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Cover Page Footnote

We greatly appreciate all of the comments we received from the other authors in this volume. Their criticism of our approach helped us to better define our objectives in presenting such a ranking scheme to our colleagues for consideration. We also wish to acknowledge the comments we recieved from Mary C. Beaudry, David J. Grette, Skip Stewart-Abernathy, and other individuals on an earlier version of this article. Finally, we wish to thank Mark Shaffer for sharing the results of his research on farmstead archaeology in Pennsylvania.

A System for Ranking the Research Potential of 19th- and 20th- Century Farmstead Sites

George L. Miller and Terry H. Klein

There is a need to establish a systematic and objective process for evaluating the research potential of farmstead sites so that intelligent choices can be made in deciding which sites should be investigated and managed and which should not. We propose the use of a checklist of traits that measures a site's research potential. Each of the traits in the checklist is assigned a score based on its value in providing important data for analyzing a site. The proposed checklist is a tool for organizing our observations and permitting comparisons from one site to the next as well as one project to the next. Applying the proposed ranking system involves documentary research and some archaeological fieldwork. This checklist approach is put forward in the hopes of generating discussion and suggestions on how best to deal with these types of sites in terms of the immediate needs of compliance with federal and state historic preservation laws and regulations.

Il existe un besoin d'établir un procédé systématique et objectif pour l'évaluation du potentiel de recherche en ce qui concerne les sites de fermes afin que des choix intelligents puissent être faits lorsque vient le temps de décider quels sites devraient être investigués et quels sites ne devraient pas l'être. Nous proposons l'utilisation d'un aide-mémoire comprenant une liste des traits permettant de mesurer le potentiel de recherche d'un site. Chacun des traits présents dans l'aide-mémoire se verra assigner un pointage fondé sur le potentiel d'un site à fournir les données importantes nécessaires à son analyse. L'aide-mémoire proposé est un outil pour d'organiser nos observations et permettant des comparaisons entre deux sites ou entre deux projets. L'application de ce système de classement implique de la recherche documentaire et un peu de travail archéologique sur le terrain. Cette approche de type aide-mémoire est mise de l'avant dans l'espoir qu'elle génère des discussions et des suggestions sur la meilleure façon d'aborder ces sites en fonction de leur besoin immédiat de conformité aux lois et aux règles fédérales en matière de préservation historique.

The Problem

During the past 10 years, compliance with historic preservation laws and regulations has brought archaeologists and government agencies into contact with more and more 19th- and 20th-century farmstead sites in the northeastern United States and the eastern Canadian provinces. Unfortunately, many historic preservation professionals seem to have difficulty deciding what criteria should be used to determine whether a farmstead site is significant and therefore worthy of our attention (Shaffer 1998, Wilson 1990). Some government agencies and archaeologists in the region consider these sites to have no significance because they are perceived as commonplace—a very simplistic view of 19th-century farmsteads (see Baugher and Klein, this volume). As a result of such attitudes, it is only a matter of time until development and neglect will make such sites rare features on the landscape.

We feel that it is important to establish procedures now that will help evaluate a farmstead's research potential so that intelligent choices can be made in deciding which sites should be investigated and managed and which should not. Our process of site selection should not be a blind one of survival through time.

One tool that would be useful in making such decisions is a means to rank archaeological farmstead sites in terms of their research potential. We offer such a ranking scheme for consideration. Before presenting our ranking system, let us look at the reasons why we should be concerned about these sites. Consider the following:

- 1) In 1790, 90% of the U.S. population was rural and most people lived on farms. By the end of the 19th century, 40% of Americans still lived on farms (U.S. Dept. of Commerce 1975(1): 31, 457, 458). As late as 1930, almost a quarter of all

Americans lived on farms. The 1901 Canadian census reported that only 37% of its citizens lived in urban areas or small towns. As late as 1921, 50% of Canadians were rural dwellers (Innis 1935: 277, 345). Given that a substantial proportion of our population lived on farms, farmstead sites represent an important resource for understanding a major part of North America's social and economic history. What justification can there be for ignoring sites that represent the mainstream of North American culture?

