The General, The Major, and the Angel: The Discovery of General William Moultrie's Grave

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THE GENERAL, THE MAJOR, AND THE ANGEL:
THE DISCOVERY OF
GENERAL WILLIAM MOULTRIE'S GRAVE

by

Stanley A. South
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Prepared by the
INSTITUTE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
March, 1979
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTRODUCTION.</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WINDSOR HILL PLANTATION</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Plantation House Ruin</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Kitchen Ruin</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Slave Quarters Ruin</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rice Fields.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Moultrie Family Graveyard.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Tombstones.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The United States Government Marker for General Moultrie</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EARLY SEARCHES FOR THE GRAVE OF GENERAL MOULTRIE.</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 1850 Committee</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 1908 Search for the General's Grave</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 1909 Search for the General's Grave</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE FOR THE BURIAL OF THE GENERAL AT THE FAMILY</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRAVEYARD AT WINDSOR HILL.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ARCHEOLOGICAL KEYS FOR UNLOCKING THE IDENTITY OF THE MAJOR AND</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE GENERAL.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The First Clues are Found as the Archeology Begins</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excavating the Graves at the Moultrie Family Graveyard</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Chronological Relationship of Intrusive Features</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of the 1908 Holes</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Discovery of the Grave of the Major.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General William Moultrie's Grave is Found.</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUMMARY</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>REFERENCES.</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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INTRODUCTION

General William Moultrie, hero of the American Revolution, was so well known for his repulse of the British fleet at the battle at Sullivan's Island, South Carolina on June 28, 1776, and for his other services to the American cause and to his state, it would seem that upon his death a suitable memorial would have been erected over his grave (Salley 1904: 257-258). Nevertheless, when he died on September 27, 1805, no tombstone is known to have been placed over his grave, though he was given a "most honourable and respectable burial" (Salley 1904: 258). Why this was the case is not known, though one could speculate that it might relate to the fact that when he died he was under house arrest as an insolvent debtor (Bennett 1938).

Since the grave was unmarked the location has been the source of some mystery, and as early as 1850, a committee sought, but failed to find, the grave site. This committee searched for the grave on Windsor Hill, the home of the General's son, Major William Moultrie, Jr., but failed to find the family cemetery (Guerry 1974: 64, 68). This action strongly suggests that this group knew that the General was indeed buried in the family cemetery at Windsor Hill, near Goose Creek, South Carolina.

Later searches, in 1908 and again in 1909, were led by the Bishop William Alexander Guerry, D.D. (Guerry 1974: 71-72). Bishop Guerry was able to discover that a grave was located beside the tombstone-marked grave of the General's son, Major William Moultrie. This information, coupled with the knowledge that the General had wished to be buried beside his son, suggested that the grave of the General had been found in the family cemetery at Windsor Hill (Guerry 1974: 72). Identification of the grave beside Major William Moultrie as that of the General was not possible however, and the location remained a mystery.

The mystery continued to burn in the mind of Bishop Guerry's son, the Rev. Edward Brailsford Guerry, culminating in his gathering together the data on the problem in a 1974 article (Guerry 1974: 64-77). Subsequently Rev. Guerry contacted Robert L. Stephenson, Director of the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology at the University of South Carolina to determine if an archeological search could reveal evidence of graves on the site of the Windsor Hill graveyard, where vandalism and tombstone moving were fast becoming problems due to the neglected nature of the site. Stephenson's answer was that graves could indeed be located through archeology. Rev. Guerry then determined to take the steps necessary to have the graves excavated and the remains and the tombstones moved from the endangered site to a more secure location.

The excavation was made possible through the permission of the owner of Windsor Hill Plantation; the estate of the late Mr. H.L. Koester; and the trustee, The Citizens and Southern National Banks of South Carolina, Mr. D.M. Allston, Jr., Vice President and Senior Trust Officer. Legal permission to move the graves came from the Charleston County Council representative Hunter McEaddy, and through the cooperation of the funeral directing firm of John McAlister, Inc. Permission to reinter the remains
at St. James Episcopal Church at Goose Creek, South Carolina, was received from the Vestry of that church. The archeological work would be carried out through the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology at the University of South Carolina. With these steps taken, the project designed to locate the grave of General William Moultrie was begun on March 14, 1977, and field work was completed with the identification of the General's grave on June 28, 1977, exactly 201 years after his battle with the British fleet at the fort that would carry his name.
WINDSOR HILL PLANTATION

Windsor Hill Plantation is located north of the Ashley Phosphate Road in Charleston County, South Carolina. The property came into the Moultrie family in 1776 through the wife of Major William Moultrie, Jr., the General's son, but it is not known from the documents when the plantation house and outbuildings were constructed (Smith 1919: 29-31). The plantation was the home of Major Moultrie at the time of his death on December 19, 1796 (J. Moultrie 1904: 259), after which it was owned by his daughter, Eliza Charlotte Brailsford. It was sold by the Brailsford family in 1837 (Smith 1919: 31), and apparently burned some time in the 1850s (Guerry 1974: 74). Windsor Hill is a high ridge virtually surrounded by water, making it an ideal location for the cultivation of rice in the surrounding swamps.

