

“From *Crap* to *Archaeology*,” The CRM Shaping of Nineteenth-Century Domestic Site Archaeology

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This paper reviews the history of CRM investigations into nineteenth-century Euro-Canadian domestic sites in southern Ontario and considers how that history has shaped the current state of the practice. This history is not a lengthy one: prior to the late 1980s CRM archaeologists could and did regularly ignore nineteenth-century materials. Instrumental in changing attitudes were the research and publications of Ian and Thomas Kenyon, which went a long way towards finding a broader acceptance for this kind of site. But while many nineteenth-century domestic sites are now documented and excavated every year, methods of excavation and analysis can often be by rote, a sort of mimicking of what “Ian would have done,” without considering whys and why-nots. In effect, the potential and value of this important archaeological and social historical site type has been slow to advance beyond initial acceptance of the site type in the 1980s.

Introduction

In recent years I have developed a sideline to my writing, exploring various dimensions related to the rise of consulting, commercial or cultural resource management (CRM) archaeology in Ontario (Ferris 1998a, 1999a, 2000a, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2007). I do believe this is an important topic for the Ontario archaeological community to explore, given the radical changes that CRM archaeology has brought to the practice in a relatively short period of time. So it is perhaps no surprise that I would want to explore how nineteenth-century domestic archaeology in Ontario has been shaped by CRM archaeology, integrating my personal research interests and lived experience.

But I would argue that the topic represents more than just happy serendipity for me. Critically, nineteenth-century domestic site archaeology, more than any other class of site (with the possible exception of nondiagnostic lithic scatters), has in large measure been “birthed” by CRM archaeology in Ontario. By this I mean that the coming together of individual interests, development pressures and provincial regulation in the 1980s changed nineteenth-century domestic sites from being dismissed by archaeologists as irrelevant to research and so much “recent disturbance,” to being a legitimate

part of the Ontario archaeological record, worthy of research, conservation effort and proponent expense.

I should first clarify what it is I am referring to as “nineteenth-century domestic site archaeology.” As with most terms that have largely arisen from idiosyncratic labelling within CRM practice, the term is a large box in which distinct classes of archaeological sites and deposits are placed. Certainly the term includes rural homesteads or farmsteads—rural by virtue of the landscape when they were occupied, regardless of whether, when subsequently found and investigated, they were located in rural, suburban or urban contexts. This category includes the initial settlers’ pioneer cabin we all imagine and see reflected in popular advertising—that log cabin carved out of the forest with little in the way of outbuildings or visible landscape alterations. Indeed, my subjective impression is that this *is* the picture many CRM archaeologists have in their heads as they strip topsoil looking to find a single cellar and, if lucky, an adjacent privy.

But of course most rural domestic sites turn out to be more than the stereotype, having been occupied beyond the initial years of homestead or township settlement. Rural domestic sites can encompass a wide array of residences, including sequentially occupied locales, dwellings with additions and renovations, outbuildings, waste

areas, sewage and water drainage, near-house activities, laneways and gardens, fences and landscapes, and even small commercial, industrial, or farmstead services—sometimes neatly separated on the ground; and sometimes not (e.g., Quark 2001). This cacophony of archaeological features, deposits and depositional processes is more consistent with the mainstream concept of “farmstead” explored in American historical archaeological literature (e.g., Baugher and Klein 2003; De Cunzo and Catts 1990; Doroszenko 2003; Fisher 2000; Groover 2003, 2004; Peña 2000; Wilson 1990; see also MacDonald 1997:56-61 for an Ontario overview).

In addition, domestic residences may have originated as a product of urban design or, after initial stages of occupation, they may have been enveloped by village or urban growth during the nineteenth century. Likewise, domestic residences were created as part of industrial or planned settlement to become momentary or more enduring ghettos of economic, ethnic or racial categorisation and residence (e.g., Lucas 2006; Mrozowski et al. 1996; Peña and Denmon 2000; Shackel 2000; Spude 2005). All of these contexts are iterations of “nineteenth-century domestic site archaeology,” whether readily evident as such to the investigator during survey and site assessment, or only after site excavation and documentary research. This, then, is the collection of archaeological contexts I am considering in the remainder of this paper.

The Father (and Father’s Father) of Nineteenth-Century Domestic Site Archaeology in Ontario

While a few Ontario archaeologists such as Wilf Jury had exhibited some research interest in nineteenth-century domestic site archaeology and pioneer life earlier in the twentieth century, a formal, broader focus on this type of site only truly emerged in the later 1970s and early 1980s, and then only among a handful of Ontario archaeologists. This pattern is generally consistent with the evolution of historical archaeological research in North America as a whole. Early

in the twentieth century, there tended to be a focus across the continent on sites of military, industrial, fur trade, fort, marine and architectural importance, as well as on material studies and the industrial and temporal dimensions of those goods (e.g., Kidd 1969; Noël Hume 1969, 1973, 1978; Schuyler 1978a; see also Huey 1997 for a good overview of the development of historical archaeology in adjacent New York State). An expansion of the focus and growth in diversity of historical archaeological research, and in the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of the practice, only really began to appear in the 1960s and 1970s (e.g., Binford 1977; Cleland and Fitting 1977; Deagan 1982; Deetz 1977; Fitting 1977; South 1977).¹

Despite this intellectual maturing and reflexive consideration of what “historical archaeology” means, during the 1960s and 1970s the focus remained dominated by “grand scale” colonialist manifestations in the archaeological record. Indeed, the institutional and nationalistic (as in nation-founding) dimensions of historical archaeology in the mid-twentieth century fuelled funding and provided much of its early research focus, making historical archaeology as much the domain of government agencies such as Parks Canada and the United States National Park Service, or even more so, than of the academic world (Deagan 1988; Klimko 2004; Schuyler 1978b; Wylie 1993). This “history of *our* nation” focus dominated historical archaeological activities in North America through much of the twentieth century, even while intellectual advances and self-reflexive critiques helped advance broader conceptual frames for the practice (e.g., Cleland 2001; Deetz 1983; Funari et al. 1999; Hall and Silliman 2006; Leone and Potter 1999; Little 1994; Orser 1996, 2005).

As historical archaeology in North America expanded to encompass more than the monumental institutional, political, military, upper-class-male and national histories, there was growing interest in the remains of nineteenth-century domestic life—frontier, settler, pioneer, immigrant, labourer, agricultural; all of which were gendered, ethnic, and classed. In Ontario, there were several archaeologists advancing this interest

during the 1970s. For me, the two most seminal individuals were Thomas (Tim) and Ian Kenyon.²

Tim Kenyon was well known in the Hamilton-Niagara-Grand River area for his interest in all things historical. His interest included a strong photographic pursuit of the landscape, architecture and people of the lower Grand River Valley, and surveying and collecting ancient and particularly post-A.D. 1600 sites in the region, including surface scatters of nineteenth-century ceramic, glass, brick and bone. He repeatedly returned to collect more material from the various Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal domestic sites he documented, creating sizeable collections. He also conducted limited excavations of nineteenth-century sites, such as the Anthonys Mills site in Dunnville (Kenyon and Kenyon 1986), and the John Croker site, also in Haldimand County (Kenyon and Faux 1981).

Ian shared many of Tim's archaeological predilections, developing early research interests in the contact-era Neutral Iroquoian villages of the Hamilton-Brantford area, Late Archaic Broadpoint sites, and nineteenth-century domestic site archaeology from the same area and often from the same sites Tim had found initially. Through happenstance, or brilliant foresight of Bill Fox, Ian was hired in the late 1970s to work in the Ministry of Culture and Recreation's London field office. There, he pursued many long- and short-term research projects, several of which were related to nineteenth-century archaeology. By 1980, Ian had developed two informational guides for archaeologists on nineteenth-century ceramics and nineteenth-century sites (Kenyon 1980a, 1981).³ He had also conducted fieldwork on various nineteenth-century sites, including the Kitchener Gaol (Kenyon 1980b) and the Van Egmond House in Seaforth, and expanded his search for nineteenth-century sites beyond the lower Grand River by surveying along the Sydenham and Thames Rivers (e.g., Kenyon 1987a).

Coincidentally, the London Chapter of the Ontario Archaeological Society was formed in 1977 and shared space with the Ministry's regional office. The establishment of the chapter

newsletter, *Kewa*, provided a ready outlet for Ian and Tim's voracious appetite for historical research, superior graphic skills, and interest in nineteenth-century archaeology. In 1980, Ian and Tim initiated a popular feature called "Nineteenth Century Notes," which consisted of one-page information sheets on various aspects of mostly nineteenth-century material culture. By the end of 1984, *Kewa* had published close to three dozen "Nineteenth Century Notes;" Ian's first two articles on nineteenth-century ceramics (Kenyon 1982, 1983); a paper that synthesized the multiple domestic sites that he had surface-collected and upon which he had conducted extensive historical research (Ferris and Kenyon 1983); and a paper on a fully excavated domestic site as a result of CRM work (Kenyon et al. 1984). It had even published an analysis of clothing buttons from various nineteenth-century sites extensively illustrated by Tim Kenyon (Ferris 1984). Thus, *Kewa* helped to focus attention (in at least parts of southern Ontario) on nineteenth-century archaeology, which was of real interest to Ian as a legitimate subject but perhaps only tolerated by others. At the same time, broader attention was being given to Ian and Tim's research, arising from their work on the production, distribution, use, and disposal of nineteenth-century ceramics, and the interpretative potential of ceramics as more than just chronological aids.

The ceramic chronology that first appeared as a guide for avocational and professional archaeologists (Kenyon 1980a) was a solid piece of research, developed from Ian and Tim's work on material they collected from more than 100 nineteenth-century archaeological sites in southwestern Ontario. It was augmented by extensive research on commercial suppliers, distributors, inventories of various ceramic stocks in local dry goods stores, and the dates of the first appearance in the region of specific ceramic styles such as sponged ware or ironstone. This was an essential piece of work that filled a void in knowledge with an entirely made-in-Ontario analysis.