- 2) Farmsteads are generally isolated from their neighbors. This makes them ideal sites for archaeological study because they rarely have intrusive materials from other sites.
- 3) Farmsteads often have a higher level of documentation than other sites because the occupants generally moved less frequently than urban dwellers.
- 4) Farmsteads were occupied by diverse social, economic, and ethnic groups ranging from wealthy farmers with large estates to tenant farmers and freed slaves. Also, a wide range of agricultural activities occurred on farms across the region.

We feel that 19th- and 20th-century farmstead sites are a greatly undervalued resource and that they have been ignored and "written off" out of ignorance about the nature and history of this type of site. One problem is that most archaeologists place the highest value on the oldest sites. For example, John Bedell states that "Dating criteria are straightforward; the earlier the site, the more important it is" (Bedell 1999: 95). We could not disagree more. Earlier sites are not any more important than later ones in terms of the interpretation of the past. They are, however, less common than later sites and their research potential should not be judged on the same scale as later sites. Rare, early sites (e.g., those dating to the 17th to middle 18th centuries) would usually be selected for investigation because we have so few to study.

In many ways, 19th-century sites have a greater research potential than earlier sites because of the increased availability of historical documentation, such as census records, directories, agricultural census records, cata-

logs, price lists, illustrated advertisements, newspapers, and account books. During the 19th century there was an expanding world of illustrations such as lithography and, later, photography. The second half of the 19th century also saw the development of local and county histories, which often contained information about individuals and families of an area. There was an increased use of makers' marks, patent dates, date codes, and product names on material goods. As a result, we can more precisely identify and date many 19th-century goods when compared to materials from earlier periods. This rich collage of farmstead sites, goods, and documents increases our ability to study and interpret the relationship between farmer families, the land, and their material culture.

Approaches to Establishing Site Significance

In a recent discussion of the contribution that archaeological sites can make to our understanding of the past, Deetz (1993) generated a contingency table evaluating the importance of several sites from Flowerdew Hundred. In Deetz's contingency table, time is the vertical axis and level of documentation is the horizontal axis (FIG. 1). Categories for the horizontal axis ranged from no documentation on the left to ample documentation on the right. The vertical axis placed the earliest sites on the bottom and the latest one on the top. His goal was to show the amount of information that would be lost if a given site was not excavated. For sites with no documentation, everything would be lost if the sites were destroyed. For sites with ample documentation, destruction of a site would not be a complete loss because of the existence of the written records. In Deetz's ranking system, those sites that have the least amount of documentation and are the oldest are the sites where the most information would be lost if the sites were destroyed. More recent sites that have a higher level of documentation are those where the least information would be lost if the site is destroyed. This system is a

