to drug test him.

I'm updating this on Sunday 30 April. I had to go back to the site at 6 p.m. on Friday and I had told the guard to expect me. I mustn't have made much of an impression as he was fast asleep in his truck. Then on Saturday at 12:45 p.m., Richelle was at the site and found another guard asleep. I called Bayshore Security and the secretary directed me to their voice-mail. I left a message that if we find a guard asleep again, we will get another security firm.

FIELDWORK WEEK 32, BLOCK 28
Tues. 2 May
A Channel 7 crew came by. The cameraman was filming the small green house on Pine Street that people are trying to save from demolition. The TV crew then came to the site gate. Elyn Walker talked to them and offered them a Caltrans contact but they disappeared without taking the guy's
name. The 710 John Deere backhoe blew a hose at 10 a.m. It is now 2 p.m. and no fix. MCM apparently called the wrong rental company to come fix it. On it goes. Some details on the new mobile phone: To activate the phone, we had to fax my driver’s license, then they called us back to check. I was off the site, so British citizen Keith successfully impersonated me on the grounds that the locals wouldn’t know one foreigner from another.

FIELDWORK WEEK 34, BLOCK 28
Mon. 15 May

Crew: Keith Warren, Peter Messick, Brian Mischke, Laura Villamil, Bill Stillman, Dave Makar, Anmarie Medin. Richelle Coffin ill today. Paula Frazer had prior Archaeology Week commitments at the Presidio.

Keith and Bill are starting on Well 2000 at 1820 Goss St. This well rapidly turned out to be a dud. Plastic bags and generally late materials through the first 5 feet of fill. A 1938 penny was also found. As the well got into water table, it began to smell bad and excavation was halted. The odor resembled diesel to some noses and sewage to others, especially to Dave Makar’s nose. Dave’s nose has been near enough sewage in his former plumbing profession, so he wins out. There is no evidence of a diesel slick in the well water.

FIELDWORK WEEK 35, BLOCK 28
Wed. 24 May

One visitor today, Emeritus Professor Paul Zinke, a former professor of soil science from UCB who hangs out at Peter Messick’s bar. He was enraptured by the site, not having seen such large soil exposures before, so we invited him back with his camcorder any time.

Earthmoving equipment is now nibbling away at Block 4. There is some question of our working on this block at the same time as the pile-drivers. Apart from the infernal noise, I think we have a case for our sections collapsing every time a pile is smacked and the earth vibrates. On these grounds, I would hope we could work in peace.

FIELDWORK WEEK 36, BLOCKS 27 AND 31
Tues. 30 May

Site visitor, John Apostolis, who is chief of construction in Sacramento. He was in town and wanted to know what we were up to. Janet showed him around. He asked her, humorously I hope, who
to blame if the archaeologists delayed the job. Janet handed him her business card. Looks like we’re in the clear then.

Wed. 31 May

ABC TV on site filming women crew as part of an affirmative-action program. Bill Coburn from Oakland Heritage Alliance dropped in while visiting the houses to be saved across the street.

FIELDWORK Week 37, Blocks 27 and 31

Wed. 7 June

Pits ongoing. We are on schedule to start backhoe clearance of Block 4 on Monday 12 June. Our media day is rescheduled for next Wednesday, 14 June. Kasler Construction are apparently complaining to Caltrans that the archaeology is holding them up. They have no grounds. There is a 50-day construction lockout in this area initiated by Caltrans, and we are digging blocks in the order requested. Elyn Walker’s car was stolen from the Days Inn parking lot overnight. The security guards and/or camera don’t appear to have seen much.

FIELDWORK Week 38, Blocks 27 and 31

Wed. 14 June, Media Day

The weather was overcast and showy. The Media arrived at 10:00 and remained until 12:45, along with Bob Gross and the Caltrans press officers. Media present included Channels 2, 4, 5, and 7, Associated Press, East Bay Express, and several other local papers. Medin, Hellmann, Stillman, Meyer, Makar, Coffin, Messick, Longfellow, Warren, Walker, and Mischke got to be media stars for a day.

Fri. 16 June

Block 4: At 12:15 the office arrived on our new site and there was great rejoicing.

FIELDWORK Week 38, Block 4

Thurs. 22 June

TV morning-show host Tracy Gallagher, wants to do a shoot on the site. I suggested that she hold off until there was more to see and that I’d phone her 4-5 days in advance when we had a better block. Caltrans video person comes and we film 15 minutes around the site. Mary Pratzellis reports that a visiting archaeologist saw what he took to be a “layer of shell” in the side of a trench between BART and the Post Office building on Seventh. Nina Ilic was informed; he checked out the area and found nothing.

Bill Levinson came for filming in afternoon. We went by Block 27. It is untouched from when we left and this after all the pressure to get us out by last Friday because we were “holding up the contractor.”

Tues. 18 July

Yesterday Warren rode BART by the site at 4:15 p.m. and saw the security supervisor lock the gate and leave.