The Plantation House Ruin

There is a description of the plantation house at Windsor Hill provided by Capt. C.S. Dwight who, in 1908, remembered that it was "a plain, single, two-story house, with shed rooms at the back and huge Dutch chimneys on the ends. Even the front piazza was in good preservation, though the roof was giving way. The entire house was built of cypress, set upon a low basement of brick" (Guerry 1974: 75). The foundation of this structure is still visible, being made of brick, with smaller foundation walls at the rear to support the shed rooms. A pile of bricks to the south of these walls reveals the location of the steps to the piazza mentioned by Capt. Dwight. The visible walls reveal that the plantation house was about 45 feet square (Fig. 1).

The refuse thrown from a dwelling during its period of use is used by the archeologist as books are used by the researcher examining written sources of data. This archeological record is less subject to bias than the written word, though the meaning is often less easily abstracted. Total excavation of the plantation house ruin would provide a wealth of data for use in interpreting the story of the cultural processes represented by the material remains. This story, however, is not the purpose of the William Moultrie grave project. A sample from the ruin will still allow some data to be examined, particularly regarding the dating of the structure.

The opportunity for obtaining such a sample came with the first visit to the site by the archeologist. Vandals had been digging small holes in three places adjacent to the brick walls of the plantation house, and fragments of ceramics discarded during use of the house were lying around these holes. Ceramic fragments have been found to be an excellent indicator of the period of use of a structure, and a formula has been developed for determining a mean ceramic date. This date has been found to correlate well with the median occupation date of a structure around which such fragments are found (South 1977).
FIGURE 1. The Relationship of the Moultrie Family Burial Ground to the Plantation Ruins at Windsor Hill.
TABLE 1
CERAMICS FROM THE RUIN OF WINDSOR HILL PLANTATION (RUIN A)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creamware (c.1775-1820)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1798</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>41354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearlware (c.1780-1830)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1805</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>34295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue and Green Edged Pearlware (c.1780-1830)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1805</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiteware (c.1820-1900+)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underglaze Blue Painted Pearlware (c.1780-1820)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer Printed Pearlware (c.1795-1840)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1818</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Annular Wares&quot; Creamware (c.1780-1815)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1798</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Annular Wares&quot; Pearlware (c.1790-1820)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1805</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annular Whiteware (c.1820-1900+)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ironstone China (1813-1900)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1857</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MEAN CERAMIC FORMULA DATE $114046 + 63 = 1810.2$

Ten ceramic types were recovered from the surface around these holes, for a total of 63 fragments (Table 1). Using the mean ceramic date formula, a date of 1810.2 was obtained. This date should fall very near the middle of the occupation period of the house. An important additional piece of information from these ceramic fragments is the fact that missing from the collection are white salt-glazed stoneware and delftware, types that are invariably present on sites dating from the 1770s and 1780s (South 1974). This suggests that the house here was probably not occupied until around 1790, assuming an adequate sample is represented by the ceramics recovered. Using this date of ca. 1790, and the mean ceramic date of 1810.2, an interpreted occupation period represented by the sample is found to be ca. 1790 to 1830. This suggests that the house at Windsor Hill was not lived in until some
years after the Moultries were married in 1776 (J. Moultrie 1904: 259). The 1830 interpreted end date suggested by the ceramic sample is not far from the known date of 1837, when the plantation was sold (Smith 1919: 31).

The Kitchen Ruin

Sixty-five feet to the east of the house is the ruin of the kitchen, seen as a large pile of bricks from the kitchen fireplace chimney at the west end. A smaller chimney base can be seen at the east end from a fireplace that was apparently for heating a servant's quarters. This kitchen building was apparently 28 feet square, lining up with the front of the piazza of the main house. The northwest corner of the brick foundation of this building was found by digging a hole through the rubble of the fallen chimney (Fig. 1).

The Slave Quarters Ruin

Two hundred feet to the west of the plantation house the ruin of a brick chimney was found. Lying nearby were large sections of the collapsed archway that had once formed the upper part of the fireplace opening. When a sixteen by twenty foot building is centered over this chimney base, the south face of such a structure aligns with the main rear wall of the plantation house. The distance from the main house to this structure and the size of the fireplace opening suggest a domestic dwelling. This ruin may represent the remains of slave quarters in this area (Fig. 1). Such ruins are currently of great interest to those interested in comparing the archeological remains of slave owners with those of slaves during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Otto 1977).

The Rice Fields

Windsor Hill rises to an elevation of 29 feet above the waters of Windsor Swamp, which surrounds it on all but the southwest side. Extensive embankments for impounding the waters extend from the base of Windsor Hill throughout the swamp, giving ample evidence that this hill and surrounding swamp once functioned as a rice plantation.

Some embankments are located above the swamp near the crest of Windsor Hill, and it is difficult to imagine what function they served in relation to those embankments nearer the swamp itself. They may represent defensive works erected during the Revolution or the Civil War.
The Moultrie Family Graveyard

The family graveyard where three tombstones and a footstone were found lying on the surface of the ground is located 460 feet north on a diagonal line from the plantation house. The research done by Bishop William Guerry demonstrated that in addition to General Moultrie's son, his grandson, and his great grandson, the body of William Moultrie himself very likely was also located in this graveyard (Guerry 1974: 64-77).

