

**THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE 2018 ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
EXCAVATION AT BUSH HOMESTEAD TUMWATER, WASHINGTON**

by  
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Prepared for

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Site Code: 45TN91H



**evergreen**

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## THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE 2018 SEASON

### ABSTRACT

This report outlines results of the excavations conducted in 2015, 2016, and 2018 by The Evergreen State College. It summarizes the first two seasons and adds information on the final year of excavation. The PI of this investigation was Dr. Ulrike Krotscheck, faculty in archaeology; collaborators in 2018 were undergraduate research fellow Krista Aurora Sonenshine and Jackie Wall, Nisqually Tribe THPO, who offered the help of her team. The site 45TN91H is currently at the address 8400 Old Hwy 99 SE and owned by Kathleen and Mark Clark. The site is of historical importance because it is the location of one of the first Puget Sound homesteads, settled by George and Isabella Bush in 1845/6. Lab work and database entry was also conducted at TESC. The purpose of this excavation was to recover part of a historic trash burning pit that was discovered and only partly excavated in 2016. The investigation therefore was very limited in scope and consisted of a single excavation unit, 1.9x2.9m, up to a depth of .61m. All deposits were screened with a ¼ inch screen to retrieve any small artifact fragments. A total of 42 diagnostic artifacts were recovered, cleaned, and are being stored at TESC (though they remain legal property of the Clarks). Artifact types included glass, ceramics, metal, and organic material. This deposit was formed in a single event – the burning of a trash pile – for which we hoped to find a *terminus post quem* for the fire according to the artifacts. Though we are currently still evaluating the data, only few artifacts can securely be dated, preliminary results show that the fire included items from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Research on the artifacts continues at TESC.

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## **Introduction**

This report outlines the history of the Bush family and the results of the third, and final archaeological investigation of their material remains at the site 45TN91H, at the address 8400 Old Hwy 99 SE, owned by Kathleen and Mark Clark. It is the site of one of the first homesteads in southern Puget Sound, originally settled by George and Isabella Bush in 1845/46. The original project in 2015 grew out of a query submitted by the current landowners, Mark and Kathleen Clark, who were well aware of the location's historical significance and were interested in an archaeological investigation of their property. Through Dr. Dale Croes, they contacted Dr. Ulrike Krotscheck at TESC, who submitted a permit application for an initial field school in spring 2015, followed by a second season in 2016. What follows is a description of the history of the site, including summary of finds from the 2015 and 2016 seasons, description of the archaeological methods used, and the results of the limited field excavation in 2018.

## **HISTORY**

### **George Bush and his Family**

George Bush, the son of a Black man of contested ethnicity<sup>1</sup> and a white Irish mother, was born around 1790 in Pennsylvania (Thomas 1965). The Bush family became a family of means after the death of a family friend, Captain Stevenson, because he left the Bush's most of his fortune (Oldham 2004, Thomas 1965).

As a young man, George moved to Clay County, Missouri (Thomas 1965, Oldham 2004). During his first years in Missouri, he worked with the Hudson Bay Company as a trapper (Thomas 1965). He met and married his wife, Isabella James in Missouri (Thomas 1965). Isabella was an American of German descent (Oldham 2004, Thomas 1965). The couple had nine children, five of whom were born in Missouri, before the family headed to Oregon Territory in 1844 (Thomas 1965). Those children were William Owen, Joseph Talbot, Rial Baily, Henry Sanford, and Jackson January (Thomas 1965). Their youngest son, Lewis Nisqually, was born in New Market, Washington in December 1847 (Thomas 1965).

Bush was believed to have been a successful cattle rancher, but as a man of possibly African descent, he would not have been allowed to own his own land in Missouri during the mid-

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<sup>1</sup> The exact origin of George Bush's father is contested, and a subject for another study. Important for the current investigation is that his son George was, apparently, visibly different enough from most of the other new settlers in the Oregon Territory to be discriminated against, which resulted in the party settling in the southern Puget Sound (Thomas 1965, Oldham 2004).

1800's, although, according to an 1830 Federal census, Bush was considered a "free white person" (Thomas 1965). However, according to accounts from Ezra Meeker on the matter, "Bush doubtless left Missouri because of the virulent prejudice against his race in the community he lived." (Thomas 1965).