FIELDWORK Week 43, Block 7

Mon. 24 July

Return of jet-lagged, culture-shocked field boss from European vacation musing over job offer in French Riviera. At SSU in the morning sorting out my immigration status after U.S. Immigration at pre-flight clearance in Dublin kindly permitted me, after some hesitation, to enter the U.S. until 31 July.

FIELDWORK Week 44, Block 7

Tues. 1 Aug.

At about 10:30, I got paged by Janet Pape. Janet had been ordered to close us down. Reasons currently unclear. The decision-makers apparently thought we were out of money.

Wed. 2 Aug.

Job wise, we seem saved for the moment. The state budget was passed this morning so on we roll until the next crisis. We had a problem of a different sort this morning. Mike Meyer was first at the site hut. The security guard was asleep. Mike managed to load tools from the container and take the guard’s photograph without waking her. I met him at Block 4 where we both noticed that the site looked a little different. Pothunters had been there. Two of the best-
looking privies and a pit were hit. Privy 3300 at 828 Myrtle had been trashed to a depth of about a foot. The east half of Privy 3178 had been mostly dug out to Merritt sand. We photographed them and Bill Levinson put them on video later. After cleaning both privies up, we can save something from each. I contacted Janet Pape and asked her to terminate the security firm’s contract and get us a new one by this evening.

Fri. 4th Aug

Looking through the block reports since I was gone, I noticed that we had one instance of a posthole eligible for the National Register. Being of a scientific bent, I am waiting to see the documentation and photos of this phenomenon. There are 146 lots still to do in the remaining blocks.

FIELDWORK WEEK 45, BLOCK 4
Mon. 7 Aug.

The large LPG gas container, the camp stove, and the wheelbarrow purchased last week were stolen over the weekend. This is not an auspicious beginning for the new guards. Their boss came around to hand in guard reports and I told him what had happened. We got the usual apologies. I asked for the guard to be stationed by the site hut overlooking the site rather than at the front gate on Market Street.

Tues. 8 Aug.

Pile-driving has started beside our trenches just west of Market Street. We will be able to monitor the impact on the standing sections in the ineligible pits. So far it is real noisy but not continuous. Still, only one pile-driver is working so far. Four more are lining up. Today was hot yet nobody wanted to use the shade. Are they afraid of looking like wimps? About half an obsidian projectile point turned up in the landfill from Block 4. Found by Janet Pape no less, on the side of the trench.

Wed. 9 Aug.

The guy operating the pile-driver close to us lost control and the pile took off swinging around with bits of metal flying about. Our crew had to run fast and the construction workers also got the hell out of there. Said from MCM told me later that the operator had been freshly trained and pulled the wrong lever or something. I asked for a copy of the Caltrans safety report on the incident. No one was hurt. The operator was fired and a 20-year pile-driving veteran replaced him. Crew finishing the final pits on Block 4 to the melodious accompaniment of pile-driving, while a lucky few are cleaning up in the quiet environment of Block 5.

Fri. 11 Aug.

We had a Caltrans film crew on site this morning. They were focusing on road works but wanted to shoot us too (in the artistic sense). Janet Pape and Mike Meyer talked to them.

Tues. 15 Aug.

I checked Block 29 with Mike Meyer. There’s still a large concrete pad to come up. Word from Janet at the end of the day was that Caltrans would like us to work on Blocks 6 and 29 at the same time. Block 29 will be available next Wed. 23. Scotty Thompson took a few runs on BART between West Oakland and 12th Street to shoot the site with his video camera. Apart from newspaper articles, this is how the public see us. A fleeting glimpse, if they even are aware of what’s going on. We can post this out on our Web page when it is set up. I am advised that my work-permit extension has arrived. Cool. Now instead of having to go work in Europe, I get to actually choose between downtown Oakland and the south of France. Lucky me, the American dollar or the French Riviera.

FIELDWORK WEEK 46, BLOCKS 5 AND 29
Wed. 16 Aug.

The pile-driver was banging away all day. Was it my imagination that the ground must have been harder because the bangs and booms seemed louder? So far this week it has been suggested that we: (a) speed the project up and have two crews working at the same time; (b) slow the project down and lay people off to save money. And it’s still only Wednesday.

Thurs. 17 Aug.

A few employees of Southern Pacific questioned Dave Makar about his presence on Block 29 when he returned there later in the day. This is
good news, it means they keep an eye on things. Or does it mean Dave looks like a hoodlum to Joe Citizen?

**Fieldwork Week 47, Blocks 5 and 6**

**Tues. 22 Aug.**

Block 6. We have about a dozen privies now all hiding around the center of the block. Damn, I spelt ‘centre’ as ‘center’ without a second thought. Creeping acculturation.

