

## Faunal Remains from Jackson's Mill, Lewis County, West Virginia

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### Abstract

*A small faunal sample obtained by excavation at Jackson's Mill (46LE24), Lewis County, West Virginia, is described and analyzed. The sample is dominated by pig and other domesticated animals typical of a Nineteenth century farmstead, supplemented by deer and a few small forest species.*

### Introduction

Jackson's Mill, Lewis County, West Virginia, is a Nineteenth Century grist mill and farmstead complex named for Edward Jackson, who purchased the land in 1801. It is historically significant as the boyhood home of General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson. A mill building constructed by Edward Jackson in 1837 to replace an earlier mill destroyed by fire still stands. Nass (this volume) provides a more detailed history of the site and describes excavations conducted at the site.

### Faunal Remains

A complete listing of the faunal remains by species recovered is given in Table 1. Faunal material was retrieved from 10 features as well as 25 other excavation units. The sample is a relatively small one, consisting of 586 bones or bone fragments, 138 (23.5%) of which are identifiable to species. Nearly two-thirds of the identifiable items represent pig (85), followed in rapidly decreasing numbers by cow (16), deer (11), chicken (8), squirrel and sheep (5 each), raccoon, groundhog, and opossum (2 each), and horse (1). The bulk of the sample (identified and unidentified fragments combined) represents mammal bone (560 items, 95.6%), with only minor amounts of bird (25 items, 4.3%), and fish (1 item represented).

Distribution of the sample by feature provides no information on the age of the feature, type of feature, or seasonality. Not unexpectedly, pig (*Sus*) is represented in virtually all of the features that yielded faunal material. These pig remains include 1 individual under 6 weeks of age in Feature 1, an individual 1-1½ years old in Feature 9, a 2 year old individual in Feature 10, one 3 years old in Feature 12, and another *ca.* 3 years of age in Feature 19. (Ages are based on tooth eruption and wear, following Silver 1970) A single sheep (*Ovis*) mandible fragment from an individual 2½-3 years of age occurred in Feature 7, a refuse pit dating to pre-1845. Two fragments of cow (*Bos*) pelvis

in Feature 10 represent the only other species found in features.

The faunal sample recovered from the non-feature portion of the Jackson's Mill excavations is also dominated by pig. At least 3 additional individuals, 2 in the 2-3 year age bracket and 1 immature (deciduous left upper third molar), are represented. Overall, based on development of the canine teeth, boars are only slightly less common than sows (2 to 3), though this is a very small sample. Few fragments show butchering marks or saw marks, but particularly unusual is a set of mandibles from a sow approximately 2 years old, in which the bottom of the mandible was sawn off (Figure 1). The purpose of such a cut is unknown, as it cannot have been related to removal of the head, mandible, or jaw.

Cow remains from the non-feature sample represent at least 2 individuals, 2-2½ years in age, the other 4-5 years old. Horse is represented by an isolated incisor, sheep by 4 elements from adjacent excavation units, and chicken by 8 elements found mostly in adjacent excavation units, the sheep and chicken bones probably representing a single individual of each species.

Deer, the only non-domestic species represented in any of the features, albeit by only 2 items, is relatively common in the rest of the excavation. Gray squirrel is represented by at least two individuals; groundhog, raccoon, and opossum by one individual each. These five species may not have been utilized by the Historic occupants of the Jackson's Mill site (none of the elements show any signs of butchering), but it is believed likely that the local fauna was utilized to supplement the pioneer diet.

More perplexing is the presence of 13 mussel shells (Table 2), representing at least 11 individuals and 8 distinct species. These undoubtedly came from nearby West Fork River, as did the single fish bone (representing a small, unidentifiable catostomid). The shellfish may have been collected by inhabitants of the Jackson farmstead for food, or, possibly, for fertilizer; they may have been collected by children, or they may be related to a nearby prehistoric component. It is also possible that they were collected by raccoons or even hogs. Hildreth (1828) notes that hogs would spend entire days rooting for fresh-water clams, and certainly hogs seem to have been abundant enough at the Jackson's Mill site.

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Table 1

**Distribution of mammal, bird and fish bone at  
Jackson's Mill (46LE24)**

Species	Number
<i>Sus scrofa</i> (pig)	85
<i>Bos taurus</i> (cow)	16
<i>Odocoileus virginianus</i> (deer)	11
<i>Ovis aries</i> (sheep)	5
<i>Sciurus monax</i> (gray squirrel)	5
<i>Marmota monax</i> (groundhog)	2
<i>Procyon lotor</i> (raccoon)	2
<i>Didelphis virginianus</i> (opossum)	2
<i>Equus</i> (horse)	1
<i>Gallus gallus</i> (chicken)	8
Unidentified mammal	316
Unidentified burned mammal	115
Unidentified bird	16
Unidentified burned bird	1
Unidentified fish	1
Total	586



Figure 1. Set of mandibles from a sow in which the bottom of the mandible was sawn off.