The Tombstones

Tombstones on the site of Windsor Hill Plantation revealed that William Moultrie's son, Major William Moultrie, Jr. died on December 12, 1796, and that his grandson, William Ainslie Moultrie, died on August 29, 1811. His great grandson, Edward Ainslie Brailsford, a four month infant, was also buried here, having died on October 12, 1803 (J. Moultrie 1904: 247-260). The footstone of Major William Moultrie was also found, bearing the initials "M.W.M." and the date 1796.

The tombstones of Major William Moultrie and the infant child are of the upright type (Figs. 2 & 3), whereas that of William Ainslie Moultrie was a large slab, designed to lie flat, supported by a brick foundation wall. This fact allowed this 1811 burial to be identified, since vandals had concentrated their digging within this brick supporting wall, and bricks from the wall were thrown back into the hole after their ghoulish work was done. Unfortunately none of the tombstones were in place, so the location of only the 1811 grave was known before archeological work was begun.

The inscriptions on the tombstones were copied in a family Bible in the 1870s, and later published (Guerry 1974: 69-70), but there are no less than 30 errors in the inscription on Major William Moultrie's stone alone. Also, two of the inscriptions were published as collected by J.I. Waring (1926), but these too have dropped lines and other errors. The correct inscriptions from the tombstones at Windsor Hill are published here as they were more recently observed.

Sacred
To the Memory of
MAJOR WIL: MOULTRIE
Who departed this life
Dec. 12th 1796 AE 44 years.
He was a man of intrinsic worth,
And whose urbanity of manners,
And uniform rectitude throughout life,
Secured to him the esteem
& admiration of all who knew him.

Sacred
To the Memory of
EDW: AINSLIE BRAILSFORD
Obed Oct. 12th 1803
AE 4 Months and 3 days
Rest lovely babe!
Wait the Almighty's Will,
Then rise unchang'd
And be an angel still.

* Although the date of death given on Major William Moultrie's tombstone is December 12, 1796, a contemporary newspaper account--City-Gazette and Daily Advertiser, Monday, December 19, 1796--states that the date was December 11, 1796 (J. Moultrie 1904: 259).
FIGURE 2. The Tombstone of Major William Moultrie as found on the site.

FIGURE 3. The Tombstone of Edward Ainslie Brailsford, the "Angel," after cleaning and removal to St. James Episcopal Church.
UNDERNEATH
are deposited the Remains of
WILLIAM AINSLIE MOULTREE Esq.
who departed this Life on the 29th of
August 1811 in the 33 year of his age.
HE LIVED
in the anxious Pursuit of
TRUTH & JUSTICE
and in the constant Observance of the
SOCIAL & MANLY VIRTUES.
HE DIED
(alas how soon!)
with the PIETY & RESIGNATION OF A
CHRISTIAN.
His Inconsolable SISTER
and afflicted FRIENDS
...ted* this TABLET
TO HIS WORTH
& THEIR AFFECTION.

"He was of Soul sincere"
"In Action faithful & in Honor clear."

J. Hall. Charleston

* probably "dedicated"

The United States Government Marker for General Moultrie

In 1955, Rev. Edward Brailsford Guerry, acting on behalf of the
Rebecca Motte Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution,
erected a marker supplied by the United States Government, at Windsor
Hill beside the then location of the tombstone of Major William Moultrie
(Guerry 1974: 65). Later, in 1975, the marker was missing, and a newspaper
article bemoaned this loss to vandals (Guerry 1975). Subsequently a
der hunter reported to Rev. Guerry that he knew where the stone was located,
not far from the family graveyard, and took him to the site (E.B. Guerry,
personal communication). The stone was taken again to the family graveyard,
and is now in its new location, along with the other stones from the
graveyard, at St. James Episcopal Church in Goose Creek.
EARLY SEARCHES FOR THE GRAVE OF GENERAL MOULTRIE

The 1850 Committee

In 1850, a committee from Charleston was concerned with locating the site of William Moultrie's grave so that the remains could be moved. This group went to Windsor Hill, suggesting strongly that they knew that he was buried there. However, they could not find the family graveyard, and nothing more came of this effort (Poyas 1860: 105-106).

The 1908 Search for the General's Grave

An important clue to the identity of the grave of the Major, and thereby the General, was presented by the 1908 search made by Bishop William Guerry. In order to determine if a burial was located beside the tombstone-marked grave of the Major, Bishop Guerry on November 24, 1908, assisted by a Negro named Tony, dug a trench "on the right of his grave" (Guerry 1974: 72). Tony soon recognized the outline of a grave against the hardpan background soil. In the hardpan he saw a "powdery-looking soil, entirely free from clay and very light" (Guerry 1974: 72).

The next day, Capt. A. Moultrie Brailsford returned, and with the assistance of Tony, "dug through the grave of Major William Moultrie, and compared the soil with that found on the first day in the grave to the right and found them identical. He then made an excavation to the left of Major William Moultrie's grave and here he found the soil lying in well defined strata, with no evidence of having been disturbed, or of the 'hard-pan' having been cut through" (Guerry 1974: 72).

From this 1908 search of the soil on each side of the Major's grave, as then marked by the headstone and footstone, important clues to the location of the General and the Major are in hand, namely the holes dug by Capt. Brailsford and Bishop Guerry.

