Excavating the Fortified Area of the 1670 Site of Charles Towne, South Carolina

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In 1664, a settlement known as Charles Towne was begun on the Cape Fear River in North Carolina. After three years the effort was abandoned. Within two years after the Cape Fear venture had failed, a new expedition was planned through the leadership of Lord Anthony Ashley Cooper. This effort was aimed at a settlement at Port Royal on the Carolina coast, but at Bull Bay the cassica of the "Kayawah" Indians came aboard and convinced Governor Sayle that a better prospect lay at a site on the south bank of the Kiawah River, later to be known as the Ashley. This arrangement would allow supplies to be brought by the Kiawah Indians to the infant settlement and in turn the settlement would provide protection for the Kiawah against their enemies.¹

At first the community was known as "Albemarle poyn at Kyawaw," but this was soon changed to Charles Towne. After their first landing at Albemarle Point in April, 1670, they immediately began to fortify their position, both against possible Spanish attack and unfriendly Indians. William Owen, one of the leaders of the colony, provided us with a description of the site.

...we haue made choise for ye better, hauing pitcht on a pointe defended by ye maine riuer with a brooke on ye one side, and inaccessible Marshe one ye other wch att high tides is ever overflowne: ioynig itself to ye mainland in a small neck not exceeding fiftie yards which now is pallizadoed, and with a verye small charg might be made Impregnable: for neither by water on ye one side nor by land on ye other cann ye enemie make any considerable attack but yt a handful of men may defend with securietie, if this neck of land would be seuered from the Continent.²

In view of the archaeological evidence, this reference to a neck with a width of fifty yards "which now is pallizadoed" is of particular interest, and this point will be discussed later.

In 1671, John Culpeper made a map of the Ashley River area on which he showed three symbolic house structures and marked the site of Charles Towne.³ By correlating this draft of 1671 with the United States Geological Survey maps of the area, it is possible to pinpoint the location of Charles Towne on present day terrain. By so doing it can be seen that the Charles Towne site is located on the point of land known as "Old Towne Plantation," a tract of land acquired in March, 1969, by the South Carolina Tricentennial Commission for development as an historical park commemorating the first settlement of South Carolina.
The Charles Towne settlement was designed for planting and trade, but to successfully carry these into effect a protection against Spanish attack was necessary. Before leaving England for the Carolina venture in 1669, Joseph West was supplied with:

...four iron demi-culverin and eight sacres, with ship carriages, ladles, sponges and linstocks & 12 round of shot for each....

The colonists were instructed to build a fort for the protection of the town, in which were to be placed the artillery pieces. Fortification was begun shortly after their arrival and several guns were mounted, although the carriages had been lost in a vessel that was wrecked by a storm on the crossing. A stimulus for further fortification was provided when it was learned that three Spanish vessels with infantry had been sent out from St. Augustine to launch an attack against the settlement at San Jorge, the name the Spaniards applied to the Charles Towne settlement. On August 6 and 7, 1670, a hurricane hit the Carolina coast and forced the Spanish expedition against Charles Towne to be called off, the storm battered vessels returning to St. Augustine. The attempted assault on the Albemarle Point settlement resulted in an extreme effort at fortification "as strong as they could," and by March of 1671, it was reported that:

We have with much adoe, our people being weake by reason of scarcity of provisions, pallisadoed about 9: Acres of land, being a point, whereon we first set downe for our better security, and mounted seaven great Gunns, all the other carriages haveing been lost with the ship Port Royall.

Although their expedition against the settlement of the English had failed in 1670, the Spaniards had not forgotten their unwanted neighbors. The governor of St. Augustine, Don Manuel de Cendoya, sent a spy named Camunas (who could speak ten Indian languages) to the settlement on Albemarle Point to find out what he could about the details of the fortification at the English town.

Camunas traveled overland to the English settlement, assisted by some men and a canoe. At the Indian village of Osao he met a female cassica who had been at St. Augustine, who insisted on accompanying him to within a short distance of the English town. He was met by six Englishmen, "all with military insignia," who escorted him to the village and to the governor's house. The governor received him cordially, and Camunas presented a packet of letters, and was shown the garden plots while the letters were being read. After this tour of the vegetable garden the governor offered wine in a silver cup, and toasts were exchanged for the kings of England and Spain.

While enjoying the hospitality of the English governor, Camunas was observing all around him with more than a tourist's eye, and later reported on July 12, 1672. He stated that at the entrance to the village on the land side there was a strong house of wood, and that within this wooden fort fifty men were stationed with an infantry captain in charge, and in the house were many firearms, shot-guns and naked cutlasses. After passing this
wooden fort he saw about ninety houses in the village, without any formal streets. After leaving the village:

...along the edge of the river some houses continue, all of wood & disposed with much regularity, until one comes near the Castle [fortification] which also is of wood made into a sort of wall of heavy logs & its height & elevation is about two and a half varas [7 feet] with twenty-eight pieces of artillery of iron & bronze, twelve of which are pointed toward the river & the port by which the ships enter, and the rest, from their low embrasure, toward different points on the mainland. And inside of this fortification there are some lodgings and others of the same sort outside of it which, as he was informed, were built at first when they began to settle for fear of the Indians.8

The "sort of wall of heavy logs" seven feet high would appear to be a palisade, inside of which was twelve pieces of artillery pointing toward the river and port of entry, with the rest "from their low embrasure," pointing toward various points along the mainland. The "low embrasure" would appear to be an earth embrasure accompanying the palisade along the land side of the fortified area. Inside of this fortified area there were only "some lodgings...which...were built at first when they began to settle for fear of the Indians," Thus it becomes quite clear that the fortified area described here by Camunas as having only some lodgings, was not what he considered as the village of Charles Towne in the summer of 1672, the settlement proper being located some distance away up the road "along the edge of the river," from which he had reported some ninety wooden houses.

