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ARCHEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF A PROPOSED
PIPELINE DITCH AT CHARLES TOWNE SITE (38CH1)
August 30 - September 1, 1971

by
Richard Polhemus

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Prepared by the
Institute of Archeology and Anthropology
University of South Carolina
October, 1971

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INTRODUCTION

In accordance with South Carolina state regulations, the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology was notified by the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism of earth-moving construction at the Charles Towne Site (38CH1) in August 1971. The Institute was asked for an opinion concerning potential damage to archeological values that might be incurred in this construction. The planned construction was to consist of excavation of a drainage field for a septic tank near the small house at the edge of the marsh on the southwest side of the Avenue of Oaks, and a six inch wide ditch for electric and water pipelines from that house to the area of the Horry-Lucas Plantation House (Figure 1). A third part of the work was to be the excavation of a similar pipeline ditch through portions of the Animal Forest.

Extensive archeological excavations were carried out at the Charles Towne Site (38CH1) by the Institute, under the direction of Mr. Stanley South, in 1968 and 1969. Those excavations included only specific portions of this extensive archeological site, however, and much of the site area remains unexplored. In order to avoid the unnecessary destruction of archeological values in this important site the present notification arrangements have been agreed upon between the Department and the Institute.

Dr. Robert L. Stephenson, Director of the Institute and State Archeologist, recommended that an archeologist be provided by the Institute to be present during the excavation of the pipeline ditches and the drainage field and that he be required to record any archeological values that would be revealed by these excavations. This archeologist would also be charged

with the responsibility for salvaging whatever archeological values would be threatened by the excavations and would do so with the least possible disruption to the work of the excavation crew. These recommendations were agreed to and the Department provided funds for the archeologist to carry out his responsibilities.

Richard Polhemus, assistant archeologist on the regular staff of the Institute, was assigned as the archeologist to carry out this project. Though the excavations were terminated before the completion of the planned work, all archeological features located were recorded and a small cellar, through which the ditch passed, was completely excavated without delay to the construction work. The section of the project planned for the Animal Forest was not begun at this time but was postponed until a later date. The archeological work required three days and was done on August 30 and 31 and September 1, 1971.

THE EXCAVATION

On Monday, August 30, I met Mr. Joe Farrow at the Charles Towne Site and accompanied him while he discussed, with the contractor, the location of the proposed septic tank and drainage field near the small house at the edge of the marsh on the west side of the site (Area A on Figure 1). Mr. Farrow then indicated the proposed route of the pipeline ditch to be run from the transportation center near the Horry-Lucas Ruin (Area B on Figure 1) to the small house at the edge of the marsh. At this time, the original route was altered to avoid crossing several underground electric lines along the Avenue of Oaks by making a straight line across the open field toward the transportation center.

Work was begun in Area A on Monday afternoon on the drainage field ditches near the small house at the edge of the marsh, using a Ditch Witch ditch digger. The Ditch Witch cut a five inch wide, 30 inch deep ditch with relatively smooth vertical sides making observation of stratigraphy possible without further cutting or cleaning, although any depth greater than 18 inches is difficult to see clearly. Two hundred feet of ditch were opened for the drainage field, as shown in Figure 1. These ditches provided information on the natural stratigraphy of the area near the small house but produced only one possible feature of interest to the archeologist. This feature consisted of a small lense of oyster shell (38CH1-328) deposited on the surface of the yellow sand zone 1.6 feet below the surface. The size of the shell deposit was determined with a probe and was 1.5 feet wide, 3.0 feet long, and 0.3 feet thick. No artifacts were recovered from the feature. A single sherd of plain porcelain was recovered from the humus layer behind the small house. The natural

stratigraphy of the area consisted of four zones, listed from the surface down; recent humus, light brown sand, yellow sand, and orange sandy clay. At the termination of the second drainage ditch the Ditch Witch broke down and parts had to be obtained from Columbia.

Work was begun Tuesday morning in Area B near the transportation center just west of the Horry-Lucas Ruin utilizing two men provided to hand dig the pipeline ditch while the Ditch Witch was repaired. Numerous underground electric lines, telephone cables, and ground wires in the section of the ditch (38CH1-331), south of the transportation center, not only disturbed much of the deposit but also made the work hazardous to the workmen. The hot lines were not covered or marked to prevent accidental cutting of the lines. An oyster shell pavement, or walk, was found in this section of ditch 1.0 feet below the surface.

