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The University of South Carolina offers equal opportunity in its employment admissions, and educational activities, in accordance with Title IX, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and other civil rights laws.
ARCHEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS IN THE INTERIOR OF McCGRADY'S LONGROOM, 38CH559, CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

by

Kenneth E. Lewis
Introduction

During the second week of September, 1982, archeological investigations were carried out by the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology of the University of South Carolina in the interior of McCrady's Longroom (38CH559), an eighteenth century structure adjoining Unity Alley in Charleston, South Carolina (Fig. 1). The archeological work at the Longroom was funded by Preservation Associates of Charleston, under whose supervision the building's conversion into a restaurant was being carried out. Results obtained from this archeological project are intended to provide interpretive data relating to this structure as well as information about the area in general.

The general goals of the archeological investigations have been threefold. First, the project has sought to determine the physical condition of the cultural and architectural remains at the site. Secondly, it has intended to identify past occupations of the Longroom and the site on which it stands. Finally, any intact archeological features found in the excavations were to be explored as completely as possible during the time available. Data derived from these investigations will be useful in assisting the planned restoration of the building's interior by providing evidence of architectural features and material aspects of past activities carried out there. Information relating to activity composition and distribution will also be useful in the comparative study of sites of similar function. In addition, chronological information obtained from these excavations should reflect not only the time of the building's construction, but also the presence of earlier historic occupations at the site.

Historical Summary

McCrady's Longroom is a rectangular brick structure of English bond construction measuring 75 ft. north-south and 25 ft. east-west. The first floor of the building is entered by a door in the north wall and an arcade extending along most of its eastern facade. The first floor of the building is a single room; however, an 1801 plan of the structure (May 5, 1801/CCRRMC/C-7: 387) shows it to have originally been subdivided by an interior wall (Fig. 2). At that time a kitchen is shown to have occupied the largest part of the first floor. It contained two large fireplaces in its west wall and opened eastward onto an arcade through three doorways.

The second and third stories of the building are reached via a stairwell situated just east of the structure's northern end. This stairwell is entered through a lobby opening into the arcade as well as an adjacent brick-paved courtyard. The second story is occupied by the Longroom, a multi-purpose room used for banquets, recitals, plays, operas, dances, and
Locator map of the site.
similar activities. At the northern end of the Longroom is a performance area separated by a wooden wall in the center of which is a large opening flanked by two doorways. The ceiling of the Longroom is 16 ft. high while that of the performance area is only 8 ft. high in order to accommodate an anteroom above it (NRF).

McCready's Longroom was originally connected by a ground level passageway and second story piazza to a three story building fronting on East Bay Street (Fig. 2). This structure was the tavern to which the Longroom was added. The sequence in which these structures appeared may be traced by observing through time the ownership of the property on which they stood. These property records should provide information about not only the Longroom, but also previous historic period occupations of the site.

McCready's Longroom is situated on Lot 19 in Charleston, a parcel of land fronting on East Bay Street to the east and Unity Alley to the south. It was granted originally to Jonathan Amory, a merchant, by the Proprietary government on July 15, 1698 (SCRSSLGCS). Twenty-five years later half of this lot was conveyed to Eleazer Allen, another merchant, (Nov. 19, 1723/CCRRMC/C: 171). At this time, the property was definitely occupied because the deed included the transfer of "all buildings, tenements, etc., occupied and tenured at that time by Alice Hoy, widow." In 1732 the property was sold by Allen to James Crockatt (Dec. 6, 1732/CCRRMC/K: 215). Allen, like Jonathan Amory, was apparently an absentee landlord, because the deed again specified that structures there were occupied by a tenant, Bastian Hugo. The half lot was conveyed by Crockatt to William Parker, also a merchant, in 1767 (June 1, 1767/CCRRMC/P-3). At that time the property contained a building occupied by another renter, Agnes Scott. Some time during the next decade Edward McCrady began operating a business there. In 1778, when he purchased the property, it was described as the "lot on which McCrady's tavern now stands" (Aug. 7, 1778/CCRRMC/Y-5: 509-511).

