

## The Thomas Daniels Homestead Site Waterford, Connecticut

The buried remains of the Thomas Daniels Homestead were discovered during an archaeological



survey of a new highway interchange proposed by the Connecticut Department of Transportation in Waterford, Connecticut. The construction of the house was recorded in the diary of local resident Joshua Hempstead, who noted boarding and shingling the house with Daniels in early 1712. The following summer Daniels married Hannah Keeney, whose father had owned the homestead land, then within the town of New London. Thomas Daniels was a middling-sort yeoman, with a house, 40 acres of lands, an orchard, and livestock. On March 7, 1735 he died of "pleurisy" and the homestead was sold to a wealthy local merchant named Matthew Stewart, with the proviso that Hannah retained a right to occupy the house as long as she lived. Hannah died nine years later, and the property was then enveloped in a large land lottery scheme devised by Stewart when he went bankrupt following the seizure of his ships by French privateers. Archaeological investigations at the site discovered the remains of a small one-room end-chimney house that had been expanded with a large earthfast (post-in-

ground) addition, providing the first evidence of this ancient construction technique in Connecticut. A small earthfast lean-to was also added to the back of the house to house a small blacksmith shop. The entire house and yard were excavated. Based on the recovered artifacts, the house was occupied until the 1770s, but the names of the later occupants were not recorded. Among the thousands of artifacts recovered are food remains, ceramics, table glass, tools and clothing items, which have provided one of the most revealing accounts of colonial lifeways in southeastern Connecticut. A website on the Thomas Daniels Homestead Site provides a detailed account of the archaeology and the Daniels family: <http://www.ahs-inc.biz/Daniels/index.html>