In 1844, Bush and his family joined four other families, comprised of close family and friends, on a wagon train bound for Oregon territory (Thomas 1965). However, when they arrived in Oregon, discriminatory laws, known as the 'lash laws', had been passed in the territory, limiting non-white settlers (Thomas 1965, Oldham 2004). His party, not wanting to abandon Bush, agreed to continue north of the Columbia River (Thomas 1965, Oldham 2004). The Simmons Party, as the group was known, spent the winter of 1844/1845 just north of the Columbia River near Fort Vancouver (Oldham 2004, Thomas 1965).

Eventually, the party reached the area presently known as Tumwater, WA in November of 1845 (Fullmer, Henderson and Woodard 2009, Oldham 2004, Thomas 1965). As they settled, the families relied heavily on the generosity of the local Indians and the Hudson Bay Company's Fort Nisqually for food and supplies (Thomas 1965). The indigenous tribes taught the settlers how to dig for clams and fish for salmon from the rivers (Oldham 2004). During the winter of 1846-47, Simmons and Bush set up the first gristmill in the region (Thomas 1965). Additionally, the settlers soon set up and organized a sawmill company – The Puget Sound Milling Company (Thomas 1965).

The family, and the newly formed New Market community, continued a friendly relationship with the local natives (Thomas 1965). So close was the relationship between the local natives and the Bush family, that eventually everyone in the family learned to speak the local Indian language (Thomas 1965). So strong was the relationship between the local Indians and the New Market community that in the 1850's when the Indian Wars started, Chief Leschi contacted the families promising that none of the whites would be harmed if they remained west of the Deschutes River (Thomas 1965). Bush's eldest son, William Owen, even acted as a translator between the Americans and the local Indians (Oldham 2004).

As George Bush grew older, he started to hand over the duties of managing and running the family farm to his sons (Thomas 1965). On April 5, 1863 George Bush died suddenly (Thomas 1965, Oldham 2004). After the passing of his father, William Owen and his wife returned to the family farm at Bush Prairie (Thomas 1965, Olsen and Stevenson n.d.). William Owen became the head of the family and carried on the family business for the next forty years (Thomas 1965).

William Owen (commonly referred to as Owen) later became involved in politics and was elected to serve on the first Washington State legislature in 1889 (Oldham 2004, Olsen and Stevenson n.d.). When he died in 1907, the family estate was passed to other members of the family, where it remained until the 1960-70's (Thomas 1965, Sapp 1945).

## **Site Significance**

Historical sites like the George Bush Homestead represent our own shared collective history. The property is an integral part of Washington State and therefore significant to all of its citizens, and great efforts to represent the site appropriately should be taken.

## PREVIOUS INVESTIGATIONS

### SPSCC Field Survey

In 2009, students at South Puget Sound Community College (SPSCC), under the guidance of Dr. Dale Croes, conducted an archaeological field survey of the Clark's property (Fullmer, Henderson and Woodard 2009). The report of this survey was filed with Thurston County and the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) June 10th, 2010. The report concluded that its results demonstrate considerable archaeological integrity of the site. Dr. Croes and his team mapped the 5 acre parcel and recovered 132 artifacts. The objectives of this survey were to identify and document any archaeological and or cultural resources that may have been part of the George Bush Homestead. Dr. Croes and his team visited the site of a total of four times, finding more than 200 artifacts that dated to the mid 1800's. Finds included ceramics, the leg of a wood stove, bricks from a fireplace, glass, and a variety of artifacts of other materials (Henderson et al. 2009).

The survey identified two areas of interest on the property based on the density of surface artifacts documents (Fullmer, Henderson and Woodard 2009). The first area, deemed Area A, is located in the Northeastern corner of the property and the second area, deemed Area B, is located on the Southeastern side of the property (Fullmer, Henderson and Woodard 2009).

"Figure 2" shows the final survey map from 2009. Table 1 shows the distribution of artifacts by material type for each area. According to the survey's final report, the artifacts found in Area A were more consistent with those that would be found in a barn or workshop such as nails, while the artifacts found in Area B were consistent with household items such as ceramic dishes and glassware. All artifacts documented during the survey were left in situ (Fullmer, Henderson and Woodard 2009).