The 1909 Search for the General's Grave

In spite of the fact that the 1908 search had demonstrated that a burial was indeed to be found beside the grave of the Major, the brothers Richard and Charles Dwight were not satisfied. They recounted their remembrances of their childhood visits to Windsor Hill before the house burned. They told of their father's belief that a brick vault with an arched top over a rectangular chamber was the grave of the General. They remembered visiting the site of this brick structure which was located "to the front and to the right of the residence" (Guerry 1974: 75).
Richard Dwight remembered that it was less than one hundred yards from the residence, and Charles recalled that the structure was "three-fourths below the surface, the walls showing a foot or two above ground, and a brick arch spanning the rectangular chamber. That part of the wall filling the semi-circular spaces on the ends had fallen partly in and partly out, so that one could lean head and shoulders into the vault and see to the bottom as it then was; but I cannot remember that any remains of a coffin were visible—they having been covered with brick and debris. The arch, though standing in fair preservation, showed signs of falling, even then, and, no doubt, collapsed not many years after. We moved from the neighborhood in 1857" (Guerry 1974: 78).

The Dwight brothers had excellent memories. Their descriptions fit perfectly the remains of the fallen archway over the hearth opening for the chimney ruin located less than one hundred yards (200 feet) to the west of the plantation house. With the pile of bricks from the fallen chimney around the fireplace opening one might indeed look down into what would appear to be a brick "vault" suitable for burying the dead. The architecture of the surviving ruin, however, is clearly that of a chimney base with rows of bricks for supporting a floor joist along the open side of the fireplace. The collapsed archway seen by the Dwight brothers lying nearby was the archway that extended over a hearth, not a burial. Their father had simply been in error in his identification of this collapsed chimney ruin as a burial vault. He had, no doubt, always heard that General Moultrie was buried at Windsor Hill, and had connected this visual evidence as a vault for that burial. He did not know of the tombstones at the family burial site, so was not able to show his sons the cemetery (Guerry 1974: 76).

The Dwight brother's story led Bishop Guerry and a party of five, with Andrew Young and other Negro laborers to search for this "vault" on January 25, 1909. They found "about a hundred yards from the old house and to the right," after some hours of digging, "the foundations of what was evidently an old house" (Guerry 1974: 73). They searched the entire area and found no trace of any grave. They had found the ruin seen by the Dwight brothers, and had correctly identified it as a ruin of a dwelling, the same ruin we have suggested as that of a slave quarters for Windsor Hill Plantation (Fig. 1).

The 1850 committee visiting Windsor Hill for the purpose of locating the General's grave would surely have given serious consideration to this brick ruin had they thought it the remains of a burial vault of the General. They likely recognized it for what it was—a collapsed chimney from a dwelling.
DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE FOR THE BURIAL OF THE GENERAL AT THE FAMILY GRAVEYARD
AT WINDSOR HILL

Several pieces of data point clearly to General Moultrie being buried along with his wife and son in the family graveyard at Windsor Hill. These are:

1. Copy made March 1, 1875, from an old Bible: "Gen. William Moultrie was buried at Windsor Hill, next his son at his earnest [sic] request. His body remained all night in St. Philip's Church, and the next day was removed" (Guerry 1974: 68).

2. Copy from the same Bible reveals that a Negro whose father was at the General's funeral said the general was buried beside a "white stone" (Guerry 1974: 69).

3. The Bible also revealed that a Negro, Joe Lyons, showed F.S. Holmes the location of the white stone, where Holmes found the stones of the Major, the grandson, and the infant (Guerry 1974: 69-70).

4. Bishop William Guerry in 1909 interviewed 78 year old Andrew Young, a Negro, who had lived at Windsor Hill since about 1840. Young said that "on every 4th of July a number of gentlemen would visit the old graveyard back of the house, walk around it and make speeches. They came, he said, to pay their respects to the memory of Gen. Moultrie, and that he and all the negroes on the place had always understood that the General was buried in the family graveyard near his son" (Guerry 1974: 73).

5. Mrs. E.A. Poyas stated in 1860 that, Mrs. Moultrie "was buried at Windsor, where she died; and so, too, was General William Moultrie, who died in this city, in 1805" (Poyas 1860: 105-106).
ARCHEOLOGICAL KEYS FOR UNLOCKING THE IDENTITY OF THE MAJOR AND THE GENERAL

Since the evidence is strong that the General was buried next to the Major, "at his earnest request," it is apparent that if the Major's grave could be located, the grave of the General should be found beside it. This would have been an easy job had the tombstones been in their original locations. However, all tombstones had been moved by vandals before this project began and their original position could not be guessed at.

Some hope for determining the locations of the tombstones was held out by a photograph taken in 1955, when Rev. E.B. Guerry visited the site to install the government marker. This photo shows a holly tree with a distinctive curve, allowing the same tree to be recognized today. This clue was used to position the first trench across the graveyard site. It was realized, however, that the positions of the tombstones in 1955 may well not have been the positions they originally had on the site. It was apparent, therefore, that the identification of the burials would have to depend on data other than that provided by the tombstones.

Vandals had dug into the site, leaving a hole partially filled with bricks. Since bricks were usually placed as a foundation wall around large markers such as that of the grandson, William Ainslie Moultrie who died in 1811, it was assumed that the vandal hole represented the location of this burial. Nothing found during the excavation of the graveyard discounted this assumption.

