

## 6. CONCLUSION

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The excavation at Beaverbank Place has yielded significant insight into the history and development of the tannery whose structural remains were preserved remarkably well. Moreover, the excavation has enabled a more comprehensive understanding of the earlier land use of the site in relation to the evolution of Edinburgh's industrial and technological history spanning almost two centuries. The excavation also provided a valuable opportunity to delve into part of the city's social history during the 19th century, capturing the intangible cultural heritage and psychogeography associated with the site, which is typically overlooked in developer-funded archaeological projects.

The historical account begins with place names, purportedly tracing their origin to the production of 'beaver-felt' hats and gunpowder. It also traces the

family history of the Johnstons who were displaced in 1868 by the Old Town Improvement Act (Chambers 1868) and it carries on with the social and financial relationship of the family associated with the running of the tannery.

The excavation area presented an array of power sources. Beaverbank hosted mills powered by water, later by steam engines and latterly by electricity. Machinery transmitted movement by means of drive belts, initially of leather (which could have been produced on site) and later superseded by rubber.

Through the combination of archaeological and historical evidence, it has been possible to identify the diverse historical and social narratives associated with the site which, despite their self-contained nature within chronological boundaries, interconnected to create a cohesive and fluid biography of Beaverbank Place.