**Wed. 23 Aug.**

Medin on site. Troweling Block 6. Keith Warren hit the first privy and it was a 1920s dud, 1 down, 11 or so to go. Kasler apparently chased a few self-described “amateur archaeologists” off Block 29 last night according to Janet Pape. I don’t know if they did much damage. After checking Block 5 context sheets, I figured that the following points needed to be re-emphasized.

1. Interpretation: This means what it says. ‘Don’t have a clue’ will even do if you really have no idea of how the deposit got there.
2. Handwriting: Write clearly, especially numbers, which are easily confused. Yes, we are a multicultural society but please write in clear English so someone else can read your notes. Judging by your hieroglyphic scribbles, some of you appear to be reincarnated Egyptians.
3. Orientation: Don’t put a vertical north arrow on section drawings. Magnetic north is not located in the atmosphere above West Oakland.

**Fieldwork Week 48, Blocks 6, 5-2, and 29**

**Tues. 29 August**

Lunchtime on Block 6 was memorable. While the crew was sitting in front of the office trailer, someone came onto the site and stole four toolboxes. Samantha Schell, Conrad Praetzel, Meagan Wehrstedt, and Brian Mischke lost their toolkits. Fortunately, Pete Messick had taken the cameras off site. Reported theft to Janet and she called Oakland Police Dept. This project is getting expensive for the crew.

**Wed. 30 August**

There was a portion of a human skull in a pit series being dug by Conrad Praetzel and Elyn Walker at 815 Filbert on Block 6. Elyn Walker, our osteological expert, reckons there’s an 80% probability that it is a European or other non-Native American adult. This is based on skull and incisor shape and the fact that the sutures are closed. Janet Pape informed the coroner and Adrian Praetzellis at SSU. Kevin Hinckle, Deputy Coroner from the Sheriff’s Department, County of Alameda, arrived on site around 4:30 p.m. He took a statement from Elyn and photographed the pit in which the human remains were found. He would like an osteology report from us. We have no dating evidence yet. Mr. Hinckle thought he was required to contact Native American representative Andrew Galvan. I think he may be holding off on that based on assurances from Elyn and Janet that the probability of the remains being European made that unnecessary.

![Image](image.png)

*Figure E5. Jennifer Ferneau and crew on Block 5 with a pile-driver in the background*
Thur. 31 Aug
The pile-driver has moved practically inside the site hut on Block 6. We will be billing for large doses of aspirin.

FIELDWORK WEEK 49, BLOCK 6
Wed. 6 Sept.
It was really really hot today and it felt like the pile-driver was just outside the front door of the site office. We have more bits and pieces of the deceased person, plus a belt buckle. I don’t recall seeing any particularly early materials come from the burial fill. We should have the burial excavation complete by tomorrow.

FIELDWORK WEEK 50, BLOCKS 6 AND 29
Wed. 11 Sept.
Ongoing excavation on Blocks 6 and 29, with a peak of 20 crew in the field this week. The backhoe cleared around the well at the Railroad Hotel on Block 29 and initially it looks promising. Historian Roger Olmsted visited the site today to share his thoughts, which also run towards foul play with the burial. The boots should help with dating. Pits ongoing. Messick digging when not photographing. Coffin purchasing supplies and checking concordance and photo logs. I mention them specifically as they tend not to turn up in the status report as they both have primary non-digging duties. And when their grandchildren ask “What did you do in the dig, Grandpa/ma/?” I don’t want them getting on my case.

Fri. 13 Sept.
We may be looking at about 10 apparently eligible privies plus the burial on Block 6. Block 29 is ‘Yumba.’ The Railroad Hotel well is stratified with a high artifact density. The technical term used by the crew is ‘Yumba.’ I actually pushed a couple of wheelbarrows today to rapturous crew applause. Life goes on at Cypress.

Thurs. 14 Sept.
Close to finishing Block 6. Site visitors Adrian Praetzellis and Judy Tordoff from Caltrans, Sacramento, checking feature eligibility. Three more privies bit the dust to much weeping among the crew. Elyn Walker’s stolen car was recovered by the police. The person who stole it had replaced the tires and hubcaps, put in an ace stereo system, and kindly retained the license plates while parking it outside his house. This month’s Darwin award has a winner.

Fri. 15 Sept.
At the end of the day we ran some controls on Block 6. As the ASA on Block 6 will be totally wiped out by heavy machinery on Monday, Keith Warren, Dave Makar, and myself dug the remaining unexcavated and presumed ineligible pits as fast as possible. We called it right, they were all ineligible, with either late or very few materials.

Block 29: Well 4600 continues down and contains more textiles, seeds, and similar, including coats and hats. Excavation stopped to allow the screening to catch up. Approximately 2 feet of fill is left in the well, as per probe-check to the bottom of the brick.