A key to the identification of the Major's grave of 1796, as contrasted with the General's grave of 1805, was the fact that in the 1790s cut nail making machines were developed, and began replacing wrought nails (Noël Hume 1970: 252-254). The Major's coffin might well be made of wrought nails, whereas the General's coffin of 1805 may well contain some cut nails. If the Major's grave was indeed the first in the graveyard, as suggested by the tombstone, then his coffin might be the only one made entirely of wrought nails. If several wrought nail coffins were found, however, the problem would be more complex since this would suggest that others besides the Major were buried here prior to ca. 1800, or that wrought nails continued to be used for coffins after cut nails began to be made. Houses dating after 1800 are found to have cut nails, particularly smaller nail sizes. This may also apply to coffins. The wrought nail clue, therefore, was expected to help in identifying the burial of Major William Moultrie.

A second important key to the identity of the grave of the Major, and thereby the General, was the location of the pits dug by Bishop Guerry and Capt. Brailsford on each side of the Major in 1908. If these holes could be located, the identity of the Major's grave as indicated by the tombstone in 1908 would be known.

A third key to the location of the General's grave lay in the location of the infant boy's grave of 1803, the General's great grandson, Edward Ainslie Brailsford. Because of the touching verse on this tombstone (Fig. 3)
this burial was referred to as the "Angel." The sequence of burial as indicated by the tombstones was the Major (1796), the Angel (1803), with the documents indicating the burial of the General in 1805. The General would therefore be buried beside the Angel, and/or beside his son as he had requested. A wrought nail coffin beside an infant burial would suggest the Major and the Angel, and a cut nail coffin beside the Angel would suggest the General.

*The First Clues Are Found As Archeology Begins*

The first trench across the site was 5 feet wide and 28 feet long running generally east and west, with an angle in the center (Fig. 4). The procedure involved stripping the top foot of soil away from the area. This zone had been disturbed by root action, and by removing it the burials and other pits dug into the subsoil could be seen. This first trench revealed a ditch, Feature 1, and two burials, No. 2 and 3 (Fig. 4). At the west end of the trench several tree root disturbances could be seen. As these features were being revealed by stripping a foot of disturbed topsoil away from the area, several artifacts of interest were discovered. These allowed for more projections to be made regarding the nature of the burials yet to be located and excavated.

Sherds of Indian pottery representing three thousand years of time were recovered, revealing a repeated interest by man in the environment found on this high hill above the surrounding swamp. Shotgun shell cases reflect recent continued interest in the game found here. Fragments of a wine bottle and a medicine bottle were recovered, but these were the only objects relating to domestic activity as were ceramics and other domestic refuse absent.

Of particular interest, however, was the presence of 11 wrought nails and one cut nail; a wrought, straight coffin handle; a curved coffin handle; and three fragments of human bone. Taken together as a set of data that might be assumed to be related, we can suggest that the wrought handle is associated with the wrought nails, and the cut nail may well be related to the curved handle as to original function. The human bone fragments certainly suggest that a burial with bones in a good state of preservation had been disturbed somewhere on the site. The two types of handles and cut and wrought nails suggest that two burials had been disturbed, one probably dating after around 1800, and the other before cut nails were developed. It was known that Burial 3, the General's grandson who was buried in 1811, had been extensively damaged by vandals since the hole was still standing open when archeology was begun. This burial might well account for the curved handle and the cut nail. The wrought handle and wrought nails might then be from the earliest known burial on the site, Major William Moultrie, buried in 1796.

From this first trench, therefore, it appeared that if Major Moultrie's grave was indeed the first burial on the site it was very likely disturbed.
Plan of the Moultrie Family Graves at
WINDSOR HILL
(38CH230)
Charleston County, S. C.

Documentation: The Rt Rev. William Alexander Guerry
The Rev. Edward Brailsford Guerry

Institute of Archeology and Anthropology
University of South Carolina
Archaeologist: Stanley South
Assistant: Susan Jackson
Field Assistants: Julian V. Brandt, Jr.,
Julian V. Brandt III, James O'Hara,
Jewell, Lara, and Robert South,
Ron Wogaman.

Captain Brailsford's excavation of Nov. 23, 1908 "left of the Major" where the soil was "lying in well defined strata, with no evidence of having been disturbed."

Captain Brailsford's hole of Nov. 25, 1908 "dug through the grave of Major Wm. Moultrie."

Bp. Guerry's hole of Nov. 24, 1908 "on the right of" the Major.

Made possible through permission of the estate
of the late Mr. H.L. Koester.

Alignment of burials
ca 1810 and later
Is with the Plantation Buildings

FIGURE 4.
by a later excavation. Another identifying criterion for the Major's grave, therefore, would be that it would be disturbed by some subsequent hole dug into the coffin, with a handle and bones being brought to the surface as a result.

**Excavating the Graves at the Moultrie Family Graveyard**

The original trench across the site was expanded as each new grave was located until eleven burials were found. Three days labor for the archeologist and an assistant were necessary for each burial. The outlines of the grave holes were revealed through carefully cutting away the topsoil zone (Fig. 5). These were then plotted with a transit and tape so that an accurate, detailed map of the positions of the features could be drawn (Fig. 4).

The burials were located at a depth of from 3.5 to 5 feet, with several being 4.5 feet deep. The water table varied during the excavation period from 3.7 to 4.5 feet in depth, revealing why the graves were not placed deeper than they were. The high water table and its continuous fluctuation through the years had a deteriorating effect on the bones and coffins; only slight stains remained to mark their presence in most graves. For this reason it was not possible to rely on identification of any of the burials from the physical bone remains, as to sex, age, or other characteristics.

