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A Summary of the Results of the 2000 Archaeological Project at Charles Towne Landing State Historic Site

By Stanley South

The joint SC Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism-SC Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology/University of South Carolina and Charles Towne Landing State Historic Site (PRT-SCIAA/USC-CTL)

"Exploring Charles Towne 1670-1680" archaeological project carried out in 2000, has as major goals: 1) the location of evidence for one of the Charles Towne structures, and 2) the education and entertainment of the visiting public to Charles Towne Landing State Historic Site. These goals were met exceptionally well, resulting in a classic demonstration of the archaeological discovery process.

This process involved the shovel testing of a large area inside the northern part of the fortified area for the settlement as well as in the area of the four acres set aside for a churchyard by the colonists. The churchyard shovel testing did not reveal evidence of graves there, but these negative results might simply indicate that a later project of shovel testing at closer intervals might well do so.

The shovel testing inside the fortified area, however, revealed one area where more 17th century artifacts were present, and this information allowed us to place a block excavation composed of 65 10-foot squares over this area of the site under the theoretical assumption that this concentration of Charles Towne period artifacts would be associated with structural evidence for a Charles Towne house. This theoretical assumption was based on my Brunswick Pattern of Refuse Disposal, which states that: "On

British-American sites a concentrated refuse deposit will be found at the points of entrance and exit, in dwellings, shops, and military fortifications." This pattern of refuse disposal has been demonstrated to apply to the 16th century dwellings at Spanish Santa Elena as well.

Excavation in the block did indeed reveal a posthole pattern, for a 12 by 18 foot structure, when the postholes with a depth of from .8 to 1.2 feet were plotted. This discovery validated in a classic manner the theoretical predictions on which had operated in our discovery process.

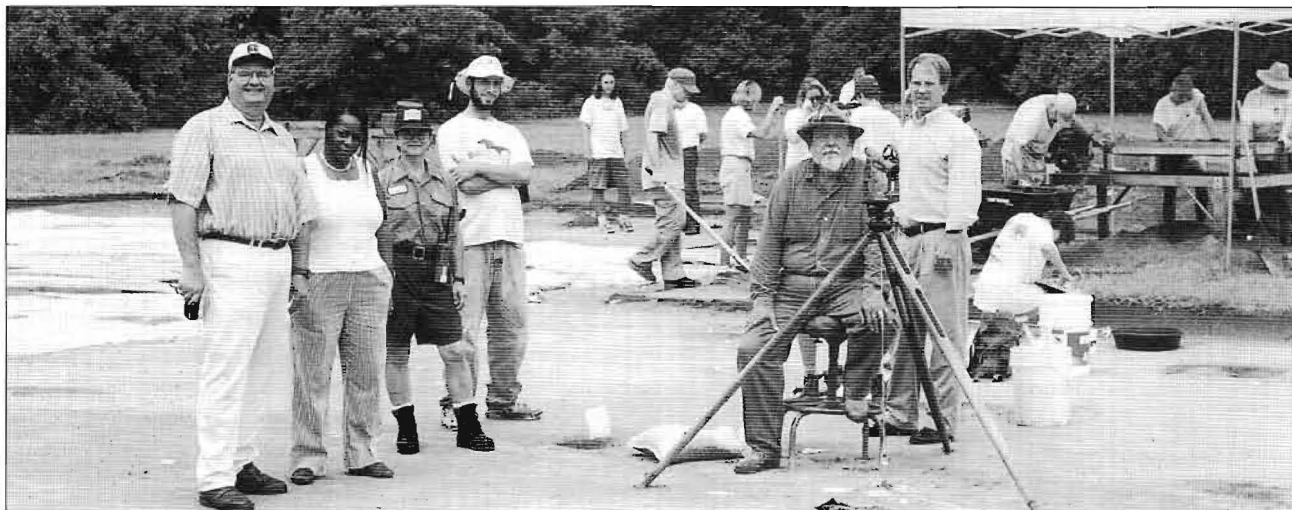
Our challenge then was to determine whether the structural evidence we had found was a house in 1670-1680 Charles Towne or whether it dated from a later time period. To address this question we had to determine whether my Brunswick Pattern of Refuse Disposal would be revealed to be associated adjacent to the structure. If such a patterned association could be revealed, using 17th century domestic

artifact distribution as determined by quantitative analysis of such artifacts from our 10-foot squares, we would then know that the structural evidence we had found was indeed that of a 17th century household inside the fortified area.

When the artifact analysis was carried out under Michael Stoner's direction, it was found that the Brunswick Pattern of Refuse Disposal was again demonstrated through concentration of 17th century artifacts in a tight cluster located east of the structure, clearly revealing the relationship between the structure and artifacts discarded from it. And, according to the prediction of my Brunswick Pattern of Refuse Disposal, the doorway to the structure would have been located on the east side. With these data in hand, we realized that our Charles Towne archaeological project for 2000 was a classic example of archaeological methodological theory successfully predicting and revealing a domestic household structure of the 1670 to



Heathly Johnson (left), Rusty Clark, and Michael Stoner working with the Gradall to remove topsoil in two-inch levels from a 10-foot square at Charles Towne Landing State Historic Site during the 2000 excavation. (SCIAA photo)



(L to R foreground): SCIAA Director Bruce Rippeteau, Business Manager Cherare Robertson, with archaeologist Elsie Eubanks, crew member Andrew Agha, and David Masich with the USC Educational Foundation catch Stan South sitting down on the job on a visit to the 2000 excavation at Charles Towne Landing State Historic Site. (SCIAA photo)

1680 period.