FIELDWORK WEEK 51, BLOCK 29
Mon. 18 Sept.
The Railroad Hotel well was finished today. It bottomed out at about 3 feet below sea level. Information from Sunshine Psota is that she dates the shoes from the burial in trench/pit 4301 on Block 6 to no earlier than 1897. This is apparently based on the rubber heels being no earlier than 1897 and aspects of the style being no later than 1916, if I remember correctly. The burial cut through a privy containing a bourbon bottle dating to 1888-1893, so

Figure F.6. Plates discarded in Well 4600 at the rear of the Railroad Exchange Hotel on Block 29
it has to be later than 1888. The Corbett family were on site from 1875 through the 1900 census. So maybe the three gentlemen who were at this address in the 1910 census knew something about it. That’s Frank Huetman, a gardener, Shubert Belisle (?), a carpenter, and William Marrd, a grocery porter who lived at 815-1/2.

Wed. 21 Sept.

Mike Jablonowski arrived on site at 10:30 am with his ASC field intern class from Anthro 496/596, Madeleine Solomon and Mary Fry. They got a tour and got put to work until 3 p.m. as artifact screeners.

FIELDWORK WEEK 52, BLOCKS 29 AND 22
Mon. 25 Sept.

Bill Stillman found a Napa Valley obsidian serrated projectile point in the builder’s trench fill of Privy 4736 at 1868/70 Seventh Street. It may have been a collector’s item or, as it was found in the builder’s trench fill, it might have been scooped up from the surrounding area.

Wed. 27 Sept.

We coned off the entire Post Office Block 22 area that we are interested in at shift change today at around 2:30-4 p.m. That got most of the parked cars out of the way and we will check that the remainder depart tomorrow. Stoyka did public relations, telling people they couldn’t park there during the shift change. Mike Meyer’s wedding is becoming increasingly inconvenient, he is needed on site. I think we should tell him to cancel it.

Thurs. 28 Sept.

Last night’s barriers on Block 22 got pushed aside by delirious postal workers desperate for a parking spot. Meanwhile, oblivious to them all, BART whizzes past overhead. We put the barriers back up. We barricaded the two routes into the ASA as best we could. It is now very obvious that no one is supposed to park in there so we await the dawn with interest.

FIELDWORK WEEK 53, BLOCK 22
Mon 2 Oct.

One disgruntled postal worker parked within our fenced-off area. I left a note on his/her windscreen. Dick McCombe said some comments from local postal workers were, “Why spend money on this stuff when this area needs it for schools?” We’re all about education, so perhaps the Caltrans display should be moved into the Post Office for a week? I monitored on Block 22. It was hotter than hell and I’m not used to being sweaty and dusty anymore.

Tues. Oct. 3rd

No obvious privies so far on the Chinese laundry.

Fri. Oct.6th

Janet will contact TV morning show host Tracy Gallagher from Channel 4. She inquired on 22 June if she could film us. We now have a site with something to catch the public’s eye. The Chinese laundry now has a well, and two possible privies.

FIELDWORK WEEK 54, BLOCK 22
Mon. 9 Oct.

Crew cleaning Well 5260 in the Chinese laundry address. We put Nina Ilic’s muscle to good use on the bucket brigade hauling dirt out from the well. Tracy Gallagher from KRON Channel 4 affiliate, Channels 60 and 35, wants to do a live program from the site on Wednesday morning. Her technician will be there from 5:30 a.m. Janet and I will be there, the crew have the option of arriving by 6:15 if they want national fame.

Wed. 11 Oct.

On site with Janet at 5:30 am. Meyer arrived by 6 and the rest of the crew by 6:15. The show went well. They did three live segments from the site. Janet will get a copy of the tape from the TV station. Excavation ongoing. Chinese laundry site steadfastly refusing to be Chinese and Jeannie Yang is getting frustrated as a potential Master’s thesis goes out the window.
Fri. 13th
Victor Salazar came by to check progress on the backfilling. We could not complete it by the end of the day and it will continue on Monday. However, we are doing the best job we can and there is no rain forecast for the weekend. If it does pour down, and we pollute Lake Merritt, I think Janet gets hauled off to jail before I do. Brief update on previous blocks:

Block 6 had 109 features with a potential for excavation; 37 were dug and my latest figures indicate 6 were apparently eligible. Fourteen lots were examined.

Block 29 had 156 features with a potential for excavation; 47 were dug and 10 were apparently eligible. Nine lots were examined.

FIELDWORK WEEK 55, BLOCK 22
Mon 16 Oct.
There is a long trench (5237) at 1813 Seventh. It contains a lot of burnt wood and a pit across its northern end had some celadon fragments. It may contain demolition debris from the Chinese laundry, so we will excavate sections of this trench. The trench may have been some kind of a drain. It seems too irregular to have been a wall foundation.