Some coffins had rows of tacks around the upper lid edge fastening down felt cloth, some of which was preserved beneath the tacks by the copper salts. One or two rows of tacks were also seen down the centers of the coffin lids, and along the outside upper edge of the sides of the coffins, in some instances.

The lid of the coffin invariably had collapsed into the coffin and was found several inches below the upper edge of the box. On the lid were often the fragile remains of embossed metal plates, and in Burials 10 and 14 these were connected by brass tacks in rows. Burials 6, 9, 10, and 14 had three of these fragile metal plates on the lid. Burials 2, 6, and 9 also had central bands of embossed metal across the lids of the coffins. This metal was so fragile it had the consistency of flaky pie crust. The coffins had either 6 or 8 handles or, as was the case with Burials 6, 7, and 15, no handles at all.

Burial 6 had a central stain beneath the bottom of the coffin which was the remains of a piece of wood on which the coffin was lowered when it was placed in the grave. This block of wood probably served to allow the ropes used to lower the coffin to pull free after the coffin was in place. This may relate to the fact that this coffin had no handles. The coffins of Burials 2 and 6 were 5.7 feet long, whereas those from Burials 4, 7, 9, 10 and 14 were 6.5 feet long. Burials 2 and 6 may have been females or young adults, an evaluation based on the size of these
FIGURE 6. The Top Edge of General William Moultrie's Coffin (F14), Showing the Row of Tacks Around the Edge of the Lid, and the Stain Outline of the Coffin of the Angel (F15).
smaller coffins. The smallest coffin was the little Angel, Burial 15, that was only three feet long. The coffin wood from Burials 2, 7, 9, 10, and 14 was identified (Bradford Rauschenberg, personal communication) and found to be Southern Red Cedar (Juniperus redcedar or J. silicicola) found along the coast. This reveals that the coffins were locally made.

The Chronological Relationship of Intrusive Features

No distinction could be made between Burials 2 and 3 from the fill soil in these features. However, the profile of the paired features revealed that when Burial 3 was dug it intruded half over the coffin area of Burial 2. This intrusive pit stopped, however, at the depth of the top of the coffin of Burial 2, revealing that the diggers had struck and recognized the lid of the coffin. They then expanded their excavation toward the south to make room for the coffin of Burial 3, which they were burying. Since Burial 3 is identified as the 1811 burial of the General's grandson, Burial 2, therefore, dates prior to 1811 (Fig. 4).

Another, more complex, intrusive picture can be seen in the relationship between Burials 4, 7, and Feature 13. Burial 7 can be seen to intrude onto Burial 4, revealing that Burial 7 is later than Burial 4. The hole, Feature 13, is seen to intrude onto Burials 4, 7, and 14, revealing that it is later than all three burials (Fig. 4).

Burials 14 and 15 share the same hole outline, but Burial 14 was slightly deeper, being 4.2 feet deep, with Burial 15 having a depth of 3.9 feet. It was not possible to make a temporal distinction between these features before excavation, in fact they appeared as a single pit outline designated as Burial 8, until excavation revealed two burials were involved. The fact that the north edge of Burial 14 curves toward Burial 15, almost touching it, suggests that Burial 15 was in place first. If this were not the case the excavation of the hole for Burial 15 would likely have intruded onto the coffin lid of Burial 14 (Figs. 6 & 7).

Identification of the 1908 Holes

Since the hole, Feature 13, intruded on three other holes, and since there was a trench to the south (Feature 1) cutting through strata "with no evidence of having been disturbed," these two features fit well the 1908 description for the holes dug by Bishop William Guerry and Capt. A.M. Brailsford. As excavation of Feature 13 was underway a wrought nail and a wrought iron coffin handle were found in the fill that matched the one recovered from the surface zone in the first trench (Fig. 8c). These clues suggested that this hole had cut into the coffin of the General's son, Feature 13, however, was found to be too shallow to disturb the three burials below. It was deep enough to have allowed the examination of the fill soil in the burials, just as Bishop Guerry reported was done in 1908. At the western end of Feature 13, the "powdery-looking soil" reported
FIGURE 7. View of the North Edge of the Grave of General William Moultrie (F14), Beside the Coffin of the Angel (F15).

FIGURE 8a. Coffin Handle and Escutcheon Plate from General William Moultrie's Coffin.
8b. Coffin Handle from the Topsoil Zone from Major William Moultrie's Coffin.
8c. Coffin Handle from Feature 13, from Major William Moultrie's Coffin.
8d. Coffin Handle from Burial 4, from Major William Moultrie's Coffin.
by Bishop Guerry was found to be a characteristic of the subsoil. The match of these features with the description provided by Bishop Guerry in 1908 identifies these features, and points to Feature 4, between them, as the grave of Major William Moultrie.

The Discovery of the Grave of the Major

With Feature 13 eliminated as the hole responsible for the intrusion into the burial of Major William Moultrie, Burial 7 became the obvious source of the disturbance which brought to the surface the coffin handles and wrought nails. This appeared to be the case since only the east half of Burial 4 was still intact, the west half having been cut into by Burial 7 (Fig. 4). When Feature 13 cut into the fill of Burial 7 a coffin handle (Fig. 8c) was recovered and subsequently became part of the fill of Feature 13. This handle had come from the coffin of the Major (Burial 4) when Burial 7 was dug.