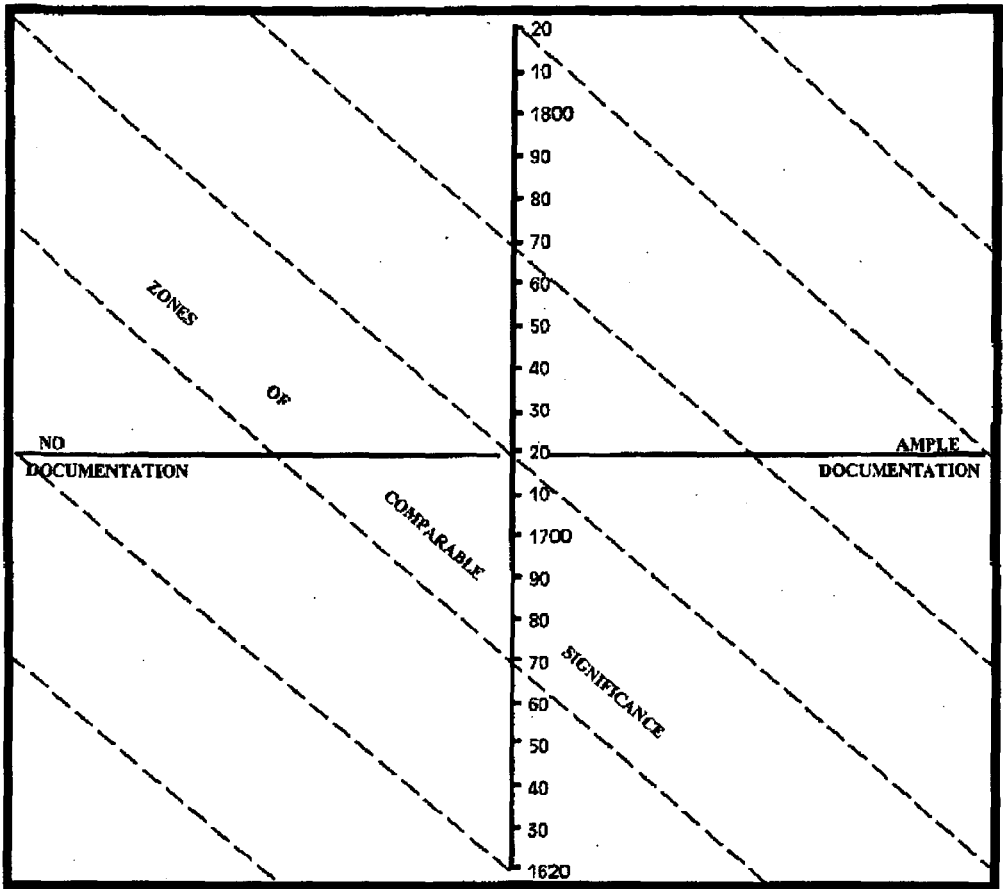


Figure 1. Site significance after Deetz (1993: 156).

good start because it is a movement away from equating age with significance.

While we agree with Deetz's intent, there are aspects of his system that we find disturbing. First, Deetz seems to equate documentary records with the archaeological record. Documents and artifacts are very different resources, each contributing differently to our understanding of the past. Our greatest opportunity to understand the relationship between people, their social and national environment, and material culture comes from well-documented sites that have rich, intact deposits. Under ideal circumstances, we would want to excavate well-documented sites because of the synergy the two data sources generate. Historical archaeology is,

after all, about both documents and artifacts (see Beaudry 1988; Burley 1989; Jones 1981; Leone 1988; Miller and Hurry 1983; Stone 1977)! Still, too many archaeologists see the documents as having a secondary role. This is evident in the many cultural resource management (CRM) site reports that make minimal links between the chapter describing the results of historical research and the chapter on the results of the field and artifact analysis efforts.

Don Hardesty proposed a system for evaluating a western mining site and its features in response to the way these sites have been evaluated in the past. He notes that most researchers deal with mining sites individually; therefore, the proposed research ques-

Table 1. Significance evaluation matrix for Gold Bar Mine features after Hardesty (1990: 48).

<i>Research Domain</i>	<i>World System</i>	<i>Contextual Level of Scale District</i>	<i>Locality</i>
Demography	Comparative data on patterns of mining frontier demography	Patterns of occupation/abandonment in district	Reconstruction of household population
Technology	Adaptive variety and change in industrial and appropriate technologies on the mining frontier	Adaptive change in industrial technologies imported into district	Reconstruction of mining/milling technologies
Economics	Adaptive patterns of economic production and distribution of the mining frontier	Patterns of economic distribution and production within the district	Reconstruction of household consumption and production
Social Organization	Patterns of mining frontier social structure and change	Patterns of "colony" social and ethnic relations	Reconstruction of household social status and ethnicity
Ideology	Emergence of "syncretic" mining frontier ideology	Interaction of Victorian and ethnic folk cultures	Reconstruction of household ideology