Wed. 18 Oct.
Crew focused on excavation of Trench 5237 on the Chinese laundry site. Maybe we found no Chinese artifacts in the well at 1823 Seventh because the laundry was using the well and made sure no junk went in it. Judging by the amount of brick demolition debris, burnt redwood, and Asian ceramics in Trench 5237, I think the laundry had a major fire, after which it was demolished and bits of it shoved into what may once have functioned as a drainage trench. The result of this is the debris in Trench 5237. I presume that happened by 1912, as the laundry is not on that year’s Sanborn. We are wet-screening everything from Trench 5237, mostly through 1/4-inch mesh with some sample 1/8 inch. We are finding lots of bright blue, marble-sized balls, ‘Laundry Blue.’ Warren and Stoyka are excavating and Stillman is organizing the wet-screening.

Thur. Oct. 19th
Excavation continuing on Trench 5237. Celadon bowls, Chinese brown-glazed stoneware and possible wooden abacus beads have been found. We have only three potentially eligible features from Block 22 to date: Pit 5293 and Trench 5237 from 1813 Seventh, the address of the Chinese

Figure F.7. Channel 4’s morning news program live from Block 22
laundry, and Pit 5200 from behind the Buhsen Hotel at 1803-5 Seventh Street.

FIELDWORK WEEK 56, BLOCKS 22 AND 25  
Mon 23 Oct

Channel 4 came on site about 1 p.m. and did some background filming with Janet Pape. By some inexplicable freak of nature, all context sheets were checked and the site matrix completed by the day excavation finished on Block 22. This is a historical first. It is also an historical last, so don’t expect it to happen again.

Thurs. 26 Oct.

Fourteen cars were parked in our ASA on Block 25 this morning. I couldn’t get through to Dick McCombe, so I contacted Post Office Security, who put out a P.A. announcement. It took until 1 p.m. to get all but one car removed.

FIELDWORK WEEK 57, BLOCK 25  
Tues. 31 Oct.

Halloween. The spooks will get wet tonight, it started to rain late in the afternoon. Our first wet time since around April or early May. We’re clearing up to 2 feet of overburden from the Block 25 site. At the end of the day we had maybe 35% of the ASA cleared. Lots of demolition debris, some brick foundations. Nina Ilic was a whiz kid and connected the generator so we have light and heat in our executive office.

FIELDWORK WEEK 58, BLOCK 25  
Mon. 6 Nov.

Backhoe on site 7:20-3:30. We wanted it to stay another half hour to tidy things up but the operator said he was off the clock and left. The Union rules.

FIELDWORK WEEK 61, BLOCK 25  
Fri 30 Nov.

We finished with only two apparently eligible pits on Block 25. Many pits were disturbed, presumably by pothunters probing in the vicinity of the rear fence line. This may have happened after the buildings on this block were demolished to make way for the current freeway project. On Block 25, we labored mightily and brought forth little. The site matrix was complex: lots of late disturbances and sewer trenches cutting across lots. I will be in Palm Springs doing exotic yoga stuff from 24 Dec. through 2 Jan. This should clear my brain out sufficiently that I can deal with the remaining blocks in pouring rain, howling bay winds, biting cold, and moaning crew.

FIELDWORK WEEK 62, BLOCK 20  
Wed. 3 Jan. 1996

Keith Warren and Rick Wolter laid out Block 20 on the ground. Backhoe will remove asphalt tomorrow.

Thurs. 4 Jan.

Warren monitoring backhoe on Block 20.

FIELDWORK WEEK 63, BLOCK 20  
Wed. 10 Jan.

Backhoe on site clearance from 7 a.m.-9 a.m. Mike Meyer dropped by and informed us that the 1886 block books held at the Oakland Cultural Heritage Alliance with Betty Marvin and friends apparently indicate the location of wells with an ‘x’. He only looked at a couple of blocks. Coffin will check.

Thurs. 11 Jan.

Surprisingly warm for a California winter. Warren tells me that Adam Jackson, the 4 p.m. to midnight security guard, was approached by Post Office police after we had gone for the day. The cops told him that a senior postal person would be coming on to the site to look for bottles. The guard told the cops that he would be arrested if he did so. Coffin checked out the “wells on Block books theory” at Betty Marvin’s. The ‘x’s marking the spot are actually poorly written ‘T’s, says Betty Marvin and mean “tenant.” Betty Marvin says wells were never shown. Too bad.

Fri. 12 Jan.

Block 20. Early-morning entertainment was provided by an SPRR person getting irate. He
wanted the railroad to bring in a surveyor at the weekend to peg out and reclaim its property on Block 20. Apparently part of the western half of this block is SPRR property, which the Post Office has been using for ages. What I took to be the edge of the right-of-way on construction plans was in fact the edge of a “permit to enter” zone, which Caltrans can use for access during construction. I don’t recall having seen the words “permit to enter” on the construction plans when we were figuring out impact areas previously. Maybe I was looking at the wrong ones. Unseasonably warm for January, we were working in T-shirts for part of the day.