During the excavation of Burial 7 fill soil, a fragment of an iron escutcheon plate for a coffin handle was found, as well as another wrought nail. These were not a part of Burial 7, but apparently were from the burial cut into by Burial 7, Burial 4. With the completion of excavation of Burial 7 it became obvious that this grave clearly cut into and removed the west half of the coffin of Burial 4.

As Burial 4 was excavated five wrought iron handles with thick metal escutcheon plates were found on the coffin. Three handles were missing, having been cut away when Burial 7 was dug. These handles were mates to those previously found on the site (Fig. 8d). The preservation of these handles was dramatically varied, even though all came from the same coffin. The handle found in the surface zone was best preserved, having long been removed from the constant association with the water table (Fig. 8b). The handles still in place on the coffin, however, were coated with a heavy layer of rust and bonded to the escutcheon plate (Fig. 3d), as a result of the long exposure to the water table.

The nails from the coffin of Burial 4 were all wrought. However, wrought nails did not prove to be a diagnostic criterion for separation of the burials in time since all burials had wrought nails. Some coffins had nails with an "L" head, others had a "T" head, and some from Burials 2, 6, 7 and 10 appeared to be cut nails with wrought heads (Noel Hume 1970: 253). An important factor in the identification of nails was that the water table condition under which the nails had been subjected made identification of attributes extremely difficult. The most important result of the lack of a demonstrated contrast between wrought and cut nails before and after ca. 1800 in coffin construction is the implication that the change to cut nails was much slower in the coffin-making trade than in house construction. This may relate to a conservatism in matters dealing with burial of the dead not found in the construction trade, where cheaper cut nails, especially for fastening lathing strips, were quickly adopted.
With the evidence from the 1908 holes, however, the location of the grave of the Major was no longer in doubt. The Major's coffin (Burial 4) had a row of iron tacks down the center of the lid and a single row around the edge of the lid, as well as around the outside upper edge of the sides. Very little remained of the bones of the Major.

An interesting series of facts regarding the tombstone of the Major became apparent at this point. If the tombstone was in its proper place at the time Burial 7 was dug, why was the burial placed directly over the west end of the Major? The tombstone could have been out of place at the time, but it would have to have been replaced in a relatively proper position for Bishop Guerry to have used it to position his holes in 1908. This would likely have been done since the diggers of Burial 7 discovered their error when they hit the coffin and bones of the Major, therefore, they could have positioned the tombstone at the place where they knew the head to have been. The bones would easily have been recognized since those fragments brought to the surface and found in the first archeological trench were in an excellent state of preservation. This explanation sees the intrusion of Burial 7 on the Major as an accidental event.

An alternative hypothesis for explaining why those digging a grave for Burial 7 would have cut so drastically into the Major and then replaced his tombstone in its proper place, can be seen in the event that an intrusion into the Major was an intentional event. It is difficult to understand why the Major's tombstone, and the footstone would have been so out of position in the early nineteenth century that Burial 7 was accidentally cut into the Major's grave. The answer may lie in a study done by John Combes of burial practices of coastal South Carolina Blacks (Combes 1974: 52-61).

Combes points out that intruding one grave into another is a practice that has been observed in Black burial areas, and that such a practice may well have been desired. He points out that the most important thing in one's life is to be interred in the family cemetery. "It is imperative that the deceased be buried with the spirits of the other members of the family," Combes emphasizes (Combes 1974: 56).

If Burial 7 is that of a beloved Black servant of the Major, the headstone of the Major may well have been removed in order to allow interment of such a person in spiritual nexus to the beloved master, and the tombstone replaced in its proper position after the grave of Burial 7 was backfilled. This would place the Major's tombstone (headstone) in the center of the new Burial 7, while still marking the place of the Major. Such a burial may well have happened many years after the burial of the Major, and without the knowledge of the Major's family.

One additional clue may lie in the fragments of medicine bottle mentioned as having been found in the first trench cut across the graveyard area. Its presence here might also be explained by reference to Combes' article. He reveals that folklore among South Carolina Blacks emphasizes placing medicine bottles on graves upside down (Combes 1974: 56). Such a practice might well have resulted in the presence of the single medicine bottle found on the site, if Burial 7, for instance, was the grave of a Black individual who shared this belief.
A difference between Burial 7 and the others is the fact that this burial had no handles, only a piece of embossed metal where handles normally would have been, nor were there any tacks or embossed metal on the coffin lid. This suggests a very simple coffin. Burial 6 also had no handles, but embossed metal plates were found on the lid. Burial 6 is certainly similar to Burial 7.

Another difference between this burial and the others is that it is the only one having any evidence of clothing. Three one-hole bone button discs, such as were used to make cloth-covered buttons were recovered in this coffin. No such evidence was found in any of the other coffins, although all soil from the area of the body from all burials was water-sifted through a window screen. This fact suggests a different burial practice regarding clothing, though the buttons may simply have fastened a gown or shroud. Whether this difference reflects a different time period or a contrast between ethnic burial practices is not known.