The section of ditch (38CH1-330) north of the transportation center revealed only one recent sewer line disturbance. A small brick-lined cellar hole was located just north of the sewer line disturbance. The ditch in Area B was completed on Wednesday morning and preparations to dig the pipeline ditch across the field were underway when word reached us to stop the project and backfill all the ditch previously dug. The small brick-lined cellar hole (38CH1-332) had been completely outlined on Tuesday and the remaining fill was excavated on Wednesday to complete the records on the feature prior to backfilling the area.

THE CELLAR HOLE

The excavation of the pipeline ditch north of the transportation center revealed a single large feature (38CH1-332), 25 feet from the northeast corner of the present transportation building (Figure 1). This feature first

appeared to be a nineteenth century midden area associated with the Horry-Lucas Ruin nearby but a layer of oyster shells enclosed by a brick wall was encountered at a depth of 1.2 feet. The pipeline ditch was directed through the south half of the 4.5 foot wide, 6.5 foot long cellar and would have destroyed a major portion of the contents (Figure 2). When the small size of the cellar was determined the area overlying it was striped and the remaining fill removed.

The cellar walls were made up of 9 to 13 courses of brick, laid without regard to any particular bond pattern, utilizing a large proportion of fragmentary bricks (Figure 4). Capping the south wall were two large rectangular building stones which may represent part of a chimney foundation. The excavation area outside the cellar wall revealed a number of post holes but no pattern could be determined within the limited area exposed.

The fill of the cellar hole was excavated in natural levels and a profile was drawn recording these levels (Figure 5). The light brown sandy soil (38CH1-332A) overlying the oyster shell level contained a variety of artifacts and evidence of disturbance, probably associated with a structure dismantled when the state acquired the property. Soda bottle "Crown" caps and aluminum foil were present near the grass roots as were a sherd of North Devon Gravel Tempered Ware and a sherd of Oriental Porcelain representative of the eighteenth century.

The major fill layer (38CH1-332B) in the cellar hole was made up of large oyster shells in a zone 2.5 feet thick. A quantity of artifacts representative of the mid-nineteenth century were recovered from this layer, including a pewter teapot, square cut nails, tinned sheet iron fragments, H-L hinges, a door lock, a key, a door latch, an iron saddle brace, bottle

fragments, a banded yellow ware chamber pot, and a wedgwood style blue and white sprig decorated pearlware sherd.

A layer of plaster fragments showing lathing impressions (38CH1-332C) * was encountered under the oyster shell fill. This layer tended to be thicker along the east and west walls of the cellar and contained a large quantity of square cut nails. Heat from the burned layer below altered the plaster in contact with it. In addition to the square cut nails the layer contained bottle glass, plain porcelain, oriental porcelain, banded white earthenware, and animal bones.

The burned layer (38CH1-332D) underlying the plaster represented the charred wood from a fire and the uppermost portion of a yellow sand layer effected by the fire. The leg bones of a human infant skeleton located near the north wall were charred, as were bird bones and egg shells in the same area. This layer contained a melted glass wide-mouth bottle, plain white earthenware, and fragments of a sponged pearlware dish with transfer printed center decoration, in addition to the human and bird bone.

The yellow sand layer (38CH1-332E) underlying the burned layer represents a period of disuse of the cellar while the structure covering it was still in use. A broken mirror, two three piece-molded bottles, five flower pots, a plain porcelain dinner plate and saucer, and a French wine bottle with an impressed seal marked "Barton & Guestier" attest to the gradual accumulation of the deposit prior to the fire which apparently destroyed the building.
Bordeaux

A grey sand layer (38CH1-332F) 0.4 feet thick resting on the orange clay subsoil contained little except small brick-batts on the clay floor. A complete bottle of dip mold form dating about 1740-1810 (Lorrain:1968), was found near the west wall and a wood chisel and bone handled table knife

were found in the northwest corner. A kaolin pipe stem marked "IOHANNES:"
CASSALMAN
and a square nail were also recovered from this layer. The grey sand layer represented the accumulation of sand during the actual use of this small brick-lined structure, possibly as a cold cellar. Entry into the cellar was made from the southeast corner, where two small post holes one foot apart probably provided footing for a ladder in the corner.