**FIELDWORK WEEK 64, BLOCK 20**

**Tues. 16 Jan**

Heavy rain overnight puddled parts of the site. Torrential rain this morning. Although the site appears to drain well, it was not possible to work in this weather. Bill Levinson filmed between showers. Our rain shelters broke apart over the long weekend. Ilic is designing a stronger version.

Jan. 17th

Stoyka is in ecstasy. After pulling dud pits for months, he finally looks to have a good privy to excavate.

**Fri. 19 Jan.**

The sun sort of shone. Well, there was a faint glow in the southern sky. It could have been a nuclear reactor going berserk in San Jose.

**FIELDWORK WEEK 65, BLOCK 20**

**Tues. 23 Jan.**

Excavation, backhoe-clearance, and rain-shelter construction ongoing. It rained heavily from 1:30 p.m., but the rain shelters seem effective. But the crew members troweling-off 1827 William for a photo got soaked.

**Wed. 24 Jan.**

It poured down rain all morning. The shelters are working and excavation kept going. However, Makar’s Privy 6298 got swamped, as we were still building a shelter for it.

**FIELDWORK WEEK 66, BLOCK 20**

**Tues. 30 Jan.**

Rainstorm hit around 2 p.m.

**Wed. 31 Jan.**

Heavy rain in the morning after an overnight downpour flooded parts of the site, including a number of pits. We bailed, pumped, and dug enough drains to be able to keep working. The ground is saturated and slow to drain. Privy assessments now give us four potentially eligible features. We have averaged about 3.5 weeks per block so far. Block 20 has been our largest surface exposure so far and wet weather could delay us a little.

**Fri. 2 Feb.**

We may have a fourth eligible privy at 1825-23 William Street. Stoyka found what seems to be a gold ring with entwined hearts in it. We have finished work in the area owned by SPRR and it can be backfilled Monday. We have excavated a few privies in lots with poor association, for example, 1827 William, as a control. While I’d like to think unexcavated features would remain intact for future generations, it’s more likely that construction crews will dig through them.

**FIELDWORK WEEK 67, BLOCK 20**

**Mon. 5 Feb.**

Warm day after weekend downpour. Sponged out, pumped out, and bucketed the water away. We are now excavating by digging fast and stockpiling buckets of fill for a large wet-screen crew, rather than screening as we go. This suits the weather conditions better. Privies and pits are dug faster and sections exposed to possible rain and flooding collapse for less amount of time. We will tackle Jack London’s lot at 807 Pine tomorrow. Cookie Him will work with us on this lot for the rest of the week.

**Tues. 6 Feb.**

The crew troweled-off Jack London’s lot at 807 Pine. Nothing too exciting showing, just one more pit found.
Wed. 7 Feb.
Initial excavation of possible Privy 6441 and Pit 6442 on Jack London's lot at 807 Pine is producing late materials

Thur. 8 Feb.
Adrian Praetzellis on site playing Doctor Doom with potentially eligible privies. Some of our excavators get emotionally attached to their privy candidates and get depressed if they get junked. I should keep a bunch of Prozac handy. Caltrans has distributed a memo dated yesterday informing all and sundry that the archaeologists would finish work in mid-March. Janet had faxed everyone our mid-April finishing schedule on 31 January.

Fri. 9 Feb.
It seems there is evidence to reconfirm the location of prehistoric site CA-ALA-17. At about 11 a.m., Mike Almeida came to the site. He said that an electrician had found some bones when digging a hole earlier this week. He took them home. Someone told him they were human. So he must have told his employer. The police, the coroner, and Andrew Galvan were then contacted. Someone then thought it a good idea to contact us. There was a meeting at the burial location site at the USPS building at Seventh and Adeline at 11:30 today. Among those present were Andrew Galvan, Bill Self, George Miller, Nina Ilic, Mike Meyer, and Janet Pape. The burial is still partly in the ground in a 6 ft. hole just about 100 ft. outside the right-of-way in the southeast corner of the USPS training center. Janet has confirmed that it will be a Caltrans project. Presumably freeway construction necessitated some wiring alterations at the USPS.

Excavation is complete at Jack London’s former childhood home at 807 Pine. The best we can offer for show-and-tell is an Owl Drug Company bottle with an adhesive label, which may date to ca. 1890 to 1930s. Beyond that, the earliest material is an Alameda Soda Water Co. bottle from ca. 1904. The Call of the Wild didn’t leave much behind.

FIELDWORK WEEK 68, BLOCK 20
Tues. 13 Feb
The deal with the burial on USPS property is that Andrew Galvan will contact the Native American Heritage Commission to find the most likely descendant and they will keep Janet Pape informed.

Wed. 14 Feb.
Update on the Native American burial is that it is on federal land and Larry Myer from the Native American Heritage Commission thinks the Post Office should handle it. Apparently the Post Office didn’t tell the Caltrans engineers they were planning to dig there because it was such a small area.