*Figure 1: William Owen Bush's house, n.d.*

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Figure 2: SPSCC Final Survey Map

Artifact Type	Area A	Area B	Total
Metal	44	1	45
Ceramic	13	17	30
Brick	33	4	37
Glass	55	33	88
Bone	1	2	3
Shell	0	9	9
Plastic	1	0	1
Tooth	0	1	1
All Types	147	67	214

Table 1: Surface artifacts documented during 2009 cultural survey



As a result of these findings, the survey team proposed excavation was warranted and suggested that focus should be on Area B, the suspected location of Owen Bush's house and the original split log cabin. As such, one of the goals of the excavation could be to find the original foundation(s) of one or both of the houses. Despite the recent demolition, the exact location of Owen Bush's house (built over the site of the original log cabin) is unknown (Fullmer, Henderson and Woodard 2009). However, based on the artifacts found during the 2009 survey and historical records, the team concluded that Area B would be the best place to start looking (Fullmer, Henderson and Woodard 2009).

### **The Evergreen State College 2015 Field School Results**

In July and August of 2015, 16 TESC students, local archaeologists, and volunteers excavated 20 1x1m test units in Area B of the Clark's property. A total of 4.9 cubic meters, or 173 cubic feet, was excavated from the units. The average excavation unit was taken to a depth of 20 centimeters. The soil at the excavation site displays historic agricultural turbation caused by repeated plowing of the land. As a result, the soil had no clear stratigraphic structure. Accordingly, an archaeological context was defined to be 5-10cm intervals. All deposits were screened through ¼-inch screens to ensure the recovery of fragmentary or organic deposits.

The 2015 field school revealed a vast array of archaeological artifacts. Non-diagnostic fragments of metal, glass, wood, shell, ceramic, charcoal, bone, and other organic or unidentifiable materials were uncovered with a total of 3651 non-diagnostic artifacts found. 257 diagnostic artifacts of glass, ceramic, metal, and organic type were collected and identified in the field, though in the lab that number was later pared down to 250 determinable diagnostic artifacts. Additionally, the excavation area was combed for surface artifacts before the excavation began in full, and a total of 237 surface finds collected. A complete summary of artifacts collected during the field school is below in Table 2.

An archaeological feature displaying characteristics of burning was discovered at the end of the field school in unit F5 along the northern boundary. It was a segment of burned wood beginning at approximately 15cm, or the third context, of unit F5. At the close of the excavation, all units were covered with a thick, synthetic landscaping fabric to preserve the excavated progress of all units, particularly in the case of F5.

In the lab, preliminary artifact analysis was done on the most detailed of our diagnostic artifacts. Three ceramic fragments could be traced to estimated origin dates. BUSH20150137's maker's mark identified the manufacturer as Copeland & Garret of Stoke, Staffordshire, England, used between 1833-1846 (Jewwit 1883, 382 & 392). The few other identifiable artifacts from the 2015 field school indicated late 19th century and 20th century manufacturing. A challenge of the excavation is in the extreme intermixture of contexts through repeated tilling of the soil over the years, thus artifacts of varying temporal contexts are found alongside each other, often broken. The field school suggested further excavation be focused around and underneath Feature 1, colloquially known as "the hearth", in F5 where there is the greatest likelihood of undisturbed contexts. Further shovel testing in more locations on the property were suggested as a means to test other sites where a home or barn foundation may be.

Artifact Type	Surface Finds	Non-Diagnostic	Diagnostic	Total
Glass	174	2727	134	3035
Ceramic	35	233	81	349
Metal	2	476	37	515
Organic	22	201	5	229
All Types	237	3651	257	4146

*Table 2: Material type and Artifact Frequency, BUSH2015*

### **The Evergreen State College 2016 Field School Results**

The partial excavation of the 1x1m grid in 2015 necessitated a further field season in 2016. Though this season was slightly smaller in staff and students, and shorter in duration, the goals, methods, and results of the season did not change from 2015. In addition to the continues excavation of the grid, we investigated a number of other potential features with shovel tests. South of the initial area of excavation the overgrowth of foliage gave the appearance of a slight obtrusiveness in the rough dimension of a rectangular house. This was observed by the property owner many times as the field's foliage grew unabated in the spring and summer. He removed the surface vegetation mechanically for the field school prior to the commencement of the 2016 season so that we could investigate the field with greater attention. This was accomplished through collaboration with Steve Hackenberger from CWU, who helped identify specific areas of interest with Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR). A secondary research goal was to uncover a purported trash pit near the area of excavation, discovered by the property owner earlier in the year and subsequently recovered undisturbed.