Importantly, the guide also had a brief section about "social dimensions" of ceramic use. Ian and Tim were interested specifically in using

ceramics to gain insight into class and ethnic patterns derived from the variable representation of expensive and inexpensive ceramic sherds in site assemblages, and in the relative proportions of plates to cups and saucers and bowls. Using over 100 samples, they noted meaningful differences among these assemblages. This focus of research culminated in a 1982 paper (Kenyon and Kenyon 1982) presented at the Philadelphia meetings of the Society for Historical Archaeology.⁴ Though never published, it was distributed and cited widely. It demonstrated the research *potential* of using nineteenth-century domestic sites to explore various questions of archaeological interest. In other words, it legitimised a focus on a part of the archaeological record so often dismissed by Ontario archaeologists at the time as being of little or no research interest.

By the mid-1980s, Ian was further refining his ceramic seriations and expanding his analysis of social dimensions of nineteenth-century domestic life. He published this work as a series of articles in the Ontario Archaeological Society's newsletter *Arch Notes* (Kenyon 1985a, 1985b, 1985c, 1987b, 1988a, 1988b),⁵ which were then compiled, further revised and expanded (Kenyon 1991). Having satisfied his wish to explore chronologies and industrial changes, he then wrote a series of insightful articles, including some co-written with his wife Susan, on nineteenth-century foodways, ceramic stocks, the distribution and use of ceramics, and the decline of rural homelots in nineteenth-century Ontario (Kenyon and Kenyon 1992, 1993; Kenyon 1992, 1995).⁶ But critically for present discussion, it was the attention Ian gave to the impact on, and possibilities for, nineteenth-century domestic sites arising from consulting archaeology that links Ian closely to the current state of practice in Ontario.

Late in 1985, the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture hosted in London the first-ever gathering of Ontario private-sector consultant and government archaeologists to talk about issues arising from the emerging practice of CRM archaeology. It was an important meeting in many ways, and triggered the development of technical

guidelines for consultants and the formation of a Ministry Development Review unit. A number of papers were presented during the meetings, several of which touched on historical archaeology (e.g., Adams 1986; Stewart 1986), while another specifically touched on nineteenth-century CRM salvage archaeology (Mayer 1986). But it was Ian Kenyon's (1986a) piece, provocatively titled "That Historic Crap! Historic Archaeological Resource Management," that would prove important in shaping the direction that CRM archaeology would take with respect to nineteenth-century domestic sites.

In typical Ian fashion, the piece was a subtle chiding of the CRM practitioners collected in the room for their failure to reconsider the predominant, dismissive attitude towards historical artifact scatters. Ian was specifically referring to nineteenth-century domestic sites—a ubiquitous site type on the landscape of southern Ontario—which, he knew from his day-to-day experiences in the Ministry, were being variably acknowledged, ignored or mangled in their interpretation by archaeologists. Ian's message was intended to be straightforward: there are legitimate research interests and concerns for this type of site. They require archaeologists to develop enhanced skills for both archival research and artifact identifications otherwise not the usual forte of Ontario "prehistorians." Ian argued:

"That Historic Crap" sometimes seems to exist in an archaeological border zone, where every nineteenth-century site was apparently occupied by a Rodney Dangerfield, because they don't get no respect. "That Historic Crap," or some saltier version of this phrase, is not an uncommon refrain among archaeologists... There is little question that for some this relatively recent material is too recent, too recent to merit anything but a perfunctory examination...

And what of the "That Historic Crap" attitude? In part its origin seems to lie somewhere within the bowels of the Departments of Anthropology in which

most archaeologists working in Ontario have been trained. Somehow historical material is not always perceived to fit within the theoretical perspective of “anthropological archaeology.” I was forcefully reminded of this recently. A former professor of mine, who had just received an article I had written on some aspect of nineteenth-century archaeology, was overheard to say upon its receipt: “Well, he always had *tendencies* in that direction” [emphasis in original].

Yet it seems to me this negative attitude represents a long out of date viewpoint, one smacking of antiquarianism, where somehow the oldest and the most primitive are what really are of relevance. Yet... it is not the antiquity or so-called primitiveness of a culture that is important, but understanding people themselves, regardless of who they are, where they live, or when they existed. Yet I can sympathize with my former professor, for he is an academic who is perfectly free to narrowly select his field of interest... *Those of us associated with the consulting industry, however, have no such luxury* [emphasis added].

The question which follows is this: is justice being done to these historic sites by those who are paid to say something about them? The answer, it seems to me, is an unequivocal yes/maybe/no... I hesitate to make any recommendations, since this is just one person’s opinion... [Kenyon 1986a:41]

Ian articulated what were, in effect, meaningful and “reasonable” CRM guidelines for conducting historic site documentary and site research for Stage 1 through 4 (background study, survey, site testing, excavation) consulting practices. He then provided an appendix of historical sources related to Ontario to help CRM archaeologists conduct informed documentary research when dealing with historic sites.

To my recollection, Ian’s plea for respect for nineteenth-century domestic sites, made in a room filled with the vast majority of Ontario’s CRM practitioners and regulators at the time, had the desired effect. It established a new consensus: consultant archaeologists would no longer walk away from, fail to report on, or refuse to excavate at least some portion of the nineteenth-century archaeological record found during CRM surveys. Indeed, when the CRM community met during the following few years to develop what would become the first set of technical standards for the practice of consulting archaeology in Ontario, some form of historical background research was identified as a standard requirement for Stage 1 background studies and for Stage 3 site-specific assessments. Likewise, the category of “European pioneer associations” was identified as a basis for determining a site’s information potential, i.e., significance, when deciding the need to conduct Stage 4 excavations (MCTR 1993). Ian had specifically “encouraged” archaeologists to adopt all of these technical standards in his 1985 conference paper (Kenyon 1986a).

That Ian was able to make nineteenth-century domestic sites a legitimate part of the archaeological record for the Ontario archaeological community and among CRM practitioners arose in no small part from the respect that many people in the community held for Ian and his work. His research on nineteenth-century sites was well known from his many *Kewa* and *Arch Notes* articles, conference papers, and constant willingness, as a government archaeologist, to help consultants and other professionals and avocationalists. But Ian was also known and respected for his insightful and thorough research in all time periods, and for his encyclopaedic knowledge of all things pertaining to Ontario archaeology, as well as other things both conventional and esoteric. Phone calls and visits to Ian to pick his brain were a daily occurrence at the Ministry office. Given that most of his colleagues, trained as hard-core “prehistorians,” could recognise Ian’s legitimate and extensive interest in things they knew something about, the fact that he was also well-versed in things they didn’t know much about gave him and his “tendency” to research nineteenth-century domestic sites additional

credibility. This kind of influence would not have been achieved to nearly the same extent by, for example, a hard-core historical materialist, had one suddenly parachuted into the Ontario CRM community.

At no time did consultants rely more on Ian's expertise than when they struggled to identify historical artifacts or make sense of that historical "crap" in the field. Ian developed a guide for consultants to analyse and seriate ceramic tablewares recovered during survey in order to come up with a median age for a site (Kenyon 1986b). This ceramic seriation guide, or "ceramic checklist" as it was often called, listed all major nineteenth-century ceramic decorative types in a data table, which the investigating archaeologist then filled in, recording the number of sherds by decorative type. Ian then added a home-made software program to the form, in effect a datasheet that consultants could use to input their sherd counts, by ware and decoration, which would then allow them to calculate a median date of occupation for the site in question. The sheet also included instructions on how to collect a ceramic assemblage in the field, giving recommendations as to the minimum number of decorated, undecorated and rim sherds needed to achieve accurate results with the program and to obtain a useable median age.⁷ Again, this was done in order to ensure a consistency in the recovery practices CRM archaeologists used for nineteenth-century domestic sites. This tool proved to be very popular with consultants and, during the late 1980s and early 1990s, it was often included in their reports (at least in southwestern Ontario). The recommendation concerning site significance for such assemblages would often be guided solely by the median age of the site as calculated by the program.

In a very short period of time Ian saw nineteenth-century domestic sites in Ontario go from undocumented "historic crap," lacking much respect from the broader archaeological community, to being a fully entrenched part of the archaeological record, regularly documented by all archaeologists. And all this happened right on the eve of a dramatic increase in CRM archaeology in Ontario.

Changing Archaeological Landscapes in Ontario

All dimensions of archaeology have significantly changed over the last 30 years with the rise of cultural resource management, an activity that completely dominates the practice today (Ferris 1998a, 2002). This change was not really planned for. The articulation of standards of practice and expectations tended, therefore, to be after-the-fact during those rare occasions when the community could pause and reflect on the state of the industry. Indeed, during the early CRM years, for the entire archaeological record, "community standards" of field practice, analysis and reporting evolved mostly from personal predilections, common assumptions of importance and past conventional research foci. For example, anything with Aboriginal ceramics was considered significant; lithic scatters were considered significant if projectile points that were mostly from the same period were found; and anything with Fossil Hill chert (or other Palaeo-Indian attributes) required excavation. Of course, for the precontact record, personal predilections and variation in experience meant that not everyone could recognize Palaeo-Indian materials, points could be mis-identified, and some archaeologists might readily dismiss as insignificant sites not of their own research domain. But notwithstanding issues of competency, views that were generally divergent tended to reinforce and reify the middle-of-the-road consensus articulated through a range of similar practices followed by the majority of CRM archaeologists in the province. In Ontario today, there is broad recognition of the features and characteristics that are required of most pre-contact sites to identify them as significant. They are echoed back to the practising community through standards the province has codified, or is in the process of codifying, in various regulatory and policy standards and guidelines.

These standards evolved from the practical experiences of archaeologists during the previous century working with the precontact archaeological record in Ontario. At the same time, there was very little experience or training for future CRM practitioners on European and Euro-Canadian dimensions of the archaeological record. Nonetheless, the

Kenyon, and others in Ontario archaeology who exhibited similar “tendencies” towards nineteenth-century domestic site archaeology, did lay the groundwork for legitimizing this site type. Furthermore, Ian’s efforts in training many of those people in the Ontario consultant community who lacked background or understanding of nineteenth-century archaeology had the effect of generating new advocates for this site type. By the time that Ian’s 1985 conference paper was published in 1986, a change was underway: at least some percentage of the nineteenth-century domestic sites found by consultants across the province was starting to be recovered, documented, and registered.