tions used to justify the study of these individual mining sites and features come across as trivial (Hardesty 1990: 42). Hardesty presented a "Significance Evaluation Matrix" for the mining site and its features that placed research issues within several contextual levels or scales and five key research domains (TAB. 1). This matrix served as "a systematic guide for pinpointing what kind of archaeological information has high value in the features being assessed" (Hardesty 1990: 47). Then, taking the integrity of the site and its features into account, Hardesty assigned scores of significance to the features. "Scoring was done qualitatively ..., classifying the value of each feature for each rating question into high, moderate, and low categories" (1990: 47). The site and features being evaluated were subsequently examined in terms of the number of areas that are ranked as having low, moderate, or high level of significance. This information was used to make a recommendation as to the importance of the site and features (Hardesty 1990: 46-49). The system that Hardesty proposed for mining sites is, like the one we propose for farmsteads, a step towards a system-

atic and objective evaluation of a site's research potential.

Roger Moore, Shawn Bonath Carlson, and Nicola Hubbard developed a numerical ranking system for the archaeological assessment of locations in downtown Houston, Texas, where a ballpark was being built (Moore, Carlson, and Hubbard 1997). Their system considered the following: initial settlement date; historical significance of the occupants of the site; extent of site disturbances; quality of available historical information; potential to provide information on poorly-documented socioeconomic groups; and the proposed level of impact from the proposed project (Moore, Carlson, and Hubbard 1997: 5). Under their system, a site could score up to 11 points. Those that scored more than seven points were considered significant. Sites settled before 1850 began their scores with four points, so the system is somewhat biased toward the earlier sites. Specific research questions or topics were not a factor in the scoring scheme.

Stephen J. Hinks, Denise L. Grantz, and Martin T. Fuess have proposed a ranking system for farmstead sites (Hinks, Grantz, and Fuess 1998). The categories in their system

include the length of occupation, number of families occupying the site, integrity of the site, association with significant themes, available documentation, settlement patterns, farm type, farm tenancy, and refuse disposal patterns. Various numerical scores are assigned to these categories, resulting in an "evaluation matrix." Under this scheme, sites destroyed by a catastrophic event are assigned a higher value than other sites. Also, sites with short occupations (i.e., less than 20 years) are considered of greater research value than sites of longer occupations.

We have expanded upon and refined these various approaches to evaluating site significance by developing a checklist of common traits for farmstead sites. These traits, which are derived from both documentary evidence and the archaeological record, have been given variable scores as a measure of how important each trait is in terms of providing data that can be used in performing research. The higher the resulting score, the greater the site's research potential. Assigning scores does involve subjectivity on our part, as the scores are based on our experience with sites in the Northeast. These scores, however, could and should be adjusted as they are applied to sites in other regions.

The checklist is offered as a tool to organize our observations and permit comparisons from one site to the next, as well as one project to the next. This checklist approach is also put forward in the hopes of generating discussion and suggestions on how best to deal with these types of sites in terms of the immediate needs of compliance with federal and state historic preservation laws and regulations.

Research Questions and the Evaluation of Significance

In reviewing our checklist (TAB. 2), one will observe that we are not using explicit research questions as a device for determining site significance. We know that this is contrary to how a site's significance is supposed to be determined following guidelines and bulletins published by the United States National Park Service and State Historic Preservation Offices.

Under those guidelines and bulletins, archaeological sites, such as farmstead sites, are usually determined to be significant under National Register Criterion D. For a site to be significant under Criterion D, it must "have yielded, or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history" (Townsend, Sprinkle, and Knoerl 1999: 23). Following the Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Historical Archaeological Sites and Districts (Townsend, Sprinkle, and Knoerl 1999), "information important in history" refers to a site's ability to provide data that can be used to address important research questions.