A particular question that we were addressing with the 2000 dig was the relationship between the documents that reveal that the Charles Towne settlers were from Barbados and evidence for this in the archaeological record. Mike Stoner had excavated in Barbados and had defined a lead-glazed earthenware type as Codrington ware in his master's thesis. He recognized Barbadian-made pottery in the assemblage from our Charles Towne dig and plotted the distribution of this ware from the 65 10-foot square excavation block to determine if it also clustered east of the structure as had the domestic ceramics and other 17th century objects. He found that indeed it did, verifying that this ware, also, was contemporary with the broken British ceramics also discarded from what was now, most certainly demonstrated to have been a 17th century Charles Towne domestic household.

The question then arose as to what the architectural structure represented by the postholes looked like. The irregularity of the size of the postholes, as well as the variability in depth, was certainly unlike the

regularly spaced and shaped postholes typical of 17th century structures found by archaeologists in Virginia, particularly Neiman, that we had theorized we would find. Our research indicates that the building probably looked much like the rural Haitian house photographed by John Vlach in 1973. We obtained permission from him to publish this photograph here to provide an interpretive perspective of what we now view as a Barbadian vernacular house type, perhaps occupied by indentured servants, or slaves, or soldiers, all of a lower socio-economic level. Documentation for Barbadian structures thought to be similar to the Charles Towne one is provided by Richard Ligon, who visited Barbados in the mid-17th century and first published his account in 1657.

Having only our single dwelling as an example of the 20 "lodgings" said to have been inside the fortified area, we do not know whether this is typical of the other lodgings or not. It may well be that the structures inside the fortified area were those primarily for the soldiers and other individuals manning the guns there. We may find that, through further

excavation inside the fortification, that there were houses more closely related in posthole pattern to those found in Virginia. In which case our first structure might well turn out to be interpreted as a servant's quarters associated with the more regularly laid out architectural plan. This decision will have to wait further discovery of other evidence for Charles Towne structures inside the fortified area.

Our view at present, however, is that the more regular house posthole patterns found among the upper classes as well as servants in Virginia, may well be found on the many lots known to have been located outside the fortified area, where the more affluent planters had their homes. This speculation will also have to await archaeology yet to be done outside the fortified area to the north sometime in the years to come.

Based on what we see at present, however, it appears that the Barbadian settlers at Charles Towne, perhaps primarily the servants, slaves and soldiers, apparently brought with them a vernacular house style they were familiar with in Barbados. These could be built relatively cheaply compared with the

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CHARLES TOWNE, From Page 13

more regularly laid out half-timbered houses that had to be made of hewn timbers, a process that only someone of means could afford to build. We can only address this interpretive question more fully when we have more archaeological examples, not only of house remains such as we found, but the remains of the affluent planter's houses that may well prove to be similar to those known from Virginia.

Another question of interest to us is that posed by Mike Stoner's analysis of the tobacco pipestems discarded to the east of the little structure. This revealed a suggested date for the accumulation of the sample later than the 1670-1680 time frame documented for the original Charles Towne settlement. This suggests that it may have been occupied during what we have called the transitional period from the Charles Towne settlement to the 18th century Old Town Plantation period. If this is not the case, then we wonder why tobacco pipestems supposedly dating later than the Charles Towne settlement, those with holes of 5/64" and 4/64" diameter, would have been thrown from a

household of much earlier date. At present, therefore, we are interpreting the occupation of our structure as extending somewhat into the 18th century, but certainly not far, because ceramics from that later period are not present on the site. It will be interesting to see if the tobacco pipe measurements from yet to be discovered Charles Towne structures match or vary from those we found. This question can only be addressed through discovery of evidence for additional Charles Towne structures inside the fortified area.

Because the concentration of domestic household artifacts is to the east of the structure, the question is raised as to whether further to the east, adjacent to our excavation block, was another structure, with the refuse being discarded between such an hypothesized building and the house we found. Perhaps evidence for a more auspicious structure may be found in an excavation block placed to the east of our 2000 block. In order to test this idea we plan to excavate a 40 by 70 block, or more, tangent with our previous block excavation. If evidence for a more auspicious

structure is indeed found in our 2001 excavation block, then this would suggest that the building we found was likely a servant's or soldier's lodging west of the main house. This question will be addressed in our second dig beginning on March 12, 2001, and continuing through May 18, 2001.

The second major goal of our project was the education of the public visitors and volunteers to Charles Towne Landing State Historic Site regarding the role historical archaeology plays in interpreting such a famous historic place. This aspect of our project proved to be highly successful with hundreds of people viewing the archaeology in progress and having the work and the historic site explained to them by the archaeologists.

The same goals are designed for our up-coming 2001 excavation season that will search for the Barbadian connection, and we hope that this project will continue to produce the successful results as did that in the year 2000. Personnel for the joint PRT-SCIAA/USC-CTL project are as follows:

Stanley South, Archaeologist and Research Professor, PRT-SCIAA/USC-CTL Project Manager

Michael Stoner, Principal Investigator / Archaeologist, PRT-SCIAA/USC-CTL Project

Elsie Eubanks, Archaeologist, PRT-Charles Towne Landing

Rusty Clark, Assistant Archaeologist, PRT-Charles Towne Landing

Archaeological Assistants:

Andrew Agha (2000 and 2001)

Heathly Johnson (2000)

Linda (Polly) Worthy (2000)

Nicole Isenbarger (2001)

Raye Wall, Volunteer Assistant (2000 and 2001)



Figure 5: The SCIAA/PRT Team: (L to R) Elsie Eubanks, Rusty Clark, Larry Duncan, Andrew Agha, Ron Rischer, Linda (Polly) Worthy, Heathly Johnson, Stanley South, Michael Stoner, and Phil Gaines, with volunteers. (SCIAA photo)