Through excavation and shovel-testing we opened and excavated a total of 21 units. The maximum depth of the units which were not shovel-tested (all but five) was 48cm. In addition to the main area of excavation, six other units were opened throughout the property. Four were excavated to a depth of one meter. Two of the test units had dimensions of 200x50x100cm, and the other two to 100x50x100cm. These units assisted in some of our stratigraphic analysis of the property. The test units showed that the GPR had picked up a compact layer of clay associated with glacial retreat. None of the four text units identified by the GPR contained any cultural material.

Our fifth test unit was near a purported trash pit discovered in early spring of 2016 by the property owner, Mark Clark. The test unit was initially opened with the dimensions of 100x50cm and shovel-tested to a depth of 50cm. Along the northern quadrant of the unit, artifact distribution seemed to concentrate, so a further unit was opened at 50cm northeast from the test pit. This new unit, termed the trash pit 2 or TP2, was opened at 150x100cm in dimension. After surface vegetation removal and excavation of the first context, the soil was found to be heavily compact and stratified. Many artifacts were discovered in situ among deposits of charcoal. This unit was excavated according to stratigraphic layers to a depth of 25cm. A total of 152 diagnostic artifacts were recovered. A breakdown of the diagnostic material can be found in the table blow. Artifacts were weighed in grams primarily due to the overwhelming quantity of small pieces of nondiagnostic material.

Artifact Type	Nondiagnostic (g)	Diagnostic (g)
Glass	6296.23	1746.26
Ceramic	606.81	125.6
Metal	6389.06	539.43
Other	2133.45	N/A
All Types	15425.55	2411.79

Table 3: Material type and Artifact Frequency, BUSH2016

### 2018: Research Goals & Questions:

The aim of the 2018 archaeological excavation was to continue excavating the ‘trash pit’ which had been discovered in the spring of 2016 by the property owner, Mark Clark. The unit of the trash pit, partly excavated during the summer field school of 2016, had yielded a stack of burned paper, some of which remained *in situ*; a goal of this year’s work was to extract the rest of the paper, as well as to find the bottom of the trash pit.

This season was a continuation of the 2015 and 2016 years of excavation and so had similar goals to the field schools: To provide field training for a student archaeologist, to carefully record, excavate, and curate all artifacts, to be available for future study, to ensure public access to our results, and to produce opportunities for further research and publication for archaeology students.

### Methods

Excavation during 2018 ran from June 18 – June 25 with processing of artifacts taking place during July and August. Research on these artifacts is ongoing. On the first day of excavation, PI Dr. Ulrike Krotscheck and SURF student Krista Sonenshine transported all equipment to the site. Jackie Wall, Nisqually THPO, and her team also joined us. Hand tools were used to clear the area of surface vegetation and surface finds were bagged and recorded as they were discovered. The first zone to uncover was termed the Plow Zone because it was just under the surface and had been subject to plowing and other bioturbation from farming activities. Excavators were instructed to proceed in increments of 5-10cm until reaching the Trash Pit - which could be noticed in the color differentiations of the soil - treating it as one context. This was accomplished in a day and a half and excavators were then instructed to proceed similarly through the Trash Pit until reaching its bottom, which could be noticed again by a difference in soil color and consistency. The Trash Pit was also treated as a single context. Both contexts were screened through ¼ inch screens. Fragmentary artifacts determined to be non-diagnostic and smaller than a ½ inch were generally not collected. Artifacts were collected from the screens and *in situ*, placed in bags, and labeled with the date recovered, section, and material type. Diagnostic artifacts were bagged and labeled independently with their own database number. All field notebooks remain in the possession of The Evergreen State College Archaeology Lab (TESCAL)

for future use. Additionally, photographs were taken of the profiles of the Trash Pit, showing stratigraphically where the burned layer started and stopped, as well as of the fully excavated Trash Pit.

All artifacts were transferred to the lab daily. After each day of excavation the SURF student spent time in the lab cleaning, sorting, and entering diagnostic artifacts into the database. All artifact data was recorded in the Excel spreadsheet containing the database from the 2018 season.

Laboratory work also included the processing, cleaning, washing, and brushing of artifacts and photography of all diagnostic artifacts. According to the parameters of the permit, all excavated artifacts remain in the property of the Clark's but will be processed, stored, and curated at TESCAL until further notice with the exception of any apparent tribal artifacts.