The need to define the important research questions in historical archaeology became an explicit endeavor with the plenary session and subsequent articles published in a 1988 volume of *Historical Archaeology* (see Honerkamp 1988). Today, historical archaeologists still bemoan the lack of appropriate research contexts for interpreting and evaluating sites, particularly 19th- and 20th-century farmsteads (see Klein et al., this volume). Delaware is one of the few states in the northeastern United States that has completed detailed historic contexts addressing the state's agricultural landscape and its research value (De Cunzo and Garcia 1992, 1993). Most other states' historic contexts, however, are extremely general, outdated, and often minimal in terms of content. Given this problem, how do we determine if a site has the potential to provide information important in history (i.e., National Register Criterion D), when we as a discipline are still struggling to determine what is important research? We have emphasized the word "important" because we see that historic-period sites, including farmsteads, are being determined eligible for listing in the National Register simply because they have the potential to provide any type of information. Whether or not this information is important in the context of understanding the past is never really addressed.

Beaudry (this volume) notes that many of the questions posed for the investigation and assessment of 19th- and 20th-century farmsteads come from archaeological investigations in urban contexts, and that archaeologists seem to forget the rural and agricultural con-

text in which these sites existed. Quite often, the research questions proposed as part of site evaluations have been used to package sites much like the way that shrink-wrap packages a cut of meat. In many cases, the research questions being used are more reductionist than shrink-wrap. One of the problems with our current approach to using research questions to define a site's significance is that we seem to be limited to very simple questions and suppositions because we know so little about a site at the National Register evaluation phase of a study. In many cases, once such sites are ultimately excavated as part of a data recovery program, we often find that our initial questions could not be answered, were too simplistic or not relevant given the nature of the archaeological and historical records that came to light during the excavations. We all have had such experiences.

There is clearly a need for usable historic contexts to guide our site evaluation process (see Klein et al., this volume), and we should proceed and develop these contexts. But what do we do in the interim as these contexts are being developed and tested? Can we afford to wait for the academy to develop the research questions, issues, topics, etc., to be used in our site evaluations; especially since academics do not have the time or resources to develop these research goals? Further, those in CRM currently do not have the time and budgets to develop the historic contexts we all desperately need, nor do the overworked staffs of the State Historic Preservation Offices. So what do we do now given that we encounter these types of sites on our projects on a daily basis?

We believe that using the checklist, or one like it, scholars will be able to identify the best sites in terms of research potential and help screen out those with low potential. The proposed checklist scheme uses site integrity as the critical measure of a site's significance. Here, integrity is "the level of preservation or quality of information contained within a ... site." (Townsend, Sprinkle, and Knoerl 1999: 14). As noted in the National Register Bulletin authored by Townsend, Sprinkle, and Knoerl:

In general, archaeological integrity may be demonstrated by the presence of:
1) spatial patterning of surface artifacts

and features that represent differential uses or activities; 2) spatial patterning of subsurface artifacts or features; or 3) lack of serious disturbances to the property's archaeological deposits.

In his article "We've Got Thousands of These! What Makes an Historic Farmstead Significant," Wilson (1990) suggests some questions that can be used to make preliminary determinations of a site's significance in the context of National Register eligibility:

- 1) Are features and archaeological deposits temporally and spatially distinct? This concern relates to the National Register question of integrity, both in terms of modern disturbance and sequential historic occupation.
- 2) Was destruction of superstructure catastrophic (as opposed to deliberate)? This is another integrity question, concerned with demolition practices and effects of natural disasters on site data classes. Generally, superstructure demolition or deliberate burning will leave a more distorted artifact and feature record than will such catastrophic events as natural fires and floods.
- 3) Is there a good record of successive occupations, relative to the record for similar sites in the study area? A sense of the extent and reliability of the archival record within the area is necessary to answer this question (Wilson 1990: 30).