Thurs. 15 Feb.
Backhoe on site from 7-5:30 to finish clearance on Block 21. Makar stayed late to monitor. There are now four wells and about six to nine possible privies. Crew finalizing excavation on Block 20. Various amounts of Chinese ceramics, including celadon bowls, brown-glazed stoneware, and an almost intact soy pot, have been found in a number of pits on 1813 William. There is no information available to us indicating Chinese occupants and none of the excavated features have been eligible.

After a week of record heat for February, it started to rain again this afternoon. Messick and I were able to get some aerial shots of Blocks 20 and 21 from the top of the new postal parking facility. However, it was raining and light conditions were not good.

Benchmark established on Pine Street edge of Block 21 is 9 ft. 2 in. ASL to the nearest inch. Groundwater level in the sump trench is at 1 ft. 1 in. ASL. Top of the wells is at about 6 ft. 8 in. ASL, so one set of trenching with the backhoe should be enough to excavate the wells.

FIELDWORK WEEK 70, BLOCK 21
Mon. 26 Feb.
Crew troweling-off the double lot at 1776 Atlantic, and 1781 William. Real cold in the morning so the exercise will keep them warm. I laid out as much of Block 19 as possible with Meyer. There is a
blocked storm drain on the block within our ASA. The resulting flooded area is known to the locals as Lake Victor, after the resident engineer for Contract B.

Tues. 28 Feb
Kasler dropped off more sandbags to pack around the base of the back-dirt pile. We have a total of 97 sandbags, for which we will be billed over three bucks each. Nothing is free.

Thurs. 29 Feb.
On site, it was a dark and stormy night.... day, actually, though the clouds were dark enough. There may yet be some hope for this lot. We have five privies with apparently intact lower deposits and wood linings surviving intact under one to several feet of later disturbance. Which is a bit of an oxymoron as there is no such thing as earlier disturbance. The paperwork crew, Medin, Stoyka, Praetzel, and Wolter, are working stoically in the rain. The pit diggers get to work under shelters.

FIELDWORK WEEK 71, BLOCK 21
Mon. 4 March
Heavy rain for most of the day. Dan Bedford and his backhoe still managed to dig safety trenches around the wells at 812 and 814 Pine. There was a partial collapse of well fill while excavating Well 7097 at 814 Pine.

Tues. 5 March
The site looked unusual at 7 a.m. Two rain shelters were impaled on the now-bent site fence, which is 6 feet high. Two others were ripped apart in the middle of the site. Keith eventually found a fifth one a couple of hundred yards away by Seventh Street. It had to blow over the fence to get there. The mind boggles. Gerry from the post office said there was a fierce hail storm with high winds about 5 p.m. yesterday and he saw a couple of shelters ripped loose from their sandbags. Nina had to go home for his power tools and then spent much of the day fixing them. We can't operate without them in the rain. We will use extra sandbags in future. There were about six or seven boarders on the well site lot at 803 Wood St. in 1900, so I presume there was a boarding house there, probably for rail workers. It's a big lot with a big house on the 1889 Sanborn.

Thurs. 7 March
Springtime takes us unawares. Dry warm weather helped as we hit the wells. The well at 803 Wood is a dud. Only one ink-bottle out of the entire fill. It was excavated to about 10 feet bgs.

Figure F.8. “The Archaeologist as Artist”—depth of field experiment on Block 21. L to R: Bill Stillman, Mike Stoyka, Anmarie Medin, Brian Mischke, Ginger Hellman.
FIELDWORK WEEK 72, BLOCK 21
Tues. 12 March

Cold with showers on and off all day. After Makar and Mischke both fell into water-filled privies, which were excavated last week, I had the backhoe backfill them. There are still a few left open but they are visually obvious. The site now looks like Flanders Fields after aerial bombardment in the first world war.

Thurs. 14 March

Warm and sunny. Most of the crew spent a physical day doing bucket brigade from the well at 812 Pine after the backhoe cleared a deep safety trench around it. The area looks like a ziggurat in reverse. The well bottomed at 8 feet 9 inches below sea level, which I think makes it the deepest on the project. We wound up using every bucket, wheelbarrow and trash bin available to store the excavated material for wet-screening. It was important to get it out fast to avoid pumping the well more often than we have to.

FIELDWORK WEEK 74, BLOCK 21
Fri. 29 March

In the cleared area of the ASA there are nine probable privies and a bunch of pits. We also have brick foundations showing at 1769, 1771, 1773 and 1775 Atlantic, plus 768 Pine. These foundations correspond to the locations of houses shown on the 1889 Sanborn. This is the biggest run of foundations we have yet found.

FIELDWORK WEEK 73, BLOCK 21
Mon. 18 March

We have a tightly dated 1901 bottle among a number of other possible turn-of-the-century bottles in the well at 812 Pine. Plus paint cans and paint brushes. According to Mike Meyer’s research at the Oakland Public Library, the German family Weinheimer (more likely Weisheimer), who were there during the 1900 census, sold the lot in 1903 to Jefferson D. King. Mr. Weisheimer was a house painter, so it looks like his family’s stuff.