## Results

We continued to excavate the units of the Plow Zone and Trash Pit to a maximum depth of 61cm. Initially this unit, as TP2, had been opened with the dimensions of 150x100cm and had been excavated to a depth of 25cm. We extended these dimensions to 2.9x1.9m to follow the direction of burned soil and to include the concentrations of artifacts, as well as the stack of paper, in the norther quadrant of the unit (Fig.3).



Figure 3: 2018 Unit at End of Excavation. Trowel = N

A total of 42 diagnostic artifacts were recovered. A Breakdown of diagnostic material can be found in the table below.

Artifact Type	Diagnostic
Glass	20
Ceramic	13
Metal	8
Carbonized paper	3 units
All Types	44

Table 4: Material Type and Frequency of Diagnostic Artifacts, Bush Homestead 2018

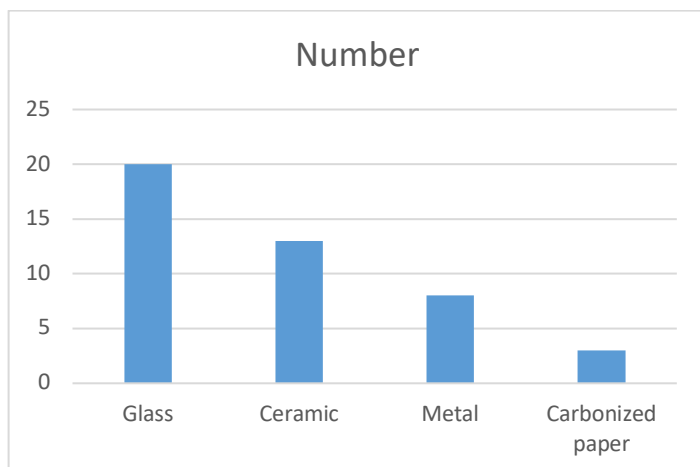


Table 5: Material Type and Number of Diagnostic Artifacts, Bush Homestead 2018

In addition, a much greater amount of non-diagnostic artifacts were recovered. As these were all extremely fragmentary and did not provide contextual information about manufacture or deposition date, they are being kept in storage at TESCAL until detailed study of the entire site.

Artifact Type	Nondiagnostic
Glass	8 quart bags
Ceramic	1 quart bag
Metal	1 gallon; 6 quart bags
Other	3 quart bags
All Types	4.3 gallon bags

Table 6: Material Type and Frequency of Non-Diagnostic Artifacts, Bush Homestead 2018

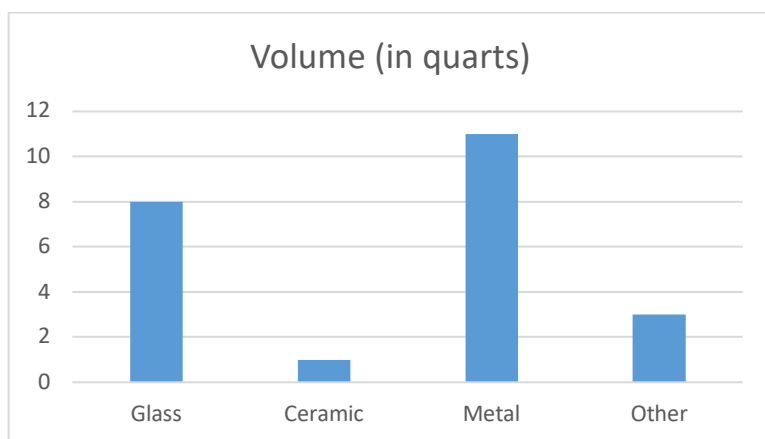


Table 7: Comparative Amounts of Non-Diagnostic Artifacts, Bush Homestead 2018

### Archaeological Features

The trash pit was again treated as a feature by excavators, and instead of excavating the unit context-by-context, the goal was to expose and excavate the entire trash pit as a single context since it lacked stratigraphy. In the northern quadrant where a stack of paper had been

removed in 2016, another stack of paper was uncovered, removed, and brought back to the lab where it was cleaned of dirt and stabilized for future scrutiny. At present the only clear advertisement to be found has been for the Regal Shoe Company, dating between 1893 and 1922. More in depth analysis may uncover more legible information.

### **Artifacts**

The breadth of preserved diagnostic material suggests that many artifacts found in the Trash Pit date to the initial settlement of the Bush homestead, though it remains unclear as to when the material was put in the Trash Pit and burned, as there was a small amount of modern material mixed in with historic artifacts. This could be solely due to the bioturbation of the soil, or it could be that the items in the Trash Pit were burned at a later date, mixing historic and modern material.