INTERPRETATION OF FEATURE

The features located in Area B, near the transportation center, were associated with the Horry-Lucas Ruin. The oyster-shell walk or pavement may be a continuation to the west of a shell walk exposed by Stanley South in 1969 at the northwest corner of the Horry-Lucas Ruin. The brick-lined cellar crossed by the pipeline ditch is oriented with the Horry-Lucas Ruin and is located 130 feet behind and 48 feet west of the ruin. The 1836 map of the Lucas Plantation by R. Pinckney (Figure 3) illustrates two outbuildings behind and to the west of the Plantation House. Other tabby walls located by South, west of the Plantation House may represent others of the structures indicated on the 1836 map.

The burned layer in the cellar corresponds with evidence of fire in the ruins of the Plantation House and both structures may have burned at the same time. The exact date of the fire cannot be determined through archeology but a search of Charleston newspapers should provide that information. The presence of charred human remains in the cellar hole would suggest that it took the occupants unaware. The bones are from an infant less than three months of age.

Only a more extensive excavation of the area around the cellar hole

could determine the nature and extent of the structure covering it. Any future project involving excavation of the Horry-Lucas Ruin should include further exploration work in the areas on each side of the ruin to locate not only the flanking structures indicated on the 1836 Pinckney Map but other structures associated with the operation of a plantation during the first half of the nineteenth century.

