What the Artifacts Mean

The decorations on the broken pottery can be used to date them to the mid-1800s. These types of plates, cups, bowls, and jugs were produced at that time, mostly in England or in other places far from Ramptown. The wide variety of pottery types suggests that the freedom seekers may have obtained the objects from their Quaker neighbors, purchased them in local markets, or bartered their labor to acquire them. The mixed nature of the collection also stands in contrast to the matched ceramic place settings used to symbolize new dining standards that became popular among people of the landowning class.

It is likely that numerous sites associated with the Underground Railroad remain undiscovered in Cass County. Archaeology can help identify sites that are often ignored in official documents such as plat maps and the census. These sites should be preserved so that the information they contain about the Underground Railroad and Cass County history is not destroyed by further plowing and lost forever.

No matched dishes like this Early Flow Blue Transferware pattern were found at Ramptown.

A cabin in Ohio similar to those built at Ramptown

Courtesy Brian Stansberry/Creative Commons, bstansberry@tntech.edu

What Was Found

Most of the artifacts found by the archaeologists were broken pieces of pottery, glass, and brick fragments that had been discarded in the 1800s. Archaeologists know the age of the sites based on the types of pottery and glass that were popular at the time. Of the 12 sites they located, five were probably places where the Ramptown residents had lived. The domestic nature of the artifacts and the size of the distribution scatters are consistent with what one would expect to find immediately within and outside of the cabins built by the Ramptown people.

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