42 diagnostic artifacts were recovered at site 45TN91H. The artifacts were classified and recorded by type, with four identified type descriptors. The types found include glass, metal, ceramic, and organic. Additional types were identified as wood and plastic.

### **Diagnostic Artifacts**

Diagnostic artifacts are those with trademarks, labels, other identifying marks and temporal attributes that associate the artifact with a definable or researchable time or time period. Temporal attributes include technical characteristics of bottle manufacture, glass color, ceramic manufacture or type, and surface decoration. All conclusive research of diagnostic and nondiagnostic artifacts performed up to this point is included in the proceeding sections.

### **Glass**

Glass is the second largest category of finds in terms of quantity and the largest in terms of diagnostic artifacts. In 2016, a near-entire Vaseline jar was unearthed in large shards from Test Pit 2 and this year another almost complete Vaseline jar was found in the Trash Pit. This second jar is also from Chesebrough, New York. The Vaseline name was registered as a trademark in 1877. Other glass artifacts were largely in the form of fragments of bottles. A collection of shards ostensibly from the same bottle portrayed the embossed name of The Duffy Malt Whiskey Company, a company that produced whiskey in the 1870's but which was forced to close in 1886. The seams, mouth size, pontil scars, and bases with markings all helped to form an estimation that most of these bottles were used for liquor, or possibly beer, and that some were druggist/prescription bottles. All the diagnostic shards were dated between at least as early as the 1820s to as late as 1915.

### **Ceramics**

Ceramics comprise the smallest quantity of artifacts. One in-tact ceramic jar lid was found as well as multiple other fragments of jar lids made from ceramic and milk-glass. Ceramic jar lids were invented by Lewis R. Boyd and patented on March 30, 1869. Presumably used from 1869 to the 1950's, they were originally made from ceramic, with milk-glass beginning to be used around 1871. Some earlier lids may have been made by the Consolidated Fruit Jar Company and/or by the Hero Fruit Jar Company. Fragmented words on some of the shards suggest that they may have been made by one of these fruit companies.

## **Metal**

Metal comprised the most numerous finds in terms of quantity. As with the previous years, the most abundant finds were nails, showing again the three types: machine-made modern nails (dated circa 1890-present), early partially machine-made nails (dated circa 1790-1900), and hand-wrought nails (dated circa 1800 and before) (Visser 1997). Numerous springs, coils, and flattened pieces of metal were also uncovered. Other metal artifacts of interest were a 2.4 x .7cm metal ring with a stone set in it (BUSH2018039); BUSH2018026 and BUSH2018027, two 12-gauge bullet shells, with the words "WINCHESTER NO.12 LEADER" and "NO.12 U S AJAX", respectively; and BUSH2018028, two metal buttons, one whole and one fragmented, both engraved with a picture of a train car. Also discovered were BUSH2018041, two horseshoes stuck together, and BUSH2018042, a large hinge with nails still attached, both attesting to the agricultural use of the land.

## **Organics – Paper**

Three pieces of conglomerates of carbonized paper (BUSH2018040) were unearthed. Some words were still slightly visible and one ad for The Regal Shoe Company could be seen. This company was established in 1893 and was successful until 1922. The stacks of paper have been documented and stabilized, though it was not feasible to take photos since the carbonization has rendered the letters nearly unreadable.

## **Conclusion**

The 2018 season at the Bush Homestead uncovered 42 new diagnostic artifacts, many of which could be securely dated to the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries CE. The entirety of the Trash Pit was excavated and the site has now been backfilled. This season's excavation adds to the creation of a map of the historical site and may denote further areas of excavation or survey, such as northwest of the Trash Pit, in the hopes of finding more diagnostic artifacts. Further study of the diagnostic glass and ceramic artifacts may also yield a larger glimpse into the social and economic lives of the Bush family.