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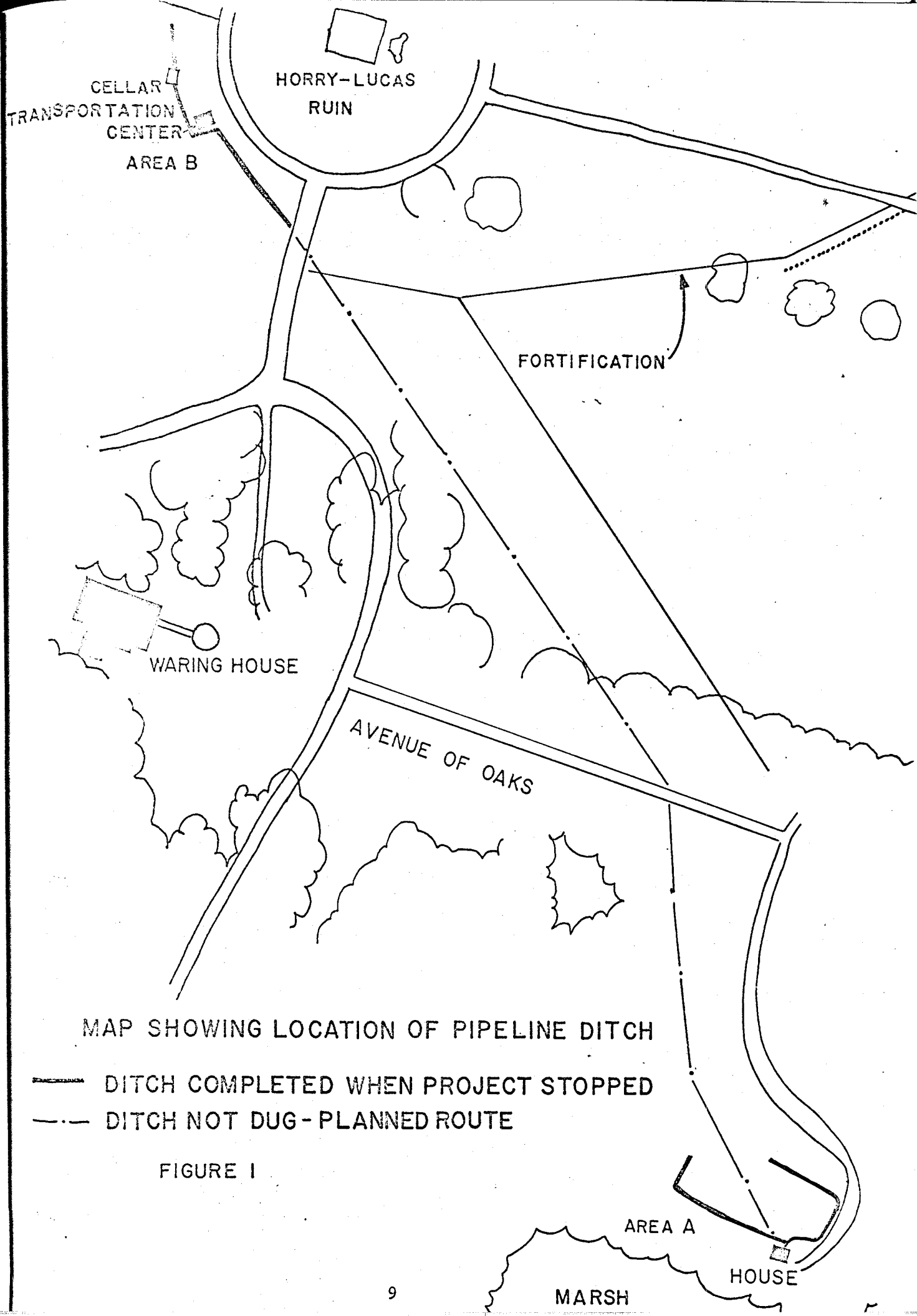