Between 1778 and 1788 McCrady also purchased adjacent properties on Unity Alley (Oct. 20, 1788/CCRRMC/0-5: 301-306; Aug. 5, 1788/CCRRMC/A-6: 130). These purchases enabled him to expand his business by constructing the Longroom shown on the 1801 plan. The building date of the Longroom is uncertain, but it was completed prior to 1791 when President George Washington dined there on May 4 while on a visit to Charleston during his tour of the southern states (Salley 1932: 19).

Subsequent use of the Longroom as a printing plant in the twentieth century resulted in modification to the building's interior. Installation of heavy equipment pads and drains appears to have brought about the removal of interior walls and is likely to have disturbed the early floor of the structure. Later construction to the east of the Longroom has closed off the passageway to East Bay Street and the piazza connecting McCrady's Tavern and the Longroom has been removed. The courtyard outside the Longroom was covered with a wooden floor and an entranceway opening onto Unity Alley was cut in its southern wall (NRF). In recent years many of the later modifications have been removed in order to restore the Longroom structure to its original appearance. Presently efforts are underway to develop the building as a restaurant and the current archeological work has been carried out to provide information to aid in this restoration.
Plan of excavations in the interior of the longroom.
The archeological investigations at McCrady's Longroom were designed to provide information relating to the site's condition, its chronological sequence and affiliation, and architectural and cultural features lying within the building. Documentary data have indicated that the Longroom's first floor was originally divided into several areas (Fig. 2). Later occupations of the structure have obliterated all evidence of interior walls as well as the brick and slate kitchen floor. Because of the extent of this disturbance, it was decided that an extensive sampling of the structure's interior was necessary to determine the locations of intact evidence of early occupations. When found, such deposits might then be explored more intensively for data relating to the goals of this project.

The Condition of the Site

The initial phase of the archeological work involved the excavation of six test pits designed to locate intact cultural and architectural features. Their locations are shown in Figure 3. The pits were placed so as to sample as much of the floor area as possible and were placed in areas where the ground had not been disturbed by the construction excavations. In all six of the pits evidence of a modern occupation was present and in all but three the soil was disturbed to a depth of several feet, making the recognition of cultural features and distinct occupation zones impossible. This condition contrasted with that in the three other test pits in which excavations clearly revealed definable soil stratigraphy as well as undisturbed cultural features. The occurrence of deep soil mixing in three of the pits implied extensive disturbance to the archeological record in a large part of the building's interior (Fig. 3). This information allowed such areas to be avoided by further exploratory excavations which were concentrated in those parts of the structure where historic occupational deposits were likely to lie intact. Results of these excavations have produced information relating to the nature and temporal affiliation of the site's early occupations.

Cultural Chronology of the Site

In order to determine the dates and cultural affiliations of the past occupations at the site of McCrady's Longroom, a 5 x 5 ft. test pit was excavated just east of the north fireplace (Fig. 3). It was anticipated that artifacts uncovered here would provide evidence of the McCrady occupation of the 1780s as well as those previous to it. Because ownership and occupation of this parcel of land date back to the late seventeenth century, archeological evidence of an earlier historic presence was anticipated.

This stratigraphic control pit yielded six distinct soil layers, each of which contained materials capable of identifying the period in which it was deposited. English ceramics of the colonial period are an extremely sensitive chronological indicator (South 1972) and have been used to establish the temporal sequence of the stratigraphic deposits uncovered here. The stratigraphic sequence revealed in the control pit is illustrated in Figure 4.
McCRADY'S LONGROOM
CHARLESTON, S.C.

FLOOR PLAN
LAYER 1 - DARK GREY SAND
LAYER 2 - TAN & GREY MOTTLED SAND WITH BRICK & MORTAR RUBBLE
LAYER 3 - YELLOW-TAN SAND WITH RUBBLE
LAYER 4 - YELLOW-TAN SAND (SUBFLOOR), CONTAINING SHELL
LAYER 5 - GREY-TAN SAND WITH CRUSHED SHELL UNDER CAP OF DARK GREY WATERBOURNE SAND AND CHARCOAL
LAYER 6 - DARK GREY CLAYEY SAND (HUMUS) GRADING INTO STERILE TAN SAND (SUBSOIL)

McCRADY'S LONGROOM
CHARLESTON, S.C.