To document this change, and to see how it is connected to broader CRM trends, I will review

the timing and shape of those changes in Ontario. Figure 1 depicts the rise in archaeological licenses issued in Ontario, and the number of licenses issued with consultant practitioner conditions, between 1979 and 2002. It clearly shows the rise in the number of archaeological practitioners in Ontario through the 1980s and how small the consultant community was in the mid-1980s, when Ian was so actively advocating for better stewardship of nineteenth-century domestic sites.

More indicative of the rise in archaeological CRM activity is the number of individual Project Information Forms (PIFs), also known as Contract Information Forms (CIFs), submitted by licensed archaeologists each year (Figure 2). As a licensee can undertake any number of projects during a

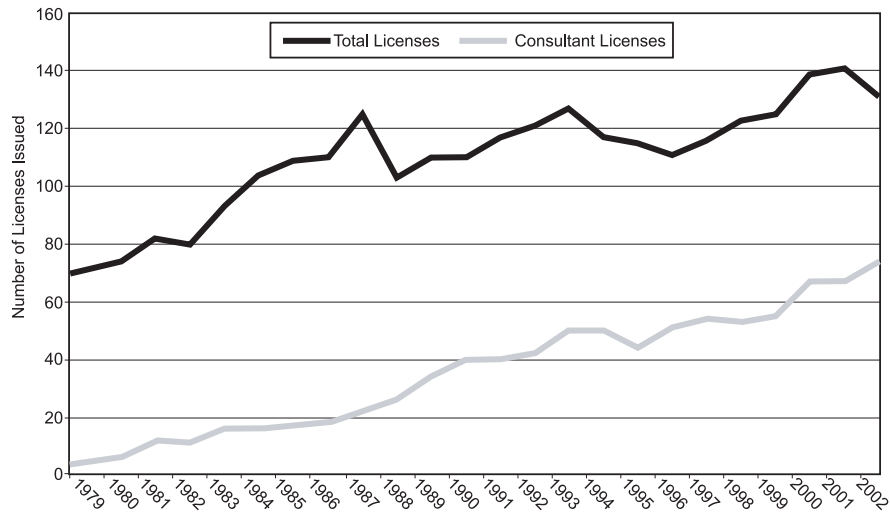


Figure 1. Archaeological licenses issued in Ontario between 1979 and 2002.

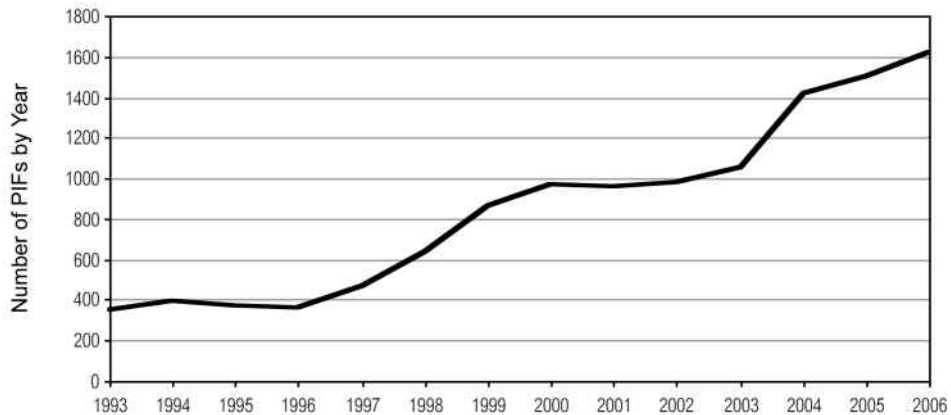


Figure 2. Number of PIFs filed by consultant archaeologists annually in Ontario (1993-2006).

year, the Ministry requires these forms in order to track individual instances of fieldwork and the subsequent reporting obligation the licensee accepts for each project. Adopted in 1993, the steady increase in the annual number of PIFs filed is testament to the true explosion of CRM work, especially in the last decade, even though consulting archaeology was on the rise in the decade before the start of PIF tracking.

The real change that CRM archaeology has wrought to the archaeological landscape in Ontario is reflected in a chart (Figure 3) of all archaeological sites assigned to licensees by year in the province on the basis of their request for Borden Block numbers. The graph in Figure 3 reflects both the differential scale of work consultants undertake and the extent of the archaeological record that would have been lost had these sites not been documented before development. Clearly, for all the good *and* bad that comes with it, CRM archaeology has re-made what archaeology is in Ontario today.

CRM and Nineteenth-Century Domestic Site Archaeology

So how has nineteenth-century domestic site archaeology played out within the skyrocketing rise of the CRM industry that started in the mid-

1980s? A first step in answering that question was to figure out just how many non-Aboriginal sites generally, and nineteenth-century domestic sites specifically, exist within the overall numbers of sites documented for Ontario through the last two decades. To do this I conducted a gross-scale sort of the Ontario Archaeological Sites Database for these site types.⁸ Notwithstanding problems of a hugely variable terminology and classification (e.g., von Bitter et al. 1999), the database does offer insight into the Ontario archaeological record over the last half century including, presumably, the potential for discovering distinct patterns for nineteenth-century domestic sites.

A first step was to sort out non-Aboriginal archaeological sites from the rest of the database. This was conducted in the summer of 2004 and so represents a snapshot of the database up to the end of 2003. An accurate sorting of the site data proved more difficult than anticipated because an obvious term like “historic” captures many Aboriginal sites from the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries in the database. A more refined search was, therefore, required using a number of specific site designations to capture non-Aboriginal sites.⁹ Of course, this refined search also captured a range of categories beyond domestic sites, such as marine shipwrecks and historic cemeteries, as well as an odd assortment of things like portages and wharf complexes. So

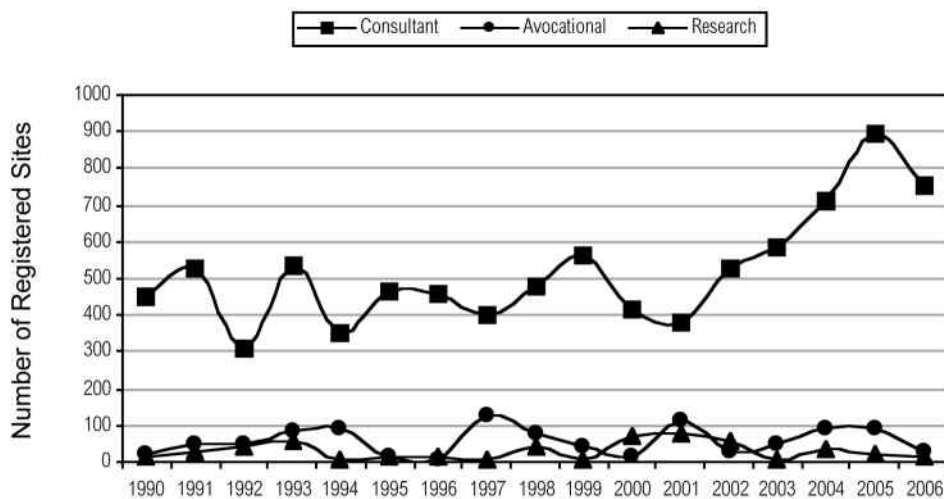


Figure 3. The changes in the number of archaeological sites registered each year in Ontario according to category of archaeologist (1990-2006).

the non-Aboriginal subset was then searched using more specific terms to tease out domestic sites.¹⁰ In the end, this initial sort showed that, in 2004, there were over 17,000 sites in the database, of which just over 2,000 appeared to be non-Aboriginal, representing 12 percent of the documented record (Figure 4). Within the non-Aboriginal subset, 45 percent or over 900 sites were identified as being a domestic site of one kind or another.

To get a sense of change through time, I queried the database, using the same sort categories, to track the year these sites were added to the database. In doing so, I encountered some additional limitations. First, I realised that the total number of sites in the Ontario Archaeological Sites Database included only those for which site record forms have been formally completed, submitted to the Ministry and incorporated into the database. This number is different than the number of sites included in Figure 3, which is based on sites with assigned Borden numbers.¹¹ A second problem encountered was that 2,831 sites in the database did not, for various reasons, include year of registration in their data field. All of these sites were removed from the final sort.

The chronological sort revealed that any focus on non-Aboriginal archaeology in Ontario did not begin until quite late in the twentieth century (Table 1). Certainly there is an increase in site numbers in the 1960s and 1970s, but this increase is concomitant with an overall increase in the number of all sites documented, especially for the 1970s, when the Ontario Heritage Act became law. So despite sizeable numbers in the

1960s and 1970s, the overall representation of non-Aboriginal sites in the database did not change: it actually declined slightly from five to three percent between the 1960s and 1970s. But in the 1980s, the number of non-Aboriginal sites increased significantly. By the 1990s more than one in five sites added to the database was non-Aboriginal. Table 1 also indicates that domestic sites were not (or rarely) documented prior to the 1980s, with 99.5 percent of all these sites appearing in the database only after 1979, despite the fact that 28 percent of all sites in the database were recorded before 1980.

Figure 5 suggests the existence of a tantalizing link between the simultaneous rise in non-Aboriginal archaeology and the rise in CRM practices. The graph shows an increase in non-Aboriginal sites beginning in 1985, and skyrocketing immediately afterwards, with domestic sites being a significant part of that initial surge. While no direct tie to CRM practices or Ian Kenyon's 1985 plea can be made to this timing, it certainly suggests that this trend is a manifestation of the discourse around nineteenth-century domestic sites occurring at that time.

The initial sort also raised questions about the representativeness of domestic sites as part of all non-Aboriginal sites in the database. While the initial increase in non-Aboriginal sites in the late 1980s resulted to a great extent from the large number of domestic sites being added to the database, this association weakened in the 1990s, with domestic sites making up less than half of all non-Aboriginal sites documented. The sort also suggested that the overall number of both non-Aboriginal and domestic sites added to the

Figure 4. Gross sort of the Ontario Archaeological Sites Database (OASD) for non-Aboriginal sites, conducted in 2004.