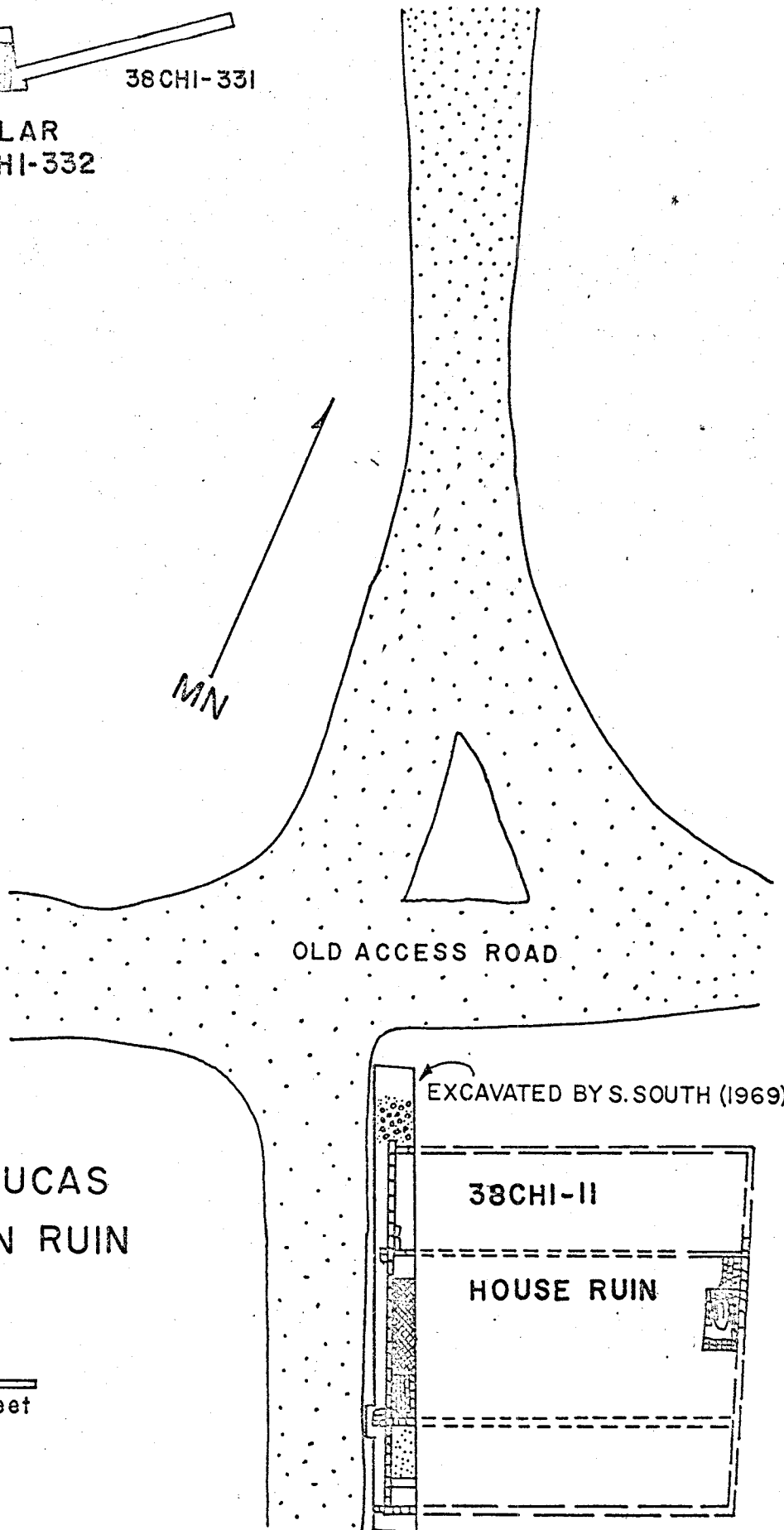
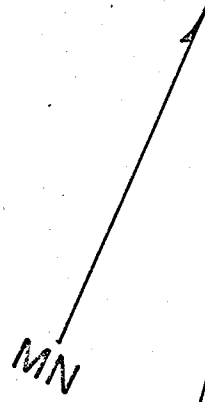
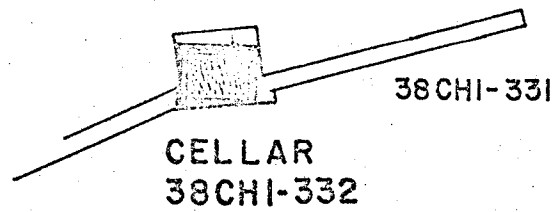


