

Goodsell Homestead Site (Site 99-31) North Branford, Connecticut

Archaeological studies were undertaken as part of a Connecticut Department of Transportation project of improving the intersection of State Route 22 and Village Street in North Branford. The Phase II archaeological investigation determined that the site was a significant archaeological resource eligible for the National Register, but because there were no prudent or feasible alternatives to avoiding the site, construction impacts were mitigated through a Phase III Data Recovery program. Site 99-31, on the southeast corner of Route 22 and Village Street, represents the ca. 1737 homestead remains of Samuel Goodsell and his family. After Samuel's death in 1751, his widow Lydia lived at the homestead with her unmarried daughter Martha until



Reconstructed Posset Pot, ca. 1750, Site 99-31

the 1790s. The Goodsell family were yeomen farmers who practiced a diversified and mixed agricultural and craft production household economy. The excavations identified ten features, including two cellars (associated with the "Old House" and the "New House" mentioned in Samuel Goodsell's 1752 probate inventory), a chimney base, and a possible food storage pit. A long linear midden was identified along the east side of the houses.

Around the time of Lydia's death in 1797, the Goodsell house was abandoned, the house structures removed, the cellar holes filled in with soil, cobbles and artifacts, and the site converted into an agricultural field. The site remained hidden by cultivation for 200 years until its discovery during the initial archaeological survey. The excavations recovered a total of 30,767 artifacts, including architectural hardware, cooking implements, tablewares, tools, personal accessories, and bone and shell. Analysis of the archaeological and primary documentary data identified a variety of activities at the Goodsell homestead, including foodways, textile production, metalwork, beadwork, and the repair of ceramics and windows. The Goodsell Site provides an important record of a "middling sort" Connecticut Yankee family, and sheds new light on the lives of 18th-century women, who are rarely noted in the historical record.