

THE TAYLOR FARM SITE

William B. Taylor

Along the remote western edge of Plymouth County lies the Taylor Farm site. This section is known as Titicut, the Indian meaning of which is "The Place of a Great River." Located along the Taunton River in North Middleboro, the 82-acre Taylor Farm has been lived on for some 8000 years, since Early Archaic times. Across the Taunton River to the north lies the noted Titicut site, the subject of several past articles in the *Bulletin of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society* (for example, Robbins 1967).

Selection of this spot by prehistoric people must have been prompted by its vast hunting and fishing potential, plus the presence of a water route to the ocean. Each spring, herring pass upstream by the thousands to spawn at Assawompsett and Nippenicket Lakes. This phenomenon must have fascinated early man and drawn him like a magnet to this beautiful area. Probably other large fish such as salmon, shad, pike, and sturgeon also migrated up the Taunton River to spawn, and the possibility that seal followed the annual fish run upstream should not be overlooked. Early settlers must have noted the area's deer hunting potential, and the river also yielded fur-bearing animals and fresh-water fish.

EARLY HISTORIC REFERENCES

The first white settlement at Titicut was made in 1637 by Miss Elizabeth Poole and several associates. She was the daughter of Sir William Poole, a Knight of Colcombe in the parish of Coliton, Devon, England. Her purchase was between the bounds of Cohannet (Taunton) and the Titicut weir above Pratt's Bridge. She came for the purpose of forming a settlement and converting the Indians to Christianity (Weston 1906:28), and is credited with being one of the chief promoters of Taunton, which was incorporated as a town on September 3, 1639.

At Pratt's Bridge, David Charles, Isaac Wannoo, and several other Indians owned the land with an old mill privilege in 1707. It was used for some years until 1725, when iron workds were established and a company was formed for the manufacture of hollow-ware. In 1730 Ebenezer Robinson had a sawmill and a furnace on what became the Taylor Farm, near the south side of the valley (Weston 1906:407).

Other early white settlers at this site developed many small industries. William Pratt owned a large farm and built a grist mill, a sawmill, a fulling mill for processing wool, a gun shop, and a linseed oil mill. He also had a blacksmith shop and a shoemaking shop. His father, Benjamin Pratt, built ships of 40 to 50 tons during the late 1700's and the early 1800's just across the river from the Taylor Farm near the Titicut site (Emery 1876:91).

The farm was purchased by the Taylor family in 1914, and 25 acres were planted to apple orchards. Through the last 30 years the orchards were gradually cut down and planted to hay fields. This process has turned up many of the artifacts we found, plus some of the burials. This farm has not been cultivated in the usual manner for corn or vegetables, and thus much archaeological material lies still buried in these fields.

ARTIFACTS

During the course of Taylor farming operations, four main concentrated aboriginal occupation areas of about 1 acre apiece have been continually surface-hunted during the past 40 years (Figure 9). Four distinct periods of occupation have been identified on the basis of the recovered projectile points, which can be compared with similar points found at other well-stratified or dated sites.