We would argue that most historical archaeologists would agree that a farmstead site is potentially significant if it contains features and primary artifact deposits, and also exhibits the above three characteristics listed in Townsend, Sprinkle, and Knoerl (1999), or if the above questions posed by Wilson (1990) are answered in the affirmative. We may not know what specific questions may be addressed through the investigation of these sites, but our experience tells us that the research potential of such sites is high.

The Checklist Evaluation System

The proposed system evaluates seven categories of information. In each category, sev-

Table 2. Farmstead Checklist.

		<i>Points</i>	<i>Site</i>
Site Type	Country estate	1	
	Owner-occupied farm	2	
	Tenant farm	3	
	Tenant farm where the name of the tenant is known	4	
	Enslaved African-American site	4	
	Ethnic minority or African-American, add 2 points	2	
	Unknown	0	
Structural Evidence	Farm and out-building standing	5	
	Farm house standing	3	
	Ruins with discernible orientation of buildings	2	
	No visible structural information	0	
Archaeological Evidence	Intact features with primary deposits	6	
	Intact features	4	
	Discreet deposits and/or assemblages that are not feature deposits	3	
	Sheet trash clustered near buildings	2	
	Unplowed site	2	
	Field scatter, high concentrations of domestic & architectural artifacts	1	
	No intact features	-4	
Documents	Deeds depending on the level of detail	1-3	
	Tax records	1	
	Write up in county history	1	
	Probate records, depending on detail	2-3	
	Insurance records	3	
	Diaries	4	
	Account records, depending on detail and length of time	2-4	
	Photos of site, depending on how much they document	2-4	
Oral History	Long term occupants of site	3	
	Old neighbors of the site	2	
	Knowledgeable local historian	1	
Occupation Period	Between WWI and WWII	1	
	1880 to WWI	2	
	1861-1880	3	
	1815-1861	4	
Length of Occupation	Less than 10 years	5	
	Less than 20 years	3	
	Known catastrophic end date to site	3	
	Burnt site, fire date not known	2	
	More than 20 years	0	

eral subcategories are given a point value. Many of these categories and subcategories are similar to the traits listed in the above referenced National Register Bulletin (Townsend, Sprinkle, and Knoerl 1999) and discussed by Wilson (1990) and others. Table 2 presents the checklist in the form of a single-page worksheet for duplication. The worksheet has two right-hand columns. The first lists the points associated with each subcategory. The second column is for writing in points assigned to actual sites. The total points assigned will be a general estimate of the research potential of the site, and thus its significance under National Register Criterion D.

Site/Occupation Type

This category on the checklist refers to the type of owner or occupant of the site. Additional points are added to country estates and owner and tenant sites occupied by ethnic minorities. We have assigned lower point scores to owner-occupied sites and country estates because these types of occupations are more fully recorded in documentary records, and will therefore gain points in the "Documents" section of the checklist. We rank sites occupied by tenant farmers and ethnic minorities a little higher because these types of sites are usually not well documented. Sites occupied by enslaved African-Americans are also given a higher score. These scores do not suggest that one type of occupation has a greater value than another. Rather, each of these types has equal research value, providing archaeological evidence of the diversity of the region's agrarian history.

Structural Evidence

We give high points for standing structures because farmsteads with extant buildings provide the archaeologists with an immediate orientation to the site, indicating productive areas for archaeological testing. Standing structures or ruins also can provide dating information on the site and provide an additional data set to be used in studying and interpreting the property.

Archaeological Evidence

The scores that are assigned here should be obvious. We wish to point out, however, that we have distinguished intact features (e.g., wells, privies, trash pits, and trash dumps) from discrete deposits and/or assemblages. The latter may represent evidence of landscape changes within a farmstead site, and thus not only encompass an artifact assemblage but also include the soils that have been moved, redeposited, or in some way altered within the boundaries of the property. These types of deposits are important if we are interested in investigating changes in a farm's landscape (see Baugher, Beaudry, and De Cunzo this volume). In addition to the various scores assigned to different types of deposits, we have provided for some negative scores for situations where sites have been badly disturbed by post-occupation activities.