General William Moultrie's Grave is Found

Since the General was said to have been buried beside his son at his request, finding the burial of the Major pinpoints the location of the grave of the General. There is only one grave beside the Major, Burial 14, a grave that lines up perfectly on the east end with that of the Major. This Burial 14 is the grave and mortal remains of the hero of the American Revolution, General William Moultrie (Figs. 7 & 8).

The final verification for this comes with the location of Burial 15 beside the grave of the General. This was the grave of the "Angel," Edward Ainslie Brailsford. Apparently a space was left beside the Major when the Angel was buried in 1803, likely for the Major's wife, Hannah Ainslie Moultrie (J. Moultrie 1904: 259). Hannah was still living when the General died, which makes the General's "earnest [sic] request" that he be buried beside his son by his first wife (Eliza Damaris de St. Julien) (J. Moultrie 1904: 257) sound much like an entreaty, perhaps prompted by his taking the grave spot set aside for his daughter-in-law. This placed the General between his son and his great grandson, the Angel.

The General's second wife, Hannah Lynch Moultrie (J. Moultrie 1904: 257), died in 1798, probably in March, and was buried at Windsor Hill (Poyas 1860: 105-106). As far as is known, hers was the second burial at Windsor Hill. My interpretation is that she was buried some eight feet to the north of her step-son, the Major, Burial 9, (Fig. 4), with a reserved burial plot to her right for her husband, the general, marked by two bricks. The next to die was the Angel, and he was buried near the Major, beside a place reserved for the Major's wife, Hannah Ainslie Moultrie (J. Moultrie 1904: 259).

The death of the General, and his burial beside his son as requested, came just five weeks before the Major's wife died on November 4, 1805 (Register 1928: 159). With her "normal" place beside her husband taken
by the General, she may well have been placed beside the General's wife as Burial 10 (Fig. 4). With this sequence of events the reserved burial plot marked with bricks beside the General's wife was never occupied by a grave. It is interesting to note that the Major's wife was not buried to the south of the Major. Would this have been because to do so would have placed her on the "wrong" side of her husband, i.e., to his right rather than on his left? If this was the case why was the General not placed on the south side of the Major?

With the relationship between the burials and the documents relating to individuals worked out, we can turn our attention to some of the details of the burials themselves. The Angel's coffin was not ornamented in any way, and was put together with wrought nails. An unusual fill soil, a very dark humus, was found inside the coffin, whereas the soil around all other burials was a uniform light grey. Apparently some humus-producing material, perhaps a sheepskin, was used to wrap the baby when he was placed in the coffin.

The General's coffin was decorated with three embossed metal plates on the lid, connected with a double row of brass tacks. A single row of tacks was placed around the lid and around the upper edge of the outside of the coffin. At two places on the coffin lid four tacks were found forming a decorative diamond (Fig. 9). Two rows of tacks were also found extending down the center of the side of the coffin from head to foot, with similar diamond motifs at two places. The tacks had preserved, by means of copper salts, a section of wood from the south coffin wall (Fig. 10). The preservation of wood in this coffin was not nearly so complete as was found in the coffin of Burial 10, where large sections of the box were still intact. The difference appears to relate to the amount of copper present in the tacks, as those from the General's coffin appear to have been made of an alloy of copper and another metal, whereas those in Burial 10 seem to have a higher copper content as revealed by their green appearance. Those from the General's coffin are gray in color, similar to pewter, and apparently do not preserve wood so well.

The coffin had six handles with thin, embossed metal escutcheon plates behind, much more fragile than the wrought escutcheon plates found with the handles on the Major's coffin, though the shape of the handle itself was very similar (Fig. 8a). The remains of the General were, as in all burials, extremely scanty. It should be noted here that a recent rumor has it that the General was buried with his sword, originating, no doubt, from speculation as to his military role during life. However, nothing of a military nature was found with any of the burials, not even a button.

Interesting artifacts connected with the burials in the northern section of the graveyard are the bricks used to mark the graves. The graves in this area are aligned along an axis that parallels present magnetic north, whereas those at the southern end of the graveyard are apparently aligned with the axis of the plantation house and outbuildings.
FIGURE 9. Close-up view of the tacks on the lid of General William Moultrie's Coffin (Fl4).

FIGURE 10. Wood and tacks from the side of the coffin of General William Moultrie.
The northern half is the earlier part of the graveyard, the change probably taking place around 1810. The alignment of Burials 2, 3, 6, 7, and 11 is with the later period. Burial 11 appears to be that of an infant, possibly placed beside the Angel's tombstone for sentimental association with that infant.

It is known that the Angel's brother, Edward de St. Julien Brailsford, died at the age of 16, about the year 1832 (Lawrence n.d.). His remains may well be represented by Burial 6 (Fig. 4). Some of the burials cannot be identified, nor can suggestions be offered as to their identity.

**Summary**

With the discovery of the General's grave between the Major and the Angel the search for his remains is over. The search that began in 1850 by a committee, was picked up again in 1908 and 1909 by the Bishop William Guerry and Capt. A.M. Brailsford, and again renewed through the efforts of the Rev. E. B. Guerry, had to await the science of archeology to be brought to a successful conclusion. The remains of these individuals, with the exception of General William Moultrie, have been reinterred in the graveyard at St. James Episcopal Church at Goose Creek. Through the Office of Governor James Edwards and the Secretary of the Department of the Interior, the remains of General Moultrie have been reinterred at Fort Moultrie National Monument.
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