EAST PROFILE OF TEST PIT
BY NORTH FIREPLACE
Layer 6 at the base of the stratigraphic profile consists of a dark grey clayey sand humus grading into a sterile tan sand. This layer represents the ground level at the time the earliest historic occupation of the site took place. Ceramics from Layer 6 consist of types commonly associated with seventeenth century English sites in South Carolina (South and Hartley 1980) and indicate a pre-1700 date for the initial occupation here. This occupation is not associated with a structure and may represent refuse discarded on the ground during the Amory ownership of Lot 19.

Directly above this layer is a zone of grey-tan earth containing a large amount of crushed shell. At its upper limit is a cap of charcoal, indicating that a fire must have occurred at the close of this episode of deposition. Artifacts indicate that Layer 5 was laid down after 1720, suggesting an association with the Allen and possibly the Crokatt occupations of Lot 19.

Layer 4 lies just beneath the brick floor of the Longroom kitchen. It is a yellow-tan sand containing large numbers of artifacts, oystershell, and food bones. Like the layers below it, Layer 4 does not appear to have been associated directly with a structure and is likely to represent refuse deposited immediately prior to or during the Longroom's construction. Ceramic artifact analysis indicates that this deposition took place approximately between 1750 and 1780, the period just preceding Edward McCrady’s acquisition of the property. A circular pit (Feature 2), possibly a well (Fig. 4), and a postmold (Feature 1, Figs. 5 and 6) extend from the top of Layer 4 through the underlying two layers. These features were filled and covered at the time the Longroom kitchen floor was laid down and would have been associated with pre-1780 activities at the site.

Three layers of soil overlie the brick kitchen floor and appear to represent depositions that occurred after the building's use as a kitchen had ceased. The large amount of food bone associated with Layers 2 and 3 suggests that these are refuse deposits which are unlikely to have accumulated while the kitchen was in use. Much of the bone in these layers is sawn, a technique that came into wide use in the nineteenth century (South 1974: 231), suggesting that this deposit is later than those beneath the floor which are characterized by cut bone more typical of the eighteenth century. The association of eighteenth century artifacts with these apparently later deposits is likely to be a result of mixing that occurred when dirt from earlier deposits was re-excavated to cover garbage. The presence of building rubble in Layers 2 and 3 further indicates that these layers were composed, in part, of earlier deposits dug from the floor of the building.

Layer 1 consists of a dark grey sand covering the surface of the ground. It varies in depth from 0.1 ft. at the east end of the pit to nearly 1.0 ft. at the western wall of the building. This layer contains modern artifacts and appears to represent a nineteenth century or later refuse deposit mixed with some earlier material. The redeposited artifacts, like those in Layers 2 and 3, date from the second half of the eighteenth century and include two coins minted before the Revolution. Layer 1's age and dramatic increase in depth suggest that this deposit had been used to fill an excavation dug to facilitate the placement of the printing plant's wooden floor in the early twentieth century. Several
BRICK FLOOR

FEATURE 1

McCRAWDY'S LONGROOM
CHARLESTON, S.C.

PLAN OF TEST PIT
BY NORTH FIREPLACE
Figure 6: McCrady's Tavern, north fireplace.
pieces of printers' type recovered from Layer 1 clearly link this deposit with modern printing activities in the Longroom structure.

The cultural chronology of the site, as revealed by archeology, closely parallels that indicated by documentary sources. Material remains show that the site was occupied as early as the latter part of the seventeenth century and was used for the deposition of refuse and other activities on a regular basis until the Longroom was built there in the 1780s. During the building's use as a kitchen the floor was presumably kept clean and free from accumulated refuse. Following its abandonment as a kitchen, however, it seems to have become a site of refuse disposal where garbage was deposited and mixed with material dug from the building's interior.

Archeological Features in the Longroom

In addition to investigating the cultural chronology of the Longroom, several of the test pits were intended to locate architectural features not visible on the surface. The 1801 plan indicates that the first floor of the Longroom had been divided into several areas. Test excavations were conducted to find evidence of the interior wall that separated the kitchen from the arcade and the room at the north end of the building and to determine the nature and extent of original floors in these three areas.