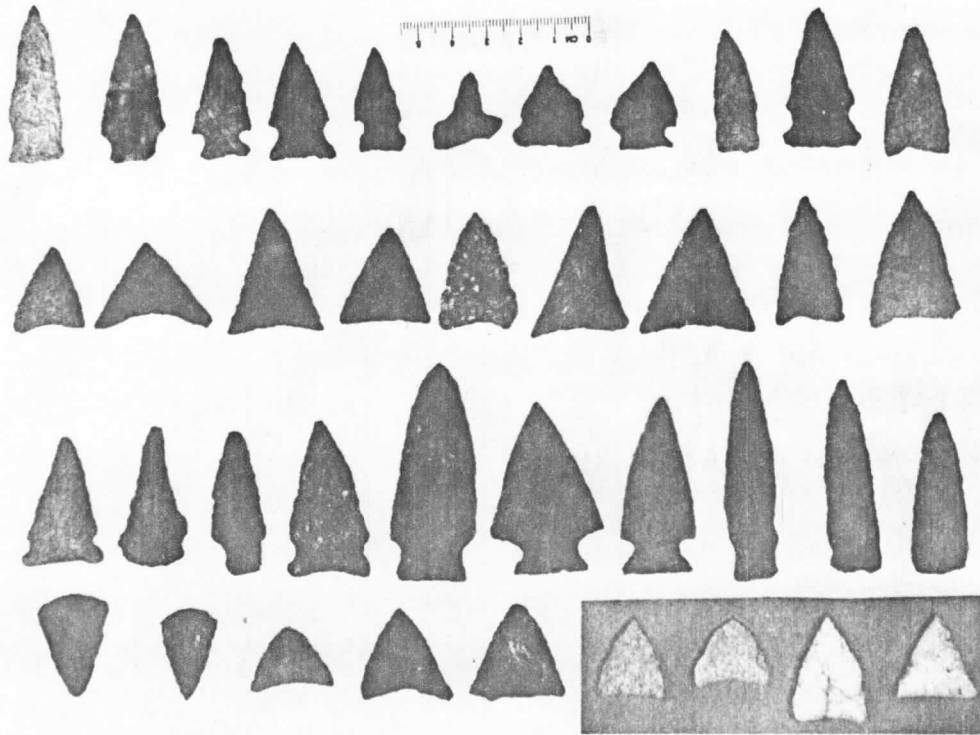


Figure 12. Woodland points, scrapers and drill. Materials are felsite, quartzite and flint.

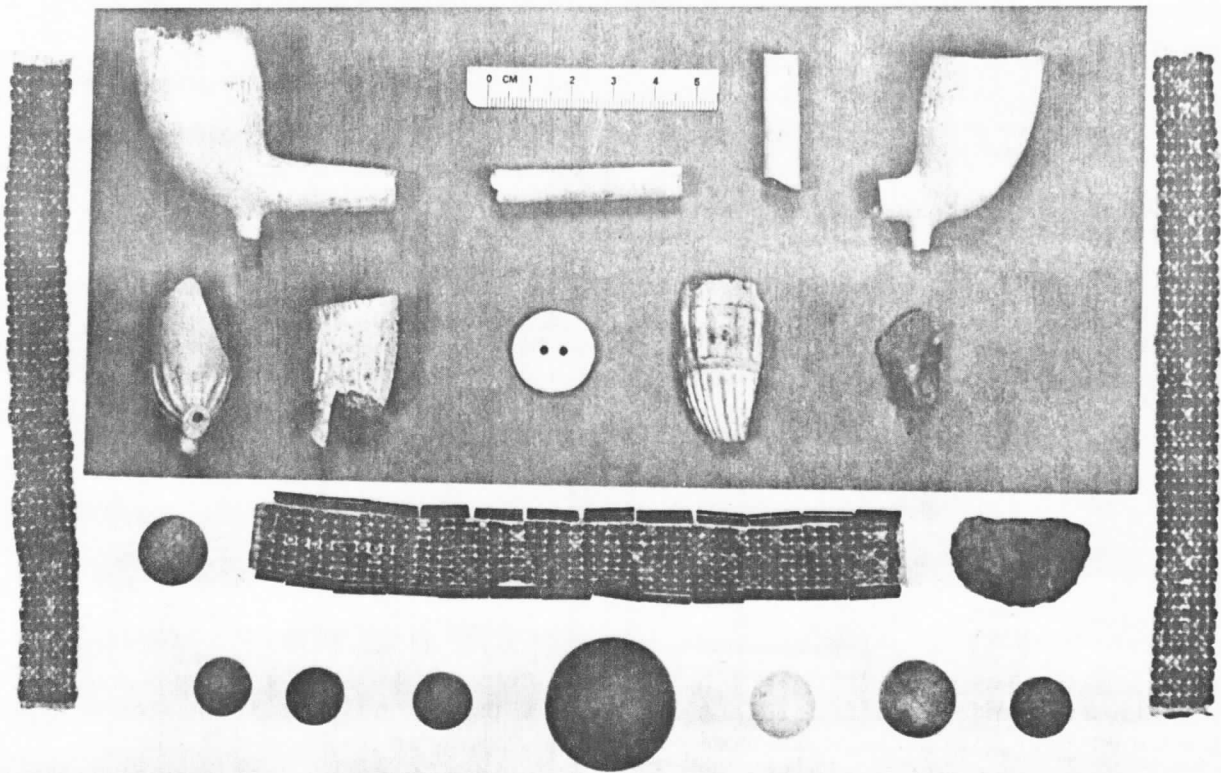


Figure 13. Artifacts from the Historic period, including glass beads, kaolin pipe fragments, clay marbles, gun flints and a shell button.