Tues. 19 March.

It has been difficult to excavate wells in a stratigraphic fashion once we get into water-logged deposits, although we won’t give up trying if we find any more.

FIELDWORK WEEK 75, BLOCK 19
Mon. 1 April

We must have upset the gods. Intermittent rain in the morning became heavy downpours in the afternoon. The backhoe and truck quit at 12 noon. Somewhere in the storm drains, there’s a block or
FIELDWORK WEEK 76, BLOCK 19
Mon 8 April

We decided to have a temporary concrete plug inserted into the storm drain in the middle of the block. The surrounding streets drain off faster than our site and they don’t have to be troweled-off afterwards. Mike Forner and Victor Salazar assured me it won’t rain anymore. Which I am not inclined to believe.

Tues. 9 April

Stoyka’s Privy 8214 at 764 Pine is going down at least 8 feet bgs when probed. The backhoe dug a safety trench around it. The wood lining is a substantial size. Stoyka thinks it’s a wood-lined well. The question is how to tell the difference between a wood-lined well and a wood-lined privy if there are no original privy deposits remaining? I have reduced the ASA on Block 18 to the bare minimum. It is now an area of about 60 feet x 60 feet immediately behind the ca. 1900 tenements along Wood Street. It should pick up the house and possible privy shown on the 1889 Sanborn.

Wed. 10 April

In Privy 8214 at 764 Pine, the wood terminates about 5 feet bgs and there is a circular, unlined well cut from this depth. I guess it was a well all along. One small prehistoric artifact was found in the top fill of Privy 8330 at 1773 Atlantic. It was probably someone’s souvenir. Nina reckons it’s a desert side-notched point, possibly dating to 1500 or later.

Thurs. 11 April

We are picking up white sand at the bottom of several privies at 1771, 1769, and 1767-65 Atlantic. We haven’t seen it before. A geologist on a nearby drilling crew thought the sand was formed naturally. This white sand smells bad. We took a sample of the stuff in case we get to analyze it later.

FIELDWORK WEEK 77, BLOCK 19
Tues. April 16th

We will try for after-exavcation shots on this block. These have generally been a luxury on this project in the past, for various unavoidable reasons involving logistics and scheduling. We just have not
been able to take the time to trowel-off the entire block after excavation.

Wed 17 April

Excavation ongoing under rain shelters. I decided we needed a deadline and I told the crew that Friday 3 May was it for fieldwork, whether we were finished or not. So we had best be finished

Thurs. 18 April

We just had an earthquake.

Fri. 19 April

Janet Pape and the Block 6 burial/murder story got a big photo spread in the Oakland Tribune. Apparently the coroner’s office is having to display the bones to the media.

FIELD WORK WEEK 78, BLOCKS 18 AND 19

Tues. 23 April

Final pits being excavated on Block 19 along with the privy on Block 18-1. Pit 8422, at 1767 Atlantic on Block 19 is within a house. It’s either real early or perhaps dug after demolition of the house. Or else the folks who lived there had real bad housekeeping habits.

FIELDWORK WEEK 79, BLOCKS 18 AND 19

Mon. 29 April

Last week in the field. Real hot for April. Some of the crew stayed cool by wet-screening. The rest stayed hot troweling-off 1765 Atlantic. Wet-screening is now complete. We have a well and a privy to be assessed.

Tues. 30 April

Another hot one. Crew in varying stages of recovery—or not—from last night’s festivities at the Pacific Coast Brew Company. Paperwork in the heat is a great cure for a hangover so they are finalizing paperwork for unexcavated pits on both blocks. A couple of construction workers were using a cherry picker to remove light poles near us. Makar went and chatted them up and I offered them 50 bucks to let us use it for half an hour. We got all the rubbish off site, cleaned up as best we could, and got a bunch of aerial photos cheap. These are working shots rather than finished excavation publication photos, but they should look good in a slide show. Record heat in the Bay area, about 90 degrees in Oakland.

Wed. 1 May

Another hot day, we’re all tanning.

Figure F.11. Block 21 flooded, 1 April 1996
Thurs. 2 May

Warren, Messick, Schur, and Wolter finished work around lunchtime and headed to Lake Temescal for the farewell barbecue. The rest stuck around until mid-afternoon. Our last two features, the aforementioned well and privy, were deemed ineligible. So we got one eligible privy from Block 19 and zilch from Block 18-1. Hot again. The job is nearly done and Janet Pape and Jack McIlroy are very relieved.

Fri. 3 May 1996

Final pack-up and clean-up. Stillman, Medin, and Makar finished packing gear to SSU. Coffin cleaned up the site office. I’ve been doing some figuring with Meyer. We averaged 18 days per city block, which should give us the world record for urban excavation. In England, we would take that much time just to get organized on a site. End of fieldwork.