As we have seen, the stratigraphic control pit revealed evidence of the brick floor of the kitchen. This floor was composed of one layer of brick, laid in common bond oriented to the short axis of the structure (Fig. 5). The floor was traced in an easterly direction until it disappeared at the edge of a recent drainpipe trench (Fig. 3). Excavations elsewhere in the Longroom structure encountered no further evidence of this floor. The slate floor covering mentioned in the 1801 plan was not found intact; however, fragments of slate in Layers 1-3 may represent the redeposited remains of this floor.

Exploratory excavations in the southeast portion of the Longroom building revealed the remains of a brick pier similar to those supporting the second floor pillars near the structure's northern end (Fig. 3). Based on the presence and location of these architectural features and a lack of evidence for a permanent interior wall, it must be assumed that the kitchen wall was of a less substantial nature than the rest of the structure and was supported by these piers alone. Such a wall may have been of frame construction and, because it was not a load-bearing wall, could have easily been removed to create more unobstructed interior space.

Just to the east of the southeastern wall pier a mortar pavement was uncovered. The western edge of this pavement runs in a north-south direction parallel to the east and west wall of the Longroom. Additional evidence of this pavement was found near the well at the northern end of the arcade, suggesting that this pavement extended along the length of the building. The presence of the mortar pavement contrasts with the kitchen's brick floor as well as the brick pavement of the courtyard to the east of it (Martha Zierden, personal communication). The restricted extent of the mortar implies that it formed the arcade floor. Because of the extremely disturbed condition of the ground in the northern end of the building, it
was impossible to determine if this mortar pavement extended into other areas outside the kitchen.

Conclusions

Archeological investigations at the site of McCrady's Longroom have indicated that the interior of this structure has been extremely disturbed, resulting in the nearly complete destruction of the building's original floor as well as earlier cultural deposits beneath it. A great quantity of eighteenth century artifacts remain in the soil of the interior, but most are mixed with later materials as a result of repeated excavation and redeposition activities. Evidence of refuse disposal during the nineteenth century is also present, suggesting that the building was used as a dump at some time after it ceased to function as a kitchen. All of the earlier deposits were further disturbed by the placement of a wooden floor and equipment supports for a twentieth century printing plant, debris from which is also present in the top layer of soil.

Excavations in an undisturbed portion of the Longroom have revealed that the site of this building had been occupied long before the present structure was built. Ceramic evidence indicates that refuse accumulated here before 1700 and apparently continued to be deposited until the 1780s when the building's floor was laid down. These pre-Longroom deposits provide evidence of the earliest English occupation of the Charleston peninsula and corroborate documents relating to the history of the property on which the Longroom stands.

Archeological evidence pertaining to the Longroom itself has been confined to architectural features relating to its floor, interior wall, and the arcade pavement. Although these elements are described in the 1801 plan, archeology has provided additional details regarding their form and composition. Material evidence produced by the Longroom occupation is not present inside the structure. Deposits of refuse would normally have been placed outside the structure or area where they were generated. Such secondary discard (see Schiffer 1976: 30-31; South 1977: 179-182) is particularly characteristic of domestic refuse and would have resulted from a desire to keep an activity area clean as well as to remove odiferous material from areas normally frequented by people. Consequently, the only such deposits present in the Longroom appear to have accumulated before the structure was built and after its use as a kitchen had ceased.

Despite its extremely disturbed condition, archeological deposits in McCrady's Longroom have provided several pieces of information relating to the structure and the occupations that preceded and came after it. Although little material evidence of the Longroom kitchen occupation itself appears to have survived inside these walls, the presence of deeply-buried earlier deposits suggests that the remains of a late seventeenth and lengthy eighteenth century occupation exist where post-Longroom period construction has not obliterated it. These deposits can supply a great deal of new data relating to this early period of Charleston's existence and constitute a priceless historical resource for the study of this era. For this reason, it is recommended that the investigation of such deeply-buried
archeological deposits be considered in the planning of further construc-
tion outside the Longroom structure.
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CCRRMC  Charleston County, Records of the Register of Mesne Conveyance

NRF    National Register Files

SCRSSLGCS  South Carolina, Records of the Secretary of State, Land Grants, Colonial Series

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