FIGURE I



HORRY-LUCAS
PLANTATION RUIN

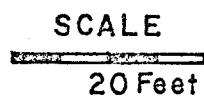
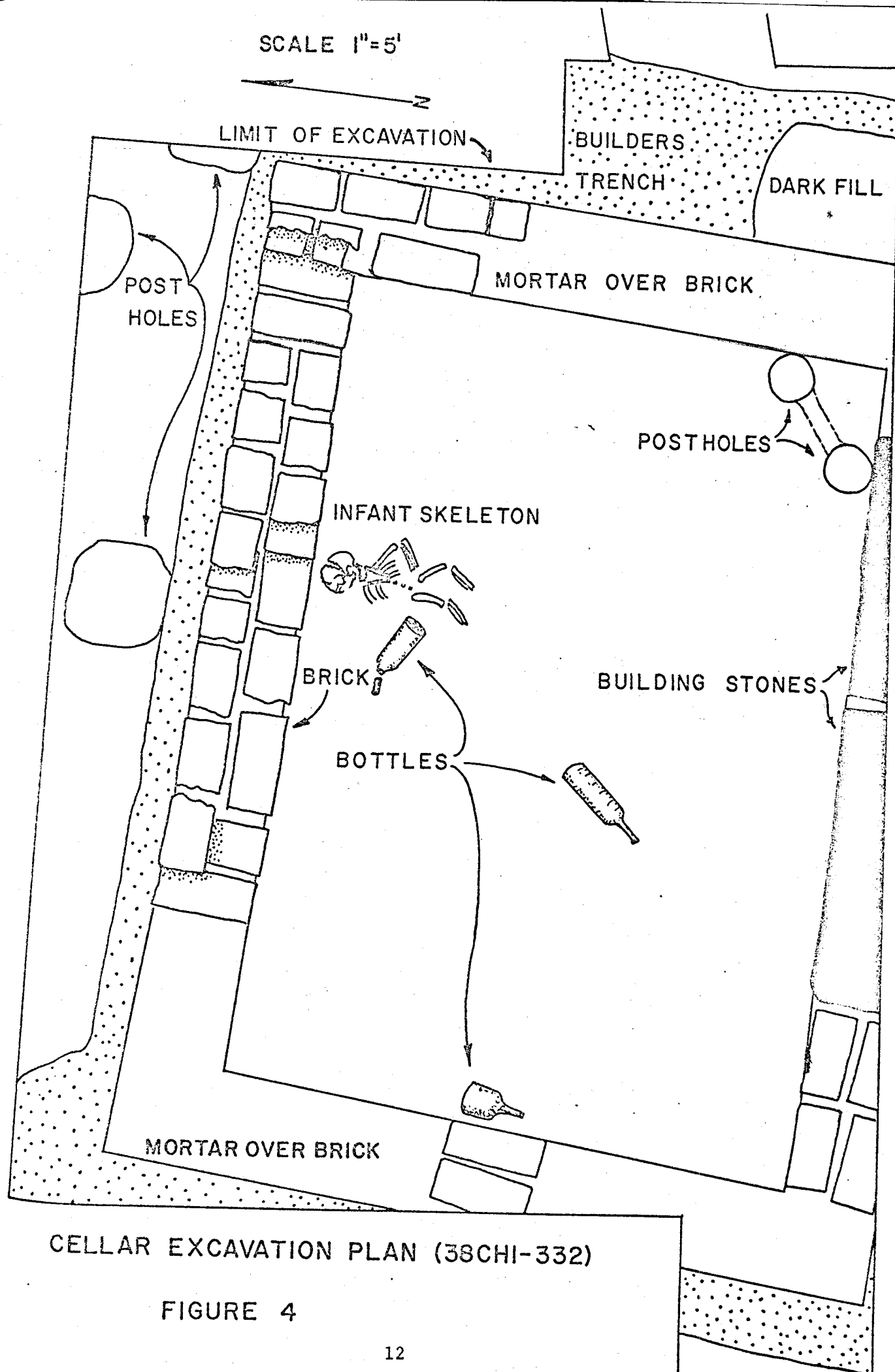
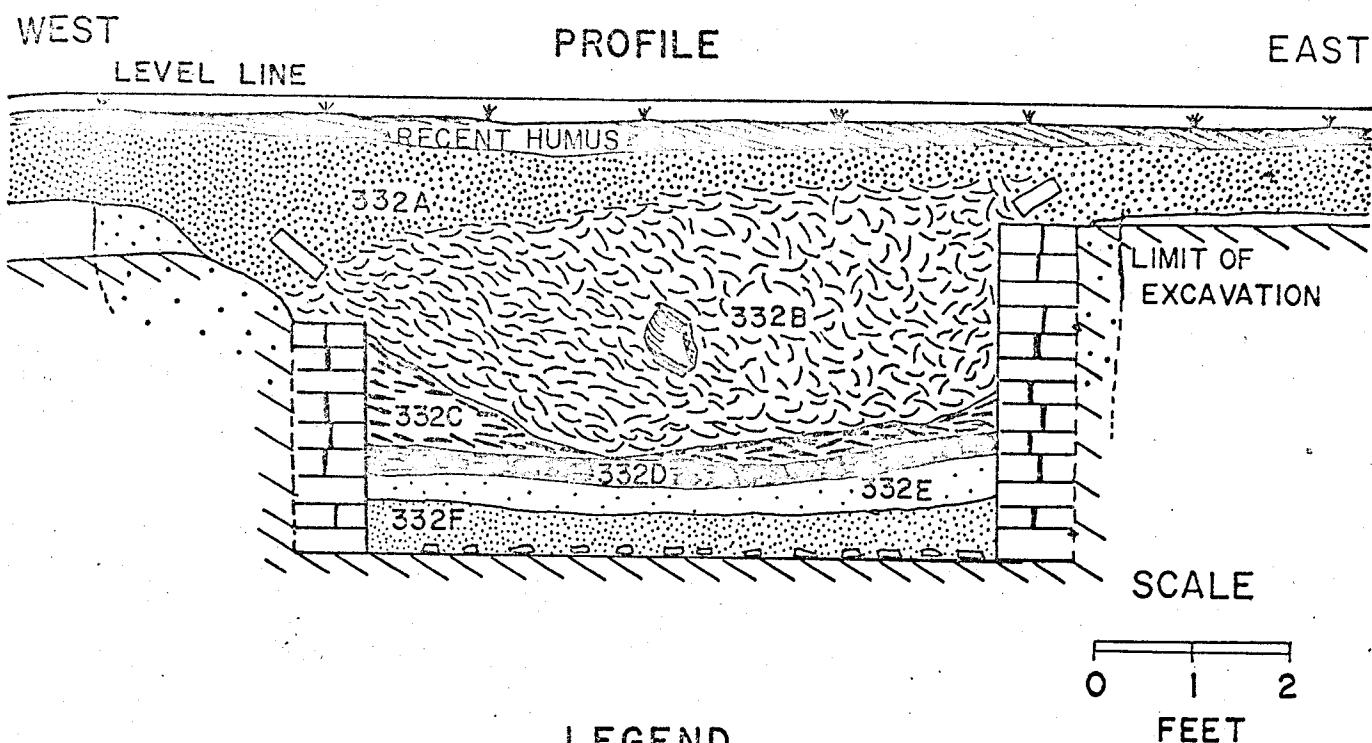











FIGURE 2







LEGEND

-  RECENT HUMUS
-  BROWN SANDY SOIL
-  OYSTER SHELL FILL
-  LATHING PLASTER AND CUT NAILS
-  BURNED LAYER
-  YELLOW SAND
-  GREY SAND WITH BRICK FRAGMENTS
-  BRICK CELLAR WALL
-  ORANGE SANDY CLAY SUBSOIL

CELLAR EXCAVATION PROFILE (38CHI-332)

FIGURE 5