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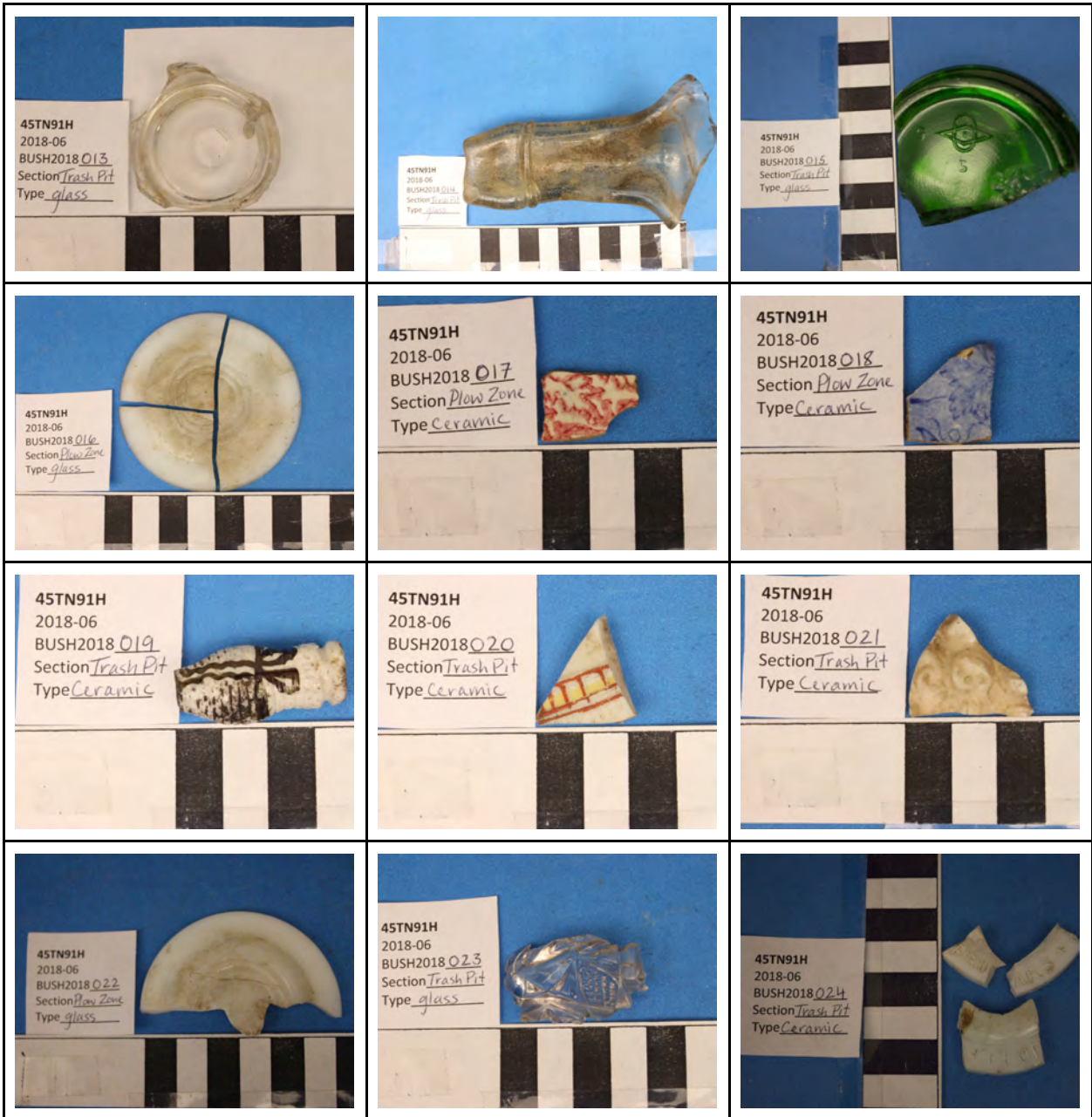
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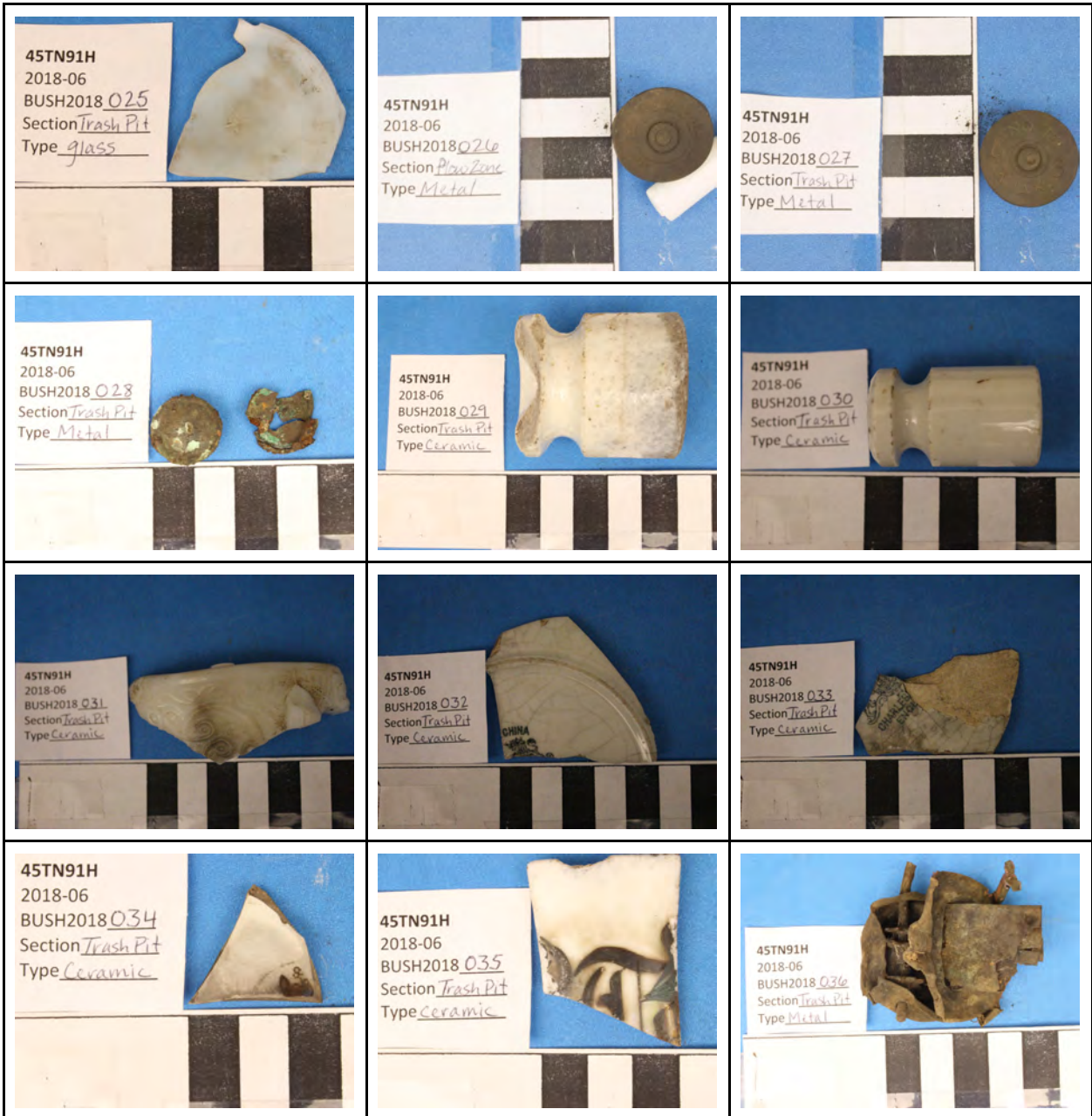
APPENDIX 1: Diagnostic Artifact Photos







TESCAL 2018 EXCAVATION AT BUSH HOMESTEAD, TUMWATER, WA. APP. 1



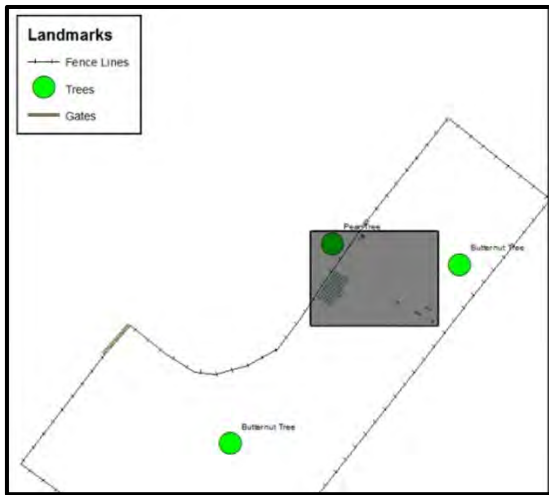
TESCAL 2018 EXCAVATION AT BUSH HOMESTEAD, TUMWATER, WA. APP. 1



**Appendix 2: Site Maps**



**Detail Area:**



Location of Trash Pit:

