

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

As this research began we identified four areas deserving of additional research. One was the ice house, where we felt further work might help resolve issues on its origin and function. A second area was the slave settlement to the east of the main house. There we wished to address general questions regarding lifeways, but we also noted that the research might help resolve the question of why this slave settlement seemed to have such a low archaeological visibility. A third research topic was the slave settlement near the main house, identified in the available map as a row of structures suggestive of house servants. We hoped that research there would provide the data necessary to allow comparisons with the more eastern settlement – comparing and contrasting status in the slave population. The final area, southwest of the main house, was recognized through high densities of ceramics, brick, and shell – but the area was not known to have structures based on the historic research. Consequently, research in that area was explorative with a goal of possibly identifying earlier plantation assemblages.

Turning to the historic documentation, we envisioned two additional research topics. We wished to obtain oral history from both whites and blacks in the community to document the plantation activities. This research was motivated by our realization that the community had changed dramatically since the senior author began research in Christ Church only 30 years ago. With the passing of another decade it seemed likely that much of oral history would be lost.

Data recovery plans were developed to allow the investigation of these topics. For the ice house we proposed interior and exterior excavations. For the slave settlement we desired block excavations; but with the low visibility, we thought it appropriate to begin with even more intensive testing than was used during the testing stage (Trinkley et al. 2003). A similar strategy was proposed for the area of the house servants. To investigate the area southwest of the main house we again proposed very close interval testing followed by block excavations.

The historical research would focus on dairying – a farming strategy about which there was little information. Secondary sources were generally vague and often contradictory. No thorough historical study had been done, and very few who participated in these dairying activities were still alive.

In addition to these broad research interests, other avenues opened as the work progressed. For example, the discovery of a burial dating from the colonial period posed a range of questions. What was the ethnicity? Why was this individual buried in the midst of the settlement? When DNA study revealed the child to be an African American, the topics were clarified, but still perplexing. Why was this child buried here, rather than with other African American slaves?

We examined pollen and phytoliths in an effort to better identify cultigens on the plantation, as well as the property's environmental setting. These data sets also offer an opportunity to compare and contrast results with the ethnobotanical study. The recovery of plaster provided another opportunity to

document often overlooked architectural information.

This summary will briefly address each of these research topics, providing a brief analysis of findings and the need for future research.

The Ice House

The architectural details - most fundamentally the very hard Portland cement mortar - suggest that the structure was constructed in the late nineteenth century. This is generally consistent with the oral history and is consistent with the rise of dairying activities that would have required the cooling of milk. Artifacts from the building predate the structure, yielding mean dates in the first and second decades of the nineteenth century. When the assemblage is examined, there is little indication of materials deposited during the building's actual use. There are no decalcomania or tinted whitewares. There is no manganese glass. Yet concrete is found all the way into Level 4 and we were unable to find any evidence that this structure pre-dates ca. 1900.

Although a late addition on the plantation, the ice house documents a structure type for which we have few postbellum or antebellum examples. It seems easy for archaeologists to overlook such small and unimpressive structures in favor of studying the underclass or those wielding power. Nevertheless, the ice house represented an important component of the plantation landscape, tying into not only the farm's late history as a major dairying operation but also the aspirations of many in state government to encourage this diversification.

The excavations revealed thick, hollow walls, partial below grade construction, a flat roof that was probably covered soil - all providing good insulating characteristics. The interior floors were sloped to provide drainage, probably to an underground French drain. In

addition to these construction details, the faunal study found an unusually high incidence of turtle and fish bones - possibly suggesting that the building was used to cool foods as well as milk.

Thus, this research has addressed both the origin and function of this structure. It would, however, be useful to have other late nineteenth century structures available for comparison.

The Slave Settlement

Our research identified two distinct areas - the western slave settlement with a mean date of about 1799 and the eastern settlement with a mean date of about 1807.

The research did confirm the testing conclusion that the settlement had a low archaeological visibility. After excavation and the failure to identify any in situ architectural features (such as chimneys or piers), combined with the recovered artifacts, we believe that the structures were ephemeral. This would explain the low archaeological visibility and is interesting since the settlement, based on the artifacts, dates into the late antebellum. This is a period when reformers placed pressure on slave owners to improve housing - and when we see far more substantial dwellings for African American slaves. The findings from Youghal suggest that at least some settlements either did not participate in these reforms or did so very late. The use of these ephemeral dwellings seems at odds with the historic evidence of other improvements on the plantation and the tract's economic history.

At most slave settlements we find ceramics dominated by hollow wares - consistent with one-pot meals. At the Youghal settlement, however, we find that the ratio of plates to bowls shifts from 0.9:1 with creamware to 1.5:1 with pearlware to 1:1 for whitewares. This seems to place an unexpected reliance on flatwares, especially through time. The

importance of flatwares is even clearer at the eastern slave settlement, where the ratio range from 2.4:1 for creamwares to 1.1:1 for pearlwares to 1.5:1 for whitewares.

We suggest that the difference between the two may be associated with the closer proximity of the main house to the western settlement – and so we may be seeing a difference in status between the two settlements.

Neither of the settlements, however, has a particularly high proportion of expensive wares, suggestive of receiving cast-offs from the planter's table. In fact, high cost wares are less common at the western settlement than at the eastern settlement more distant from the main house.

All this leads us to suggest that the owner – for reasons not entirely clear at this point – purchased wares for the slave settlement, but chose to emphasize flatwares over hollow wares. One explanation, of course, is that this was an issue of control (either tacit or explicit). Or it may be as simple as the owner being out of touch with the needs (or desires) of his slave population. Alternatively, it may be an issue of economics, with these wares less expensive or more readily available in the Charleston market.

Although the faunal assemblage from the slave excavations is dominated by poorer head cuts, the overall collection is distinct from what has been proposed as typical of nineteenth century slave settlements. Domestic species, primarily beef with some swine, dominate the collections. The next most important contributor to the slave diet was deer. This not only indicates the importance of hunting as a procurement strategy, but also means that the slaves were in possession of both fire arms and the time to engage in hunting. It may also suggest that the owner chose to minimize his contribution as a means of reducing his investment in their maintenance (consistent with the minimal structures present).

The House Servants' Quarters

Our study of the slave settlement nearest the house was perhaps the least successful of the various research activities. Most fundamentally we had a very difficult time determining where these structures might be located. A very large area was examined by testing, with extensive bush hogging to allow access to densely overgrown areas of the property. These tests produced very sparse remains and the collections were often dominated by rather recent materials. We concluded, after much effort, that the structures we hoped to identify had been heavily impacted by construction of the dairy barn and probably the ice house, as well as by the bulldozing of the burned Fuller/Auld House. With all of the various activities, we were unable to identify any deposits that were not in some way affected by more recent materials.

Thus our excavations were confined to two areas and this work produced a mixture of materials dating to the early nineteenth century (mean date of about 1828) but with ceramics such as tinted whiteware and decalcomania as well as solarized (manganese) glass – indicative of occupation continuing into the first quarter of the twentieth century.

With the mixture identified from these areas little can be said regarding the antebellum occupation. However, like the slave settlement areas, flatwares dominate the collection and there is a mixture of both expensive and inexpensive wares. Consequently, there are no obvious – or seemingly significant – differences between this settlement area and the slave row to the east.

It has been suggested that privileged slaves – the “aristocracy” of skilled artisans, drivers, conjurors, and house servants – formed a special elite set off from the mass of field hands. The privileges might involve either special items, such as food, clothing, or housing,

or might be reflected in preferred jobs, such as driver or mason.

We could certainly interpret the findings from Youghal as suggesting that status and position among the slave population was based on intangibles. Dusinger (1996), for example, notes that while some privileges might be detectable, such as better clothing or food, other privileges such as better medical care might not be. Moreover, there seemed to be a strong effort to ensure that all privileges remained as privilege and did not migrate into a "right" – and this required that the privileges be frequently removed. It may therefore be far more difficult than we anticipated to observe privilege in the archaeological record.

The Colonial Area Southwest of the Main House

It was in this area that early testing revealed dense remains, including brick and shell, but our documentary research provided no clues of structures. The archaeological excavations identified dense remains dating to the early colonial period – exhibiting a mean ceramic date of about 1756. This date suggests deposition by the earliest Barksdale owners or perhaps even earlier. The study also identified the source of the remains – a nearly square tabby brick structure measuring roughly 13 by 12 feet. Stairs on the north face provided access to a semi-subterranean plastered basement. The archaeological remains suggest a superstructure of frame construction and glazed windows, although there is no evidence of a chimney.

This building is very similar to the north and south pavilions found at the Edwards House on Spring Island (Trinkley 1990). These pavilions measure about 15 feet square and also contained flood-prone basements. Based on architectural and archaeological evidence, one may have served as a plantation office, while the other was probably little more than storage.

Since the structure at Youghal was filled with trash, deposited as the structure was abandoned, it is impossible to determine the date of construction. The builder's trench, however, suggests that little was present in the immediate area when the structure was built – suggesting a date in the first half of the eighteenth century and consistent with the mean ceramic date. A similar office or storage function is also consistent with our findings.

This building, however, is isolated – we have found no other evidence of early eighteenth century structures. On the other hand, we discovered that early colonial artifacts extended off the survey tract to the west – into an area already developed by the time of our work and cleared as a result of the original survey (Brockington et al. 1987). Therefore, it may be that additional colonial structures were present beyond the current study area.

Nevertheless, we were fortunate to document this very early plantation building since it may be the earliest Christ Church structure identified archaeologically. It certainly reveals that there was a sophisticated architectural tradition present during the first half of the eighteenth century. It also adds to our catalog another type of plantation structure other than the typical main house and slave house.

It also opens up an interesting and previously unexplored research topic. Wayne (1992:53) notes that by the 1740s, when Charleston's building code required the use of fireproof materials, there were a number of brick makers in and around Charleston. With bricks plentiful why would a Christ Church planter rely on "tabby" or shell and lime bricks? Were such bricks significantly less costly than fired clay? Were they used only when burned brick were unavailable? And how prevalent were these clay alternatives?