Consideration of "Archaeological Evidence" raises an issue that was also discussed during the 1997 CNEHA workshop: the level of effort required to evaluate the significance of a farmstead site (see Klein et. al., this volume). Most State Historic Preservation Office guidelines require or recommend that shovel test pits (i.e., a Phase I survey) should be used to locate and initially investigate a site. Is this approach appropriate on farmstead sites and does it readily identify the categories of "Archaeological Evidence" listed in the checklist? Given that the function of Phase I fieldwork is to establish if there is or is not a site in a given location, it makes little sense to perform such a survey when historical records, ruins, vegetation patterns or standing structures clearly show a site is present. It would make more sense to move directly to a Phase II evaluation effort, using both shovel test pits and excavation units. More extensive testing has a much better chance of resulting in a meaningful evaluation of the research potential of a farmstead site (see McCann and Ewing, and Klein and Baugher, this volume, and Shaffer 1998 for further discussions on this issue).

Documentary Evidence

Point systems under documentary evidence range from a low of one to two points for those types of documents that are the most common, to a high of three to four points for the types of records that are rarely found. High scores are also given for those types of documents that will have a high relationship to what will be recovered from the site. These latter types include diaries, accounting records, and probate inventories that have good descriptive detail. Deeds can vary considerably from a simple sale of the land to those that include a description of the buildings and improvements to the land. Thus there are variable scores depending on the level of detail the records contain. Though deeds are generally assigned a lower score, we do not infer that they are of less research value than other documents. Clearly deeds provide the initial information on a site's ownership and in turn the site's occupants or category of occupant (e.g., tenant). Other document groups, however, are assigned higher scores given their linkage to the material and structural elements within a farmstead site.

Oral History

Oral history can vary quite a bit in terms of information quality depending on the informant's memory and their willingness to convey that information. Oral history can also be time consuming. A site that has good contexts, excellent documentary records, and good oral informants has the highest potential for gaining an insight into the past and for conducting research that will have widespread interest to the public.

Occupation Period and Length of Occupation

We have given more points to sites from earlier periods because they are less common than later sites; however, we would not compare the point scores of sites from different time periods. The reason for this is the availability of documents. For example, sites from the earliest periods will not have oral informants and are less likely to have documentation such as photographs. Also, the periods selected here represent dramatic social and economic changes in the United States and

Canada (e.g., the War of 1812, the Civil War and aftermath, and the rise of heavy industry). Sites from these periods cannot be considered in the same historic context. We would compare, therefore, site scores within the time periods listed in the checklist under "Occupation Period."

The "Length of Occupation" score is higher for short-term sites for several reasons. First, a site occupied for a short period of time often provides tighter dates for the artifacts than the artifacts do for the site. Given this situation, any short-term site can make an important contribution to the chronologies used on all sites. Furthermore, short-term sites provide dates for those types of artifacts that are difficult to date such as metal tools and hardware. Sites with catastrophic endings, particularly of a known date, have a good potential to help improve our material chronologies. In addition, catastrophic endings often preserve types of artifacts that are not normally recovered in other sites. Burned sites, for example, often have very well-preserved iron (see Doroszenko, this volume). Sites that end in catastrophic events are of particular value because everything goes through the same depositional process at one point in time rather than being accumulated over time.

It should be noted that sites with long occupations may have discrete deposits and assemblages, thus these sites would be assigned a higher score under the "Archaeological Evidence" category when compared to a site with a long occupation that has no such archaeological contexts. Beaudry (this volume) provides a strong argument on the importance of sites with long land use histories that contain these and similar types of deposits and features.

Typical Scores for Sites from the Periods Outlined Above

Using the checklist that we have just described, Table 3 provides typical scores for owner-occupied sites. These scores were generated by pulling from the checklist the most common scores that sites are likely to have for the four time periods listed under "occupation period." The scoring was based on our experience with a number of typical 19th- and 20th-

Table 3. Typical scores for owner occupied farmstead sites.