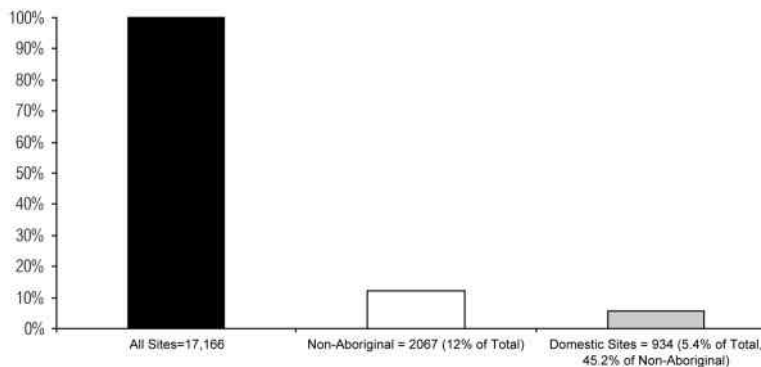


Table 1. All archaeological sites, non-Aboriginal sites, and nineteenth-century domestic sites in the Ontario Archaeological Sites Database to the end of 2003 (compiled in 2004).

	<i>n</i> sites in database	<i>n</i> (%) non-Aboriginal (% all sites)	<i>n</i> (%) domestic sites (% non-Aboriginal sites)
1950-59	170	7 (4%)	0 (0%)
1960-69	548	27 (5%)	1 (3%)
1970-79	3,486	117 (3%)	3 (2%)
1980-89	4,735	542 (11%)	197 (36%)
1990-99	4,597	1,008 (22%)	473 (47%)
2000-03	1,267	226 (18%)	126 (56%)
TOTAL	14,803	1,927 (13%)	800 (42%)

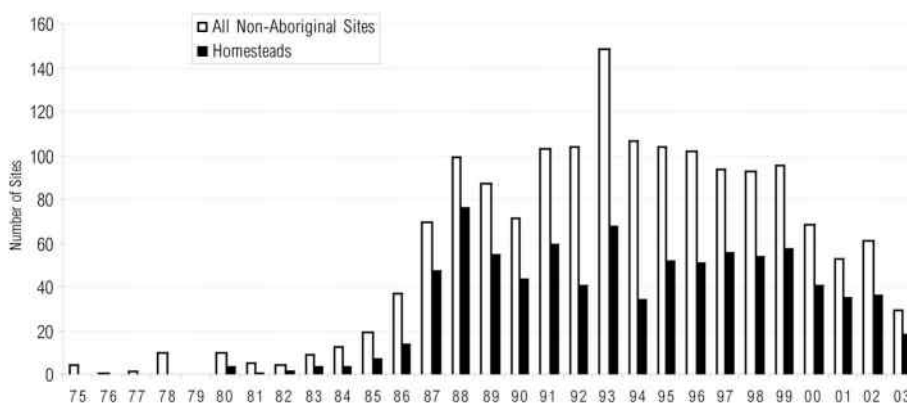


Figure 5. Distribution of gross sort of non-Aboriginal and domestic sites by year of inclusion into the OASD.

database began to decline by the end of the 1990s. This is at odds with the broader trend in Figure 3, which shows a marked rise in the number of sites assigned to licensees. Both issues, though raised by the gross sort, could not be addressed by it.

As such, a second, more detailed review of the database was conducted at the end of 2006. This time I chose to examine actual site record forms, selecting 25 Borden Blocks¹² from southern Ontario (Table 2), reviewing all site records in each block to identify all non-Aboriginal sites recorded in that block by the end of 2005. I also recorded what kind of archaeologist registered those sites (i.e., consultant or non-consultant), and which of the sites were assigned a nineteenth-century domestic site designation.

The Borden Blocks I chose all held 130 or more sites at the end of 2006. With this selection criterion, I was biasing the sample in favour of places where CRM activity had occurred intensively and over a long period of time—namely

the urban-suburban core stretching from just east of Toronto to London in the west.¹³ As such, this sample encompassed the predominant experiences that shaped Ontario archaeology for the past two decades, and serves as a window into the trends caused by the rise in CRM.

For the 25 Borden Blocks examined (Table 2), just over 13 percent of all sites are non-Aboriginal. It is striking how much this part of the record is generated by CRM practitioners. In over 50 percent of the blocks reviewed, CRM archaeologists accounted for all the non-Aboriginal sites in the database and, in all but two blocks, they accounted for the registration of at least 90 percent of all sites. CRM archaeology accounted for a remarkable 96 percent of all non-Aboriginal sites registered. Of those sites registered by consultants, 91 percent were identified (either explicitly in the form, or from descriptions of site features) as being nineteenth-century domestic sites.¹⁴

Table 2. *All archaeological sites, non-Aboriginal sites, and nineteenth-century domestic sites in specified site Borden Blocks in Ontario to the end of 2005 (compiled in 2006).*

Borden Block	# of sites in Block	% non-Aboriginal	% by CRM	% domestic sites by CRM
AhGx	454	7.5	94	94
AiGw	350	7.1	96	92
AgGx	348	3.2	100	100
AjGw	328	29.0	98	91
AlGt	314	19.7	97	93
AfHh	297	9.4	100	86
AlGu	294	27.9	91	88
AiHc	292	13.0	100	87
AiHb	257	10.9	93	77
AfHi	247	6.5	75	92
AgGs	238	16.4	92	83
AlGs	233	15.0	100	94
AgHb	229	7.4	100	82
AfHa	226	5.3	100	92
AkGw	224	25.0	96	100
AiGx	196	5.6	100	91
AgHh	183	10.9	95	95
AkGv	176	23.3	100	93
AhHa	172	9.3	75	92
AlGv	171	21.1	100	97
AfGx	161	3.1	80	75
AhGw	154	16.9	100	81
AgGu	135	14.8	100	90
AlGr	131	22.9	97	97
AgGw	131	6.1	75	100
Total (%)	—	13	96	91
Total (n)	5941	791	757	688

In this selective Borden Block examination, 13 percent of all sites registered were non-Aboriginal (Figure 6). This is close to the 12 percent obtained in the general sort (Figure 4), suggesting that it accurately reflects the category's representation across Ontario. However, the Borden Block sort contradicted the general sort in that this non-Aboriginal "slice" of the site database proved to be predominantly made up of domestic sites (91 percent), significantly more than the 45 percent suggested by the general sort.

There are likely several reasons for this discrepancy. Certainly the blocks selected are heavily weighted to CRM activity, which results in the recording of all sites on the landscape, of which nineteenth-century domestic residences far outweigh non-domestic nineteenth-century sites. As well, when individual site records are examined,

it is clear that the gross sort did not identify many non-Aboriginal sites as domestic because these sites had been designated "historic scatter."

Lastly, a range of site types are under-represented in the Borden Block sample examined for this study that nonetheless are present in the overall database. For instance, for Borden Block BdGc, representing the Kingston area,¹⁵ the percentage of domestic sites is very low (27 percent). The high overall number of non-Aboriginal sites, the high percentage documented by non-consultants, and the low number of domestic sites all appear to be explained by non-consultant marine archaeological recording of shipwrecks occurring in the block. The land-based record also contains a high number of military and industrial sites within the city of Kingston. That many of these non-consultant and non-domestic sites were

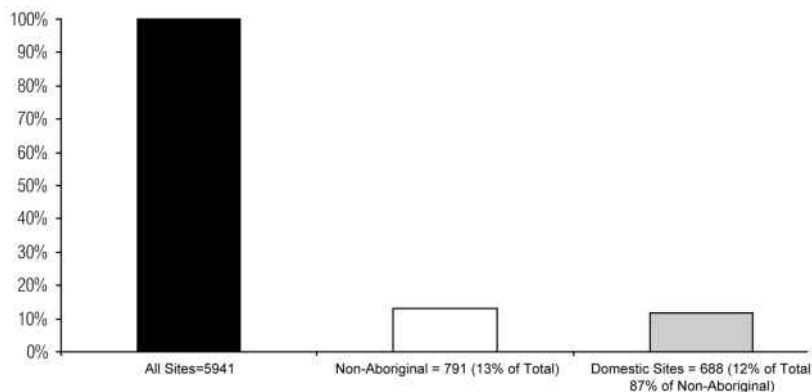


Figure 6. *Non-Aboriginal sites represented in the Borden Block sort, 2006.*

recorded in the mid-1990s hints at one reason for the discrepancy in Figure 5, where there is a decline in the percentage of domestic sites making up the overall non-Aboriginal category of sites appearing in the record.

A surprising discovery in the Borden Block sort was the variability in the representation of non-Aboriginal sites among blocks, ranging from 3.1 percent to 29 percent (Table 2). For many blocks from southwestern Ontario, where overall site numbers are high, the proportion of non-Aboriginal domestic sites is surprisingly low, even in places along the Thames and Grand Rivers, where settlement occurred relatively early in the nineteenth century. This low value reflects either the very high number of Aboriginal sites in these areas compared to non-Aboriginal settlement, especially ubiquitous lithic scatters and find-spots, or a preoccupation with the abundant Aboriginal sites present by archaeologists to the exclusion of non-Aboriginal sites, or both. Conversely, in the Greater Toronto Area east of the Niagara Escarpment there is a notable increase in the percentage of non-Aboriginal sites, which suggests that the precontact use of the region was not as intensive and so the absence of such a dense record affords archaeologists a greater ability to focus on non-Aboriginal sites. Regardless of either actual or methodological reasons for the discrepancy, this does offer an insight into the variable nature of the archaeological landscape across southern Ontario reflected in CRM practice.