At first glance it seems that the cost of collecting shell, combined with the cost of

producing lime, would closely equal the cost of burning bricks – but this is a topic that has not been adequately explored. Similarly, we have no good data for the commonness of “tabby” bricks. Might they have been used only where they could not be seen or would be parged? Clearly, additional documentary research is necessary, combined with a more careful accounting of brick materials recovered through archaeological studies.

Dairy Farming in Christ Church

This work provides a brief economic and social context for dairying in Christ Church Parish. From its origins in the antebellum, dairying activity – like other farming activities – declined in the postbellum. There was a brief recovery in the early twentieth century, but this collapsed, again with much of South Carolina’s agricultural economy, in the 1920s. Nevertheless, interest grew and the number of dairies gradually increased. Dairying, however, was in many respects even more labor intensive as other agricultural pursuits. As a result, the small producers found the undertaking onerous and – like the Auld family – left dairying quickly as wage-earning jobs became available as a result of World War II.

The only feature associated with dairying investigated at Youghal was the ice house. In retrospect, it might have been useful to also explore the dairy barn. The historical research reveals inconsistencies in the importance of dairying and how fully the effort was supported by the State Department of Agriculture and Clemson College. It might be useful to examine surviving dairy barns from the period and determine if they follow a pattern and, if so, how closely. Our documentary study has failed to reveal sources of information that might address this topic without recourse to archaeological studies. Additional consideration should be given to archaeological research should further evidence of twentieth century low country dairying come to light.

The African American Burial

A single African American burial was identified in the colonial area, about 15 feet south of the colonial structure’s southern wall. The burial was of a child between the ages of 5 and 9. The individual was laid out as an extended burial, oriented west-northwest by east-southeast, with the head oriented to the east-southeast. The absence of clothing items suggests burial in a shroud and no coffin remains were present. While there is evidence of systemic stress, possibly related to diet, there are no indications of the cause or manner of death.

We are left a number of unanswered questions. Why was this child buried only feet from a utility building – and not with other African American slaves elsewhere on the plantation? Was the child in some way special? Or perhaps for some reason excluded from burial with other enslaved African Americans? Why would the plantation owner accept the burial of a slave in his yard area?

While archaeologists have done a reasonably good job at discovering the locations of plantations and even slave settlements (often with the assistance of plentiful maps and plats showing their locations), relatively few African American burial grounds (which are rarely shown on plats) have been identified in the plantation setting. Often those found can be affiliated with antebellum mortuary practices only through proximity, the presence of postbellum burials, a recognition of the importance of place in African American culture, and perhaps oral history.

Consequently, we presume that the burial grounds found on Spring Island only 300 feet from the slave settlement (Trinkley 1990:90-93) or the burial grounds on Jehossee Island only 350 feet from the slave settlement (Trinkley et al. 2002:138-142) represent use into the antebellum. However, in our studies we could identify only one historic account – Roupelmond Plantation – where the antebellum

plantation was identified and in that case it was about 1,000 feet from the slave settlement (Trinkley and Hacker 1999).

At Youghal, in spite of an intensive archaeological investigation conducted in 1987, no slave cemetery – in fact no African American burial ground of any description – was ever identified. It seems unlikely that a plantation the size of Youghal would not have had a location for the burial of its enslaved population. Yet such a location has not been found. In fact, the location of most plantation cemeteries consistently remains unidentified.

The point of this discussion is that we have relatively little data on pre-Civil War African American mortuary practices. Thus we cannot with any certainty comment on the uniqueness of the isolated burial at Youghal. Nevertheless, this finding should be a caution to other researchers and regulatory agencies.

Other Research

These investigations also identified what appears to be a garden folly or planter in an area of the site that was being stripped in an effort to identify servants' quarters. The artifacts from this site area provide a mean ceramic date of about 1790, consistent with the Barksdale settlement.

The item found consisted of dry-laid "tabby" bricks, identical to those in the foundation of the colonial structure about 130 feet to the southwest. The artifacts, while heavily mixed with debris bulldozed from the burned Fuller/Auld House, seem consistent. There is little doubt that the colonial structure and this feature date from the same occupation.

If our interpretation of it as a garden feature is correct, then this suggests a more elaborate plantation development than might otherwise have been expected for this time period.

Conclusions

This research successfully addressed three of the four major research topics – exploring the ice house, reconstructing the slave settlement, and expanding our understanding of early colonial settlement on the plantation. Only our efforts to investigate the house servants' quarters were thwarted by modern construction and demolition.

This research provides valuable data on plantation architecture – allowing us to better understand colonial development as well as very late construction specific to twentieth century dairying activities. It also allowed us to examine slave lifeways at a "typical" Christ Church Parish plantation. This has expanded our understanding of what should be considered characteristic of both diet and ceramic use – as well as providing some indications of very late improvements to slave architecture.