	1815 to 1861	1861 to 1880	1880 to WW I	WW I to WW II
Site Type	2	2	2	2
Structural Evidence	2	3	3	5
Archaeological Evidence	4	4	4	4
Documents	5	6	7	9
Oral History	1	1	1	6
Length of Occupation	0	0	0	0
Period of Occupation	4	3	2	1
Totals	18	19	19	27

century farmstead sites in the region. Sites that have scores below these numbers probably would not be the best ones to excavate. Sites that score higher than these scores probably have a good research potential. In comparing sites that have been scored with this system, we suggest that owner-occupied sites be separated from sites that were occupied by non-owners, given that is that owner-occupied sites are generally going to have higher scores than sites occupied by non-owners. If the sites are not compared separately, then the owner-occupied sites will almost always be ranked higher than sites occupied by non-owners.

Table 4 illustrates typical accumulated scores for sites occupied by non-land-owners. As in Table 3, these scores were taken from the checklist based on our experience with these sites. It should be noted that a value of "0" has been assigned to the length of occupation. This was done since information on occupation length is generally not known for these types of sites. In both Tables 3 and 4 you can see that the score goes up through time which helps to bring home the point that site scores should not be compared across time or across types of ownership when determining which

sites are important. Again, sites that score below these averages probably are not strong candidates for research. Those with accumulative point scores above these numbers probably would have more potential for research.

We recommend that our proposed ranking scheme be tested on sites that have already been evaluated in terms of significance. This should include sites that were determined to be important and those that were not, and sites that were excavated through a data recovery program. This exercise would provide an interesting test of the proposed system, and may highlight which cumulative scores represent sites of high, moderate, and low research potential, based on actual site data.

Summary

We want to stress that the proposed ranking scheme is a tool for organizing our thoughts and observations based on an examination of a site's historical and archaeological record. This approach provides a systematic and informed means to evaluate site significance. It is time that we begin creating these types of tools and move away from what often

Table 4. Typical scores for tenant occupied farmstead sites.

	1815 to 1861	1861 to 1880	1880 to WW I	WW I to WW II
Site Type	3	3	3	3
Structural Evidence	0	0	2	3
Archaeological Evidence	4	4	4	4
Documents	1	2	3	3
Oral History	1	1	1	3
Length of Occupation	0	0	0	0
Period of Occupation	4	3	2	1
Totals	13	13	15	17

appears to be benign neglect of these important resources.

This ranking scheme is offered as an interim step while we as a discipline work toward the development of usable historic contexts on farmsteads from which significance evaluations should flow. Development of these historic contexts, however, will not be an easy task. As noted above, there is much dissatisfaction on how research on farmstead sites has been conducted to date. How will we define the research issues that will be of value to our study of these types of sites? Who will identify these issues and how will they be applied to CRM projects? How do we evaluate all of the research that has already been performed? Is the development of usable research-oriented historic contexts even feasible or possible? These issues are more fully explored in the final article in this volume, and will not be discussed here any further. We just want to point out what lies ahead as we grapple with evaluating the significance of farmsteads.

We would not be surprised that as we proceed to address these issues involving historic context development, and review previous investigations of these sites, we find that the best "research" on farmsteads comes during and after fieldwork, documentary research, and artifact analyses are performed. We feel that this research will have little or no connection with what we thought we would have learned from the site before we put the first shovel into the ground. If this does become the case, then the current process of evaluating the significance of farmsteads, following federal and state procedures and guidelines, will need a major overhaul.

Acknowledgements

We greatly appreciate all of the comments we received from the other authors in this volume. Their criticism of our approach helped us to better define our objectives in presenting such a ranking scheme to our colleagues for consideration. We also wish to acknowledge the comments we received from Mary C. Beaudry, David J. Grettler, Skip

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