This variability of site representation, even across the relatively limited area of west-central

southern Ontario, provides another insight: it is clear that the issue of representation, which is often flagged as a basis for writing off nineteenth-century domestic sites (as in “we have many of these already”), is more complex than otherwise is intuited by consultants constrained within their regionally defined perspective and experience (see for example Lees and Noble 1990; Wilson 1990). While the 688-site sample from this Borden Block sort is not insubstantial, as a representation of the idealised number of domestic sites created during the nineteenth-century in Ontario (see for example Kenyon 1995), it likely represents only a small fraction of the maximum archaeological dataset for this site type. Certainly it encompasses only portions of the nineteenth-century lived experience and settlement in Ontario. So perhaps although, at a broader level, the questions of representativeness and how many nineteenth-century domestic sites are too many are important issues that historical archaeologists need to grapple with, I have a hard time accepting that those issues should limit documentation of this site type for much of the province in the foreseeable future.¹⁶

Figure 7 shows the number of all domestic sites recorded by CRM-based archaeologists between 1980 and 2005 from the detailed sort. It confirms the startling increase in nineteenth-century domestic sites documented annually by consultant archaeologists beginning in 1985. It is particularly noteworthy that the phenomenal increase seen during 1987-1988 has not been repeated, despite the colossal growth in CRM *since* 1990. Whether Ian Kenyon lit the fuse, or

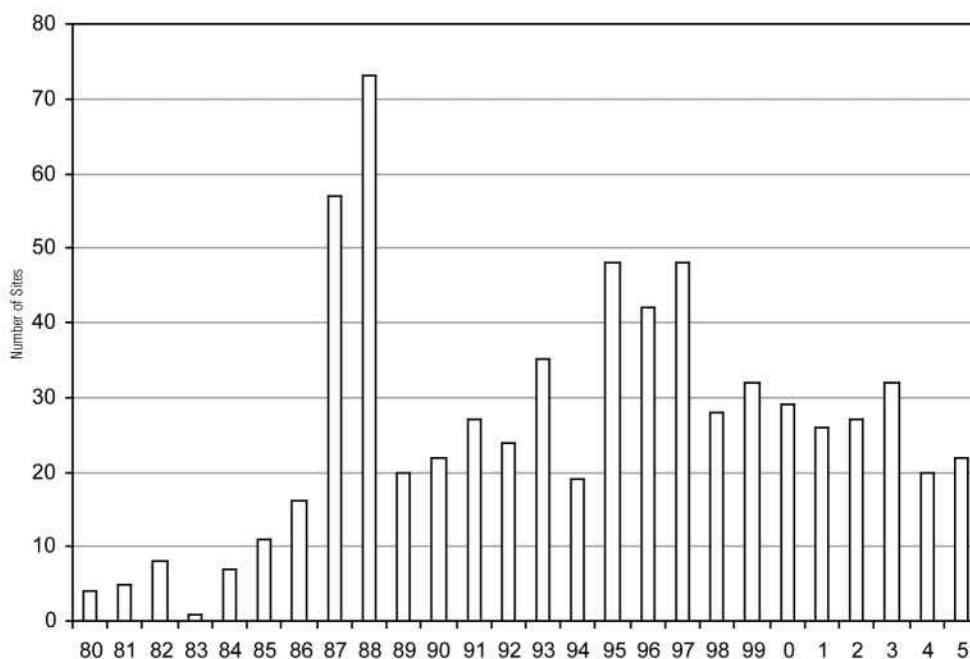


Figure 7. Frequency of non-Aboriginal domestic sites, by year, registered by consultants within the 25 Borden Blocks examined.

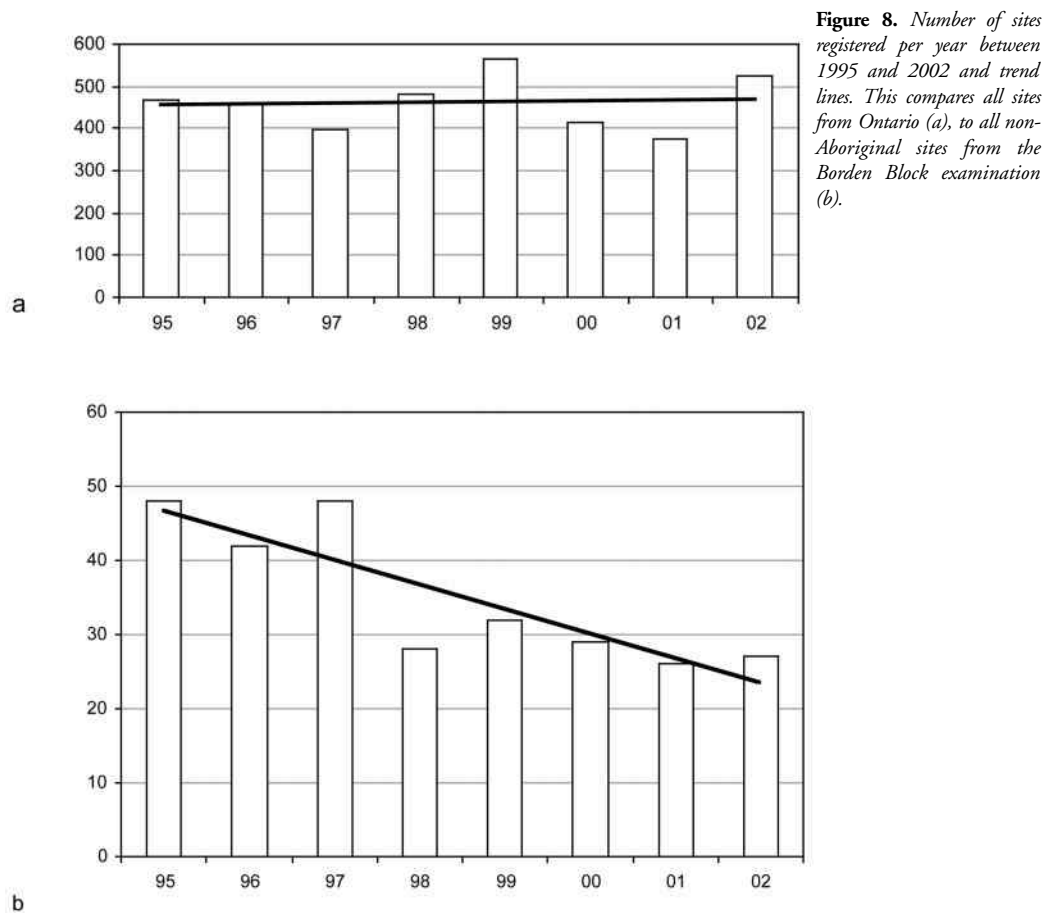
simply reflected what was happening more broadly, his 1985 plea heralded the arrival of a new focus of endeavour in Ontario CRM archaeology.

It is worth noting that the numbers drop off immediately after 1988, deflating between 1989 and 1994. In part, that drop may be connected to the economic decline Ontario experienced during that period. It also coincides with the period immediately before the expansion of archaeological conservation requirements in various land use planning and development statutes (see Ferris 1998a). The subsequent rise in numbers beginning in 1995 likely represents both the emergence of a strong economic development cycle as well as the expanded role and opportunity CRM archaeology has had as a result of broader conservation regimes coming into effect.

Despite the economic boom continuing and overall numbers of sites documented by CRM practitioners reaching all-time highs, there does, indeed, appear to be a tailing-off or decline in the number of non-Aboriginal sites being documented by consultants. In part, this contradictory trend may be a reflection of the artifice mentioned earlier—a lag in site registrations in the

Ministry's database. In attempting to account for that lag, the data still, however, exhibit a contrary trend (Figure 8). For example, after eliminating the 2003–2005-year period from the chart (which encompasses those years with the largest number of sites still awaiting submission to the Ministry's database) and the deflated numbers of the early 1990s economic downturn, there remains a slight trend towards an increase in total consultant site number assignments for Ontario during the period (Figure 8a). But the same period exhibits a stark decline in domestic site numbers within the Borden Blocks examined for this study (Figure 8b), which have continued to experience some of the heaviest consultant activity in the province.

Now, this pattern may still be a result of a lag in filing site records in the database, in that some consultants may have chosen to manage ever increasing workloads that began in the late 1990s by delaying their filing of site record forms—even until now. It is also possible that the variability in representativeness across the region is shaping the overall numbers: as conservation requirements have been imposed over a broader



part of the southern Ontario landscape, more work is occurring in areas where domestic site numbers appear to be a smaller part of the overall record that is present (e.g., more of southwestern Ontario).

But I also suspect that to explain away the pattern as entirely an artifice is to overlook the trends and practices within this part of the archaeological record beyond the simple compilation of sites over the last 20 years. With a small handful of very notable exceptions, nineteenth-century domestic site archaeology remains largely a resource harvested for CRM purposes without triggering complementary research queries. Indeed, evidence of further reflexive thinking—in print, anyway—following Ian Kenyon’s lead, has been very limited. So the decline in raw numbers may be part-artifice and part-consequence of the

fact that nineteenth-century domestic site archaeology became normalised in CRM practice immediately after acceptance of the site type around 1986, with little change, subsequently, in valuations or refinements in approaches to the site type. The impact of the needs of nineteenth-century domestic site archaeology on consultants, or lack thereof, once the community moved away from viewing this part of the record as “crap,” is reviewed next.

Beyond “Historic Crap”

In some part due to Ian Kenyon’s efforts, the Ontario CRM archaeological community joined with much of the rest of the Northeast by the late 1980s in accepting that some segment of the

nineteenth-century domestic sites encountered during survey was a resource worthy of documentation and conservation. However, it would be wrong to imply that the entire community had fully embraced Ian's clarion call, or understood it. For many, these were sites to document only because someone else (Ian, other Ministry archaeologists or colleagues with similar tendencies) said it should be done—any research consideration could be left to Ian and his ilk. For some consultants, then, material description, determination of age, and perhaps associating the location with documented occupants, were the sole research needs for such sites.

Early attempts to determine how best to identify, evaluate and document nineteenth-century domestic sites in CRM contexts were extremely subjective, based mostly on significantly variable and differing levels of personal knowledge, and occasionally backed by a nod to Noël Hume, South, Deetz, or consultation with Ian Kenyon. Indeed, as a Ministry archaeologist reviewing consultant work at the time, I often heard something like “because Ian does/does not think it is important” as a rationalisation for why a site or excavation methodology was or was not going to be used in a particular circumstance.

The work by Ian and other Ontario archaeologists with similar tendencies established a “universal” in terms of methodological expectations for these plough-disturbed scatters of ceramics, glass, brick and nails. This expectation was to find them, count the sherds, then strip them of topsoil to find a single keyhole-shaped cellar (to be partially excavated), maybe a privy or well, and that's about it. In other words, whatever happened to be the logic and happenstance of investigating and excavating these sites in southern Ontario in the mid-to-late 1980s—arising from specific research designs, idiosyncratic approaches, or salvage expediencies—quickly became the standardised and only methodology to apply to all such sites.

My own experiences as a government archaeologist anecdotally suggested that there was little consideration of the site formation processes shaping nineteenth-century domestic site settlement patterns, or of the significant variation and internal differences that could be encountered

from site to site, or even across a single site. Rather there was just this sense of needing to gather ceramics, pipes, window glass, buttons and coins,¹⁷ maybe some faunal remains, and anything else “personal” or unusual to inform the site analysis. That these and other artifact classes may have been differentially distributed across a site, or that any such differentiation may reveal nuances of occupation, function or occupant agency, were rarely imagined or considered worthy enough to note.

As a result, it was not uncommon in the first decade, after beginning to document this resource in CRM, to encounter reports detailing the discovery of thin surface ceramic scatters of creamware, pearlware and porcelain ceramics (i.e., early nineteenth- or even late eighteenth-century sites), which were then subjected to the same excavation strategies used for a dense mid-nineteenth-century scatter: a surface collection of artifacts followed by topsoil stripping. When, invariably, these early, diffuse scatters failed to reveal sub-surface features, it would be fair to say that only a few thought about what that meant (for example, the scatter originated from smaller, poorer, short-term shanty residences or other dwellings where a cellar may not have been used).

Likewise, the practice of stripping topsoil away (as well as any distinct depositional data contained in that layer of the site) from the densest surface concentration of artifacts from later sites may have typically yielded a cellar, but rarely a privy pit, or other features or exterior function areas that may have existed more than the 5-10 metres exposed beyond the edge of the cellar pit. Only a few CRM archaeologists questioned or experimented with what quickly became a rote excavation methodology for all nineteenth-century domestic sites, at least until one of Ian's kind, Eva MacDonald (1997), presented meaningful data challenging that practice. That study led to many CRM archaeologists choosing to modify practice by hand-excavating at least a sample of plough-zone deposits for some domestic sites prior to topsoil stripping.

Rote practices also characterised much of the historical research carried out for such sites in the first decade, despite Ian's 1985 plea for thorough archival surveys.¹⁸ Early determinations of where

to survey for nineteenth-century sites frequently extended only to a quick check of published historical county atlases, which usually meant that all that was being identified were late and long-lived nineteenth-century site locations, typically the kind of site often written-off from further conservation interest as being too recent.

Site-specific historical research was often limited to copying the relevant page from the abstract book in the county land registry office. More detailed historical documentation for some practitioners, such as the compilation of assessment roll or census data, intuitively fell on the other side of the line that exists in CRM, dividing “necessary” documentation and analysis from extra-curricular research. Likewise, historical research for domestic sites tended to be done only *after* they were excavated. The sense was that historical research (i.e., identifying the occupants) was something only necessary for the purpose of incorporating some names into the excavation report. While this may be appropriate in some circumstances, any potential for the historical data to contribute to *informing* field methodologies was assumed to be unimportant if sites were to be excavated by rote.

Ironically, another unreflexive practice adopted in CRM arose quickly in the late 1980s in part from the very capacity-building training and tools that Ian Kenyon developed for consultant archaeologists. Notably, Ian’s ceramic checklist tended to confirm, at least for some archaeologists, that significance for nineteenth-century domestic sites could be universally determined by site age.

Now it must be said that Ian’s own stated intent behind the ceramic checklist was to get consultants to collect and order ceramic data in a manner that would allow Ian to use and interpret that data. But the median dates calculated by the program Ian provided were soon being used to determine whether or not to write off sites from further conservation efforts. This tended to reify an informal, subjective assumption that domestic sites would no longer be considered significant if their cut-off date fell around or later than 1850.¹⁹ This assumption was problematic when used with Ian’s checklist, since the longer date

ranges of mid-to-late ceramic wares tended to influence the median date generated by the checklist. Also, it was not uncommon to see some CRM archaeologists classify all whiteware as granite-ware or ironstone, allowing for a more recent assessment of age. Indeed, even though its first appearance in Ontario is much earlier, “ironstone” became and continues to be a sort of code word in CRM meaning “insignificant,” as it is assumed, generally, to denote “late nineteenth century” and, therefore, a site of no concern. In other words, if you want to walk away from a nineteenth-century site, make sure you pick up some ironstone.

Of course extensive research has been undertaken identifying the pitfalls of relying on simple ceramic sherd counts to achieve age calculations, due to things like heirloom and use-life patterns, and patterns of ceramic use and disposal (e.g., Adams 2003; Beaudry et al. 1983; LeeDecker 1994; Majewski and O’Brien 1987; Monks 1999; Spencer-Wood and Heberling 1987). In fairness, it has been well over a decade since I last saw someone use one of those ceramic checklists and Ian’s date calculations to determine the age of a site. But the popularity of the program to provide a convenient, and conveniently unreflexive, median age for a nineteenth-century domestic site based on its ceramic sherd assemblage is part of the broader CRM approach to these sites that emerged in the first decade after their acceptance as part of the archaeological record. This is an approach that can still be found employed in Ontario today, and belies any notion that nineteenth-century domestic site archaeology has advanced much beyond that initial basic acceptance of the site type in the mid-1980s.

Lastly, it is also worth pointing out that not everyone embraced the inclusion of nineteenth-century domestic sites into the canon of Ontario archaeology or accepted that this site type had intrinsic research importance. Some even decried the requirement to investigate such sites. I recall, a decade later, one archaeologist who had attended that 1985 meeting in London objecting vociferously to consultants being “allowed” to document and excavate nineteenth-century sites, claiming the practice was nothing but a financial

boondoggle for consultants, who knew they were charging developers to harvest a plentiful site type of absolutely no interest to archaeological research.

While such criticisms underscore the fact that many CRM practitioners were primarily trained as “prehistorians,” and that a few of them retained a non-CRM prejudice against the part of the record that fell outside the orbit of their personal research interests, there is an uncomfortable kernel of truth in the criticism, at least as reflected in the practices followed by some in the CRM community. My personal experience and exposure to the “oral histories” of consultant crews over the last two decades serve to recall occasions when nineteenth-century domestic sites were misidentified as late, intentionally ignored in the field, or excavated purely to generate income.

CRM-related oral histories can typically be overstated, out of context, and favour minority tendencies, but practices and attitudes reflected in these tales also suggest another reason for the decline in overall numbers of domestic sites identified in Ontario over the last decade. Whether cynically or earnestly motivated, this indifference to, or lack of understanding of, nineteenth century domestic sites may be contributing to a decline in site documentation, representing a kind of self-censoring by practitioners of this part of the database, leading to a heightened selectiveness in the field of non-Aboriginal sites worthy of documentation.

In other words, the pattern of nineteenth-century domestic site management in CRM that emerged during the 1990s was a reflection of how it initially came to be recognised as important: a case of a few convincing many. I don't want to generalise here and suggest a foot-dragging kind of compliance. Rather, Ontario CRM archaeologists, as a community mostly of prehistorians, created an emphasis on nineteenth-century domestic sites as part of their practice, but, nonetheless, collectively lacked the critical capacity to really explore why this emphasis came about, or even what the broader aim should be for investigating this kind of site type. As a result, after acceptance, there was a quick, unreflexive move into rote practices.²⁰

Of course, rote practices can reflect both a mature expertise and consensual understanding of the site type *as well as* the reification of personal opinions and unreflexive assumptions of value. Furthermore, in the case of nineteenth-century domestic site archaeology, I would argue both realities constrain and shape the direction the practice is taking. The next question, then, is how and where these twin, contradictory realities are playing out in the community today?

Moving Towards A CRM Practice of Historical Archaeology?

Even as CRM practices adopted a host of unreflexive approaches to nineteenth-century domestic site archaeology in the 1990s, the longer term implications of the efforts people like Ian made in the 1980s began to show in the attitudes and interests among some of the archaeological community. Capacity and critical reflexivity are increasing (certainly to a level and range not seen during Ian's heyday), even while pre-1980s attitudes towards this site type persist. Despite limited achievements of the last 20 years and troubling evidence of a decline in site documentation, there are indications that increased domestic site “tendencies” are moving the practice away from the logic of “because Ian said so.”

An important snapshot of the attitudes in CRM practice was taken in 1995-1997, when the Ministry of Culture began collecting data for revising and expanding the archaeological technical guidelines for consultant archaeologists in Ontario.²¹ The intent of the Ministry data collection exercise was to solicit feedback to a questionnaire mailed out in 1996, which covered a range of topics from property and site-specific assessment methodologies, valuations of site heritage value, excavation and preservation strategies, and analysis and report writing. The feedback would be used to map out broad, consensual understandings of methodological standards of practice. Just under 60 percent of the 107 individuals who received the questionnaire responded.²² Compiled responses were published between 1998-2000 by the Ministry through an

Archaeology Unit newsletter developed for the purpose (Ferris 1998b, 1999b, 1999c, 2000b).

A number of questions focussed on the archaeology of nineteenth-century sites. Responses showed variability and some ambivalence towards this site type. But the consensual attitudes from the compiled results also reflected acceptance and a depth of consideration for the needs of this site type that went beyond the rote practices of the day.

Specific questions included exploring the basis for determining significance for domestic sites. Specifically, respondents were asked about cut-off dates—whether they considered a duration or age of domestic site occupation to be “too” recent to be significant (Question B3). Just under 70 percent of respondents acknowledged using cut-offs some or all of the time, although 60 percent of those responses also acknowledged that context could change their perception of the significance of a site. Typically, a later site might be significant in parts of the province where initial settlement was late, or where the site was associated with an important historical event or person. Specific cut-off dates preferred by respondents varied greatly (Figure 9). Whereas 21 percent of responses favoured 1850, and 19 percent favoured a twentieth-century date for cut-off, the majority of respondents (53 percent) favoured an 1880 or later cut-off date (Ferris 1999b:6-7). This preference undermined the viability of the 1850 date, which was so commonly cited in the first decade after 1986 as the basis for determining what was, and wasn't, significant.

Similar variability, and a similar lack of general support for an 1850 cut-off date, was reflected in responses to specific examples respondents were asked to evaluate for significance (Ferris 1999b:12). Of the six examples presented, only a post-1890 landfill was accepted by the majority of respondents as being not significant (Figure 10). Of the three domestic site examples (with 20-, 50- and 100-year occupation, respectively), only one, a site with over 100 years of occupation pre-dating 1930, failed to receive support from a majority of respondents for acceptance as significant. If “yes” and “unsure” responses are combined, even this site may be considered significant by a majority of people (a sort of “only if” where site specific

context would warrant excavation). But despite the willingness to accept later nineteenth-century sites as important, the ambivalence towards post-1850 deposits remained in evidence, with 25 percent of respondents only willing to accept a 20-year occupation between 1850 and 1880 as significant depending on site specifics, while 22 percent of respondents were willing to write off an over-50-year occupation pre-dating 1880.

Finally, nine percent of respondents preferred “floating” to fixed cut-off dates,²³ while 21 percent of all respondents rejected cut-offs entirely. Most of the latter respondents said that historical research had to be conducted to inform a determination of significance for all nineteenth- and twentieth-century sites.

Many respondents criticised the logic behind accepting 1850 as a cut-off date, while other respondents (who did support an 1850 or earlier cut-off date) criticised those in the practice that wanted post-1850 sites treated as significant (Ferris 1999b:6). To me, and others in the Ministry, the substantial number of respondents who rejected 1850 as a cut-off date was a surprise. It contradicted our general impression that a mid-century cut-off was favoured by the majority of consultants working on these kinds of sites, based on those consultant reports we received and reviewed every day.

My own view as to why this discrepancy between what we saw in reports and the questionnaire results was that the responses encompassed more than the opinions of project decision-makers. They also included responses from individuals with expertise in historical archaeology, and more junior company staff, whose attitudes towards nineteenth-century archaeology were formed after this part of the record was accepted into the canon of Ontario archaeology. In other words, the apparent incongruity between consultants' preference for an 1850 cut-off date and the questionnaire results was a manifestation of an increasing expertise and expanding capacity within the community, with the effect that decision-making about that part of the record was beginning to be revised in the late 1990s.

This neatly summarizes those two contradictory directions I referred to earlier—an increasing

Figure 9. *Distribution of responses to the question of a preferred cut-off date used to determine domestic site significance- insignificance. From the consultant questionnaire on standards of practice for Stage 3 and Stage 4 activities, conducted by the Ministry in the late 1990s. Taken from Ferris (1999b).*

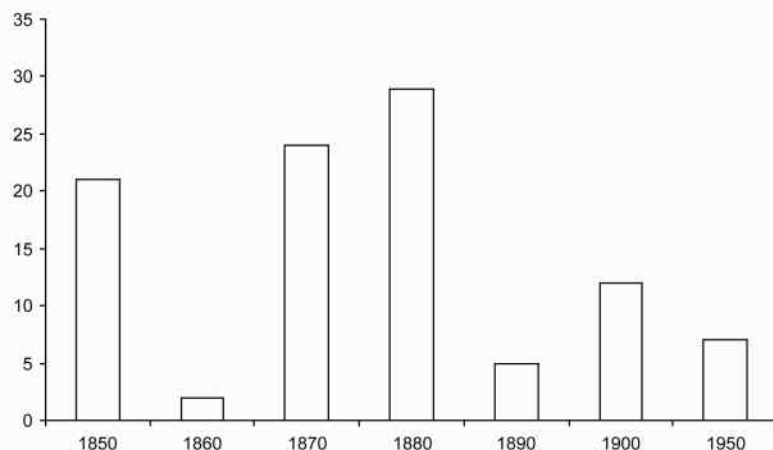
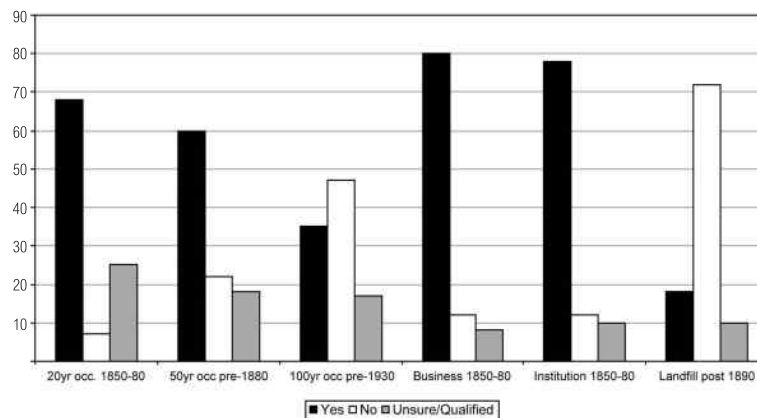


Figure 10. *Distribution of responses to significance or no significance for various historical site examples. From the consultant questionnaire on standards of practice for Stage 3 and Stage 4 activities, conducted by the Ministry in the late 1990s. Taken from Ferris (1999b).*



expertise for this part of the record and the maintenance of unreflexive personal subjectivities. These opposing tendencies, I think, are shaping the way CRM archaeology approaches nineteenth-century domestic site archaeology. They are also reflected in a consideration of who did and did not respond to the significance determination examples for both Aboriginal lithic scatters and non-Aboriginal sites in the questionnaire. Notably, there were seven more responses to the non-Aboriginal examples than to the Aboriginal examples. The reason for this difference (Ferris 1999b:12) was that a handful of people described themselves as “historical” archaeologists. Those who did respond chose not to comment on the lithic examples because they felt they did not have enough expertise or experience to offer a

valuation of those sites. On the other hand, only one individual declined to comment on the historic site examples for the reason that their expertise was on the precontact record.

Thus, by the late 1990s, there were individuals in the CRM community that could formally recognise and identify themselves as historical archaeologists, to an extent that they did not feel they needed to be generalists or self-taught experts on all parts of the archaeological record. This reflects a change in the professional demographic of the community. A decade earlier, there were also CRM archaeologists who were self-taught or formally trained as historical archaeologists, but this specialty was incidental to being a broadly-based Ontario archaeologist at a time when (prior to 1985) few historic sites were

being documented in CRM. So, by the mid-1990s, there was a segment of the consulting community that could articulate a depth of knowledge of historic sites and offer an informed contrast to the continuing status quo of the rote practices that had initially emerged a decade earlier. This contrast was enough to be measurable in the questionnaire responses, both with respect to site significance determinations, and in other sections of the questionnaire responses governing excavation strategies, historical research, and artifact analysis.

The push-pull of this increasing expertise, on the one hand, and tradition of unreflexive approaches, on the other, continues to shape current standards of practice, and has been articulated in the final draft of the standards and guidelines for consultants (2006). For example, the draft establishes a cut-off date for non-Aboriginal domestic sites of heritage value at 1870,²⁴ in effect, a simple “update” of 1850 through the acknowledgement of the passing of 20 years since the archaeological community first accepted this site type into the canon of Ontario archaeology. There is, however, allowance for a later cut-off date for sites in parts of the province where settlement (either of the region or of the community represented at the site) was later than 1870. It is also recognised that late nineteenth- and twentieth-century sites can, on the basis of professional judgement, be found to be of value, provided that informed background research supports the judgement. In short, a consultant can argue for protection or excavation of later (including twentieth-century) sites, an unheard-of-concept of value for land-based archaeology two decades previously.

I suspect that, in most situations, this refinement will mostly mean the excavation clock has simply been moved forward to 1870. But other changes in the draft standards and guidelines will advance CRM practices by affirming site-specific land use and historical research as something to be done in determining value and mitigation methodologies (i.e., Stage 3). Pre-1830 domestic sites are now specifically identified as requiring hand excavation. And, for the first time, detailed artifact analysis standards have been defined for

the entire archaeological record, including the material remains of domestic sites. While these specific changes to standards mostly represent modest, incremental change, they also provide opportunities to approach the conservation of nineteenth-century domestic sites more reflexively by that small but growing group of CRM archaeologists with particular expertise and ability to evaluate, more critically, methodologies and conservation designs. These efforts will, in turn, advance CRM practices more generally with respect to the conservation and management of nineteenth-century sites and will encourage the abandonment of past tendencies to approach this part of the archaeological record as the unreflexive harvesting of stuff that is not quite crap.

Final Comments

I think it is fair to say that when the standards and guidelines are formally implemented, or, as appears to be the case already, they are informally adopted by the majority of practitioners, CRM approaches to nineteenth-century domestic site archaeology will begin to move away from the previous thinking that shaped the unreflexive, rote approaches that some in the consulting industry still apply to this part of the archaeological record. At the very least, predominant approaches will adjust until they level off and become rote again.

What is distinct about domestic site archaeology is the rapid growth in expertise—or growth in the numbers of decision-making CRM archaeologists with this expertise. While I am sure it is completely unrelated to Ian Kenyon’s very untimely death in 1997, it has taken the better part of the last two decades to advance and build on Ian’s ground-breaking work during the 1980s with respect to nineteenth-century domestic site archaeology (e.g., Doroszenko 2003; MacDonald 1997, 2004; Morrison 1991; Quark 2001; Williamson et al. 1996; see also an ever-burgeoning body of CRM reports on nineteenth-century domestic sites that detail more than the rote harvest of material). Amazingly, Ian achieved the initial florescence in the investigation of this site type by dint of good scholarship,

research, mentoring and training alone, in the 1980s, when no regulation or standard required consultants to pay attention to such sites and general attitudes were not otherwise predisposed to embrace them.

Given the growing expertise and maturity in the subset of the Ontario archaeological community afflicted with the same “tendencies” that affected Ian, I remain hopeful that the recent literature coming from this group, and “best practices” reflected in their daily decisions, will lead to Ontario-oriented research on non-Aboriginal domestic sites that will engage with this database *and* the broader research trends in the field. What is needed, clearly, is work that is reflexive of operating assumptions and tendencies that limit. Moreover, such work critically informs CRM strategies, ensuring that documentation of this end of the archaeological record is indeed a contribution and not simply a harvested and exploited resource.

Acknowledgements. I thank Eva MacDonald and Dena Doroszenko for pulling together the conference session this paper was written for, and for encouraging me to scrape the time together to convert that conference talk into a formal paper. I also thank Rob von Bitter for all his help in allowing me to access the Ministry’s archaeological sites database for this study. Of course, any flaws in compilation, analysis or presentation, are entirely my own. Likewise, I acknowledge all the effort my colleagues in the Ministry of Culture and in the CRM private sector put in towards ensuring the CRM practice in Ontario achieves as much as it does. Nonetheless, the opinions I have offered here are entirely my own and do not reflect either the views of these colleagues or of my former employer. Lastly I acknowledge the life-long debt I owe to Ian Kenyon (Figure 11), who was a truly remarkable individual, my friend, and one of the most important, unheralded influences on the current and future shape of Ontario archaeology to come out of those heady first few decades after the birth of CRM in Ontario.



Figure 11. Ian and me, many years ago.

Notes

¹ This is also reflected by the emergence of major historical archaeology organizations, such as the Society for Historical Archaeology and the Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology, both of which formed in 1967, and regionally by the Council for Northeast Historical Archaeology, which formed in 1972.

² I want to acknowledge at the outset that what I'm offering here is a highly personal take on the rise and current trend in nineteenth-century domestic site archaeology in Ontario. It is a reflection of my perspective, which is to say, like all histories, it is subjective and relative, and I am sure others would disagree about particulars. By emphasising Tim and Ian Kenyon, I don't mean to slight the role of many other Ontario archaeologists in advancing research on nineteenth-century domestic site archaeology. The superb work by many in Parks Canada, for example, during the 1960s-1980s heyday of their material specialists, Research Bulletins, multiple publication series, and specialised historical archaeologists, was critical to advancing nineteenth-century archaeology. However, the focus here is on the relationship between the rise of nineteenth-century domestic archaeology, and the rise of CRM archaeology in Ontario. From that perspective I assert that the Kenyons, especially embodied in Ian's work, were the primary agent in advancing nineteenth-century domestic site archaeology as a legitimate focus of CRM effort and proponent-cost in Ontario.

³ These guides were for the Regional office's Avocational Conservation Officer Program (ACOP), developed primarily to help avocational archaeologists document and monitor archaeological sites in the areas they were working. However, Ian's guides, particularly his ceramics guide, proved very popular with all archaeologists, and were a frequently requested, and cited, document.

⁴ This paper of the Kenyons was written when these kinds of socio-economic dimensions to nineteenth-century domestic archaeology were cutting edge topics in historical archaeology (e.g., Miller 1980). While Ian and Tim's work never received broad exposure, it was clear that Ian, in particular, was fully engaged in—and contributing to—this field.

⁵ Ian did not have the time or patience for submitting his work to more scholarly outlets, and wasn't interested in self-promotion. Rather, he wanted the work to be used by archaeologists so that there would be a consistent identification and analysis of ceramics across the province. I recall him apologising for not submitting these articles to the London Chapter of the OAS's newsletter *Kewa*, saying he was hoping to reach a wider Ontario audience by putting them in *Arch Notes*, in order to achieve the consistency he was looking for. When I suggested he should publish them in a more formal journal, he just rolled his eyes.

⁶ All these efforts, in Ian's mind, ultimately would have been pieced together into a manuscript book addressing all aspects of nineteenth-century domestic life and foodways as constructed from both archaeological and historical data. Certainly it is something he talked about fairly regularly between 1980 and 1995. Sadly, though close to having the "guts of the thing" in hand by 1995, he died before it could come to fruition.

⁷ The concern on Ian's part here was the widespread practice at the time of field crews only picking up individual "samples" of decorated sherds (one red sherd, one blue one, one white one...).

⁸ I acknowledge and gratefully thank Rob von Bitter, the Ministry's data co-ordinator, for all his help in pulling together the information used in this paper, and in helping me negotiate through the arcane rites and rituals associated with data searches of that database.

⁹ Terms used to search the database for all non-Aboriginal sites included *18th*C*, *19th*C*, *20th*C*, *Euro*Canadian*, *European*, and Historic. The resulting tally was then reviewed to excise Aboriginal sites or duplicated sites from the total.

¹⁰ Terms used to search the non-Aboriginal subset of sites included *homestead*, *domestic*, *farmstead*, *residence*, *log*, and *household*.

¹¹ Robert von Bitter (pers. comm., 2007) reports that there are just under 4,000 individual site forms that have not yet been received by the Ministry from licensees across the province and since the 1970s. This includes over 2000 for the period 2003-2005.

¹² This term refers to the fact that entire province is gridded into geographic site registration blocks of equal size. When sites are registered the archaeologist determines the exact location and which Borden Block the location falls into. The site is then assigned a number, sequentially the next unused number for the Borden Block designation (see von Bitter et al. 1999 for a further discussion).

¹³ Based on annual consultant PIF numbers, this region generally encompasses about 70-75% of all CRM activity in the province.

¹⁴ Non-domestic sites included things like barns, mills, churches, cemeteries, factories, as well as a number of "find-spot" locations of historic material (e.g., coin, gunflint, etc.).

¹⁵ In conducting the examination of all site record forms from selected Borden Blocks, I had originally included a few blocks from outside the south west-central part of the province in order to "sample" other areas, which is why I compiled the results from BdGc. I rejected the strategy after compiling three additional blocks when I found I could not get large enough samples to adequately represent those numbers in the study.

¹⁶ In the detailed Borden Block sort, I attempted to examine patterns of site significance through time. While it was not possible to determine in every case, for many sites the investigator's recommendation for further work or no further work, or Stage 3 or 4 work conducted on the site, were all noted on the form, allowing for a majority of sites to be classified as significant or not significant. No real coherent trend was found through time. Between 1986 and 2005, by five-year blocks, the number of sites identified as significant consistently fell between 56 percent and 58 percent of all sites where significance could be determined.

¹⁷ These categories of artifacts having all been subjected to some kind of at least chronological analysis and published broadly in North American historical archaeology by that point in time.

¹⁸ In that article (Kenyon 1986a:42), Ian has asked “What’s at 77 Grenville Street?” That address had been the home through the latter twentieth century of the Provincial Archives; Ian’s point being if you are a CRM archaeologist encountering nineteenth-century sites, you should know this.

¹⁹ There was no objective basis for arriving at this date. But after-the-fact rationalisations included that, by this time, European settlement (in the south) was largely past the second generation for many families (i.e., there could be no further interest or research questions to ask of later generations), or that rural settlement had become established (i.e., therefore history had arrived at the contemporary), or that sites of this age and later were now ubiquitous on the landscape, negating the significance for any single example (an argument I’ve also heard and seen used by historically-trained archaeologists to write off dense surface lithic scatters).

²⁰ While this paper is on the role of CRM and nineteenth-century domestic site archaeology, I don’t believe this site type is somehow more susceptible to unreflective consultant practices than any other (though see Joseph [2004] for a similar discussion about the stagnation in CRM historic archaeology). A similar argument could be made for plough disturbed lithic scatters, for example, where little consideration of site formation, site activity areas *away* from high debitage counts, or sampling approaches are incorporated into the blanket approach of screening one metre topsoil units until flake counts drop below 10-15. In effect, the industry has to struggle daily with very normative, unreflexive tendencies and the reifying of rote practices, since once established, these become “standards” of both business efficiencies and contributory documentation of research (see for example, Ferris 1998a, 2000a and 2007 for a further discussion of these broader dimensions of CRM in Ontario).

²¹ The anticipated outcome of this effort, which began as early as 1995 with another Ministry-sponsored consultant workshop in London, is to be a set of comprehensive standards and guidelines for consultant archaeologists. As of this writing, the final draft is stuck within the catch-all of “under development internally.”

²² All licensees who, at the time, held any kind of consulting-related license, were sent the questionnaire, as were all other archaeologists involved in CRM activities (government archaeologists, unlicensed field directors, etc.) as well as a number of avocational and academic archaeologists.

²³ A floating cut-off date would move forward through time with the present. Half of the respondents who favoured a floating date preferred 50 years, a quarter favoured 100 years, and a quarter favoured 150 years.

²⁴ The adoption of 1870, rather than 1880, which had received a majority preference from questionnaire respondents, reflects the fact that consensual standards were felt only to be achieved through a “super” majority of 65 percent of respondents. While other standards, so defined, were subject to revision during the broader consultations on the draft standards and guidelines, and issues around the use of cut-offs were raised, the 1870 date remained.

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Cet article examine l'histoire des investigations des sites domestiques euro-canadiens du XIXe siècle au sud de l'Ontario par les firmes de gestion des ressources culturelles, et considère la façon dont cette histoire a formée les pratiques courantes dans ce domaine. Cette histoire n'est pas très longue : avant la fin des années 1980s, les archéologues des firmes de gestion des ressources culturelles pouvaient ignorer les vestiges du XIXe siècle et le faisait souvent. Ces attitudes ont changés grâce aux contributions de Ian et Thomas Kenyon. Leurs recherches et leurs publications ont emportés une plus grande acceptation pour ce genre de site. Par contre, même si un grand nombre de sites domestiques du XIXe siècle sont maintenant documenté et fouillé à chaque année, les méthodes d'excavation et d'analyse sont souvent pratiquées machinalement, imitant ce qu'Ian aurait fait, sans questionnement. En effet, l'avancement du potentiel et de la valeur de ce type de site archéologique et socio-historique fut lent au-delà de l'acceptation initiale de ce type de site dans les années 1980s.

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