Further description of this fortified area of Charles Towne comes from four Englishmen who had lived at the Ashley River settlement and who, in February, 1674, fled to St. Augustine as refugees to the Spanish, saying that Charles Towne suffered from lack of supplies, and that they had been mistreated there. They reported that the settlement contained about one hundred men, that there was no paid infantry, and that there was a fort built with stakes and fascines.9 The "stakes" were likely the same palisade "wall of heavy logs" described by Camunas, and the fascines would imply earthen embankments faced with bundles of sticks. Three of the refugees stated that the fort consisted of a platform with stakes and fascines, or stockade and fascines, "which was practically demolished, and which contained about thirty pieces of artillery," with about ten pieces mounted on the platform. This description verifies the presence of a stockade, and of a fascine covered embankment, with the additional reference to a "platform" on which the artillery pieces were mounted. The platform could have had reference to artillery pieces on ship carriages mounted on individual platform, behind a fascine covered parapet, a typical situation. It could possibly also apply to a cribbed log platform of some sort on which the artillery pieces were mounted.10 A Spanish document dated July 26, 1671, stated that at San Jorge there was a wooden fortress near the water with ten pieces of artillery aimed toward the port, with seven of these set on land and the others on beams on the ground. These beams were very likely
the wooden gun platforms for artillery with ship carriages.  

We know that by 1674, the original palisade at the fortified area of Charles Towne was "practically demolished," and on February 9, of that year the Grand Council at Charles Towne advised:

...upon the erecting of a new fortification about Charles Towne  
It is resolved that Capt Stephen Bull be present at the Council upon Friday next with his surveying instruments to run the line of the said fortification as shall them be advised.  

The fact that surveying instruments were necessary to run the line of the new fortification would indicate that it was located in a different place from the original.

The Spanish never got around to attacking the original settlement, and it continued to grow and spread out along the banks of the Ashley River. Throughout the 1670's people moved from the area of the original settlement site to Oyster Point between the Ashley and the Cooper Rivers, where a town was fast developing. By 1679, the new Charles Towne was declared the port town, and by the following year the old site was referred to as, "Kalawah sometimes called Charles Towne." From this time on, Oyster Point was to be known as Charles Towne, and the original landing site came to be known as "Old Town Plantation."

A new Spanish scare occurred in the summer of 1682, as the word reached the new Charles Towne that 800 Spaniards were marching toward the town from St. Augustine. The Council met and ordered that 20 great guns:

...that lay at a place where the town was first designed to be made, to be brought to Charls Town...  

If the twenty guns were removed to the new town at this time there were probably some eight or ten remaining. In a document dated November 18, 1685, the Lords Proprietor stated:

...that there are divers peeces of our Cannon that lye unmounted & useless at old Charles Town And haveing taken into our consideration That Stewarts Town at Port Royall is the Frontier of ye Whole Settlement towards ye Spainard and most lyable to be hurt by them whenever they Shall be disposed to disturb us  
Wee doe therefore Order That you deliver Five of ye aforesaid Peeces of Cannon to...Stewards Town or Some other Town in Port-Royall in Carolina and there to mount ye same for ye safety thereof... 

This accounts for almost all the artillery known to have been in the Charles Towne fort, and with the removal of the artillery the fifteen year recorded history of the fort comes to a close. Between 1694 and 1697, 760 acres of land known as "Old Town Plantation" was granted to James Le Sade. This included the site of the original Charles Towne and fort. From that time to the present, the property has carried the name "Old Town Plantation."
In November and December of 1968, John Combes and I conducted a five week survey of the tip end of Albemarle Point where the fortification for Charles Towne was thought to have been. No evidence of unusual topographical features could be seen in the pine woods now covering the site, except what appeared to be an old roadbed at the edge of the marsh on the west side of the peninsula, and a similar depression at the edge of the marsh on the east side of the point. These features were not immediately recognized as the remnants of the seventeenth century fortification ditch and parapet though speculation as to this possibility was made. Surface material over the site was limited to nineteenth century ceramics and glass, with only two sherds of seventeenth century stoneware being found on the surface during the entire archaeological search.

The design of the survey was to locate any evidence remaining of the original settlement at Charles Towne in the 1670's. The project was sponsored by the South Carolina Tricentennial Commission through the office of the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology at the University of South Carolina. Preliminary work had been undertaken by an untrained individual who had attempted to locate evidence of the palisade thought to have been "across" the fifty year neck of land separating the tip of Albemarle Point from the mainland. A number of ditches had been found, and fortunately these had not been excavated, but only revealed at the subsoil level, allowing re-cleaning and plotting to be carried out with no loss in data recovery. Exploratory trenches were cut at various places on the point, with a ten foot wide trench running down the center of the peninsula. The exploratory work was carried out in an area of some 16 acres, mostly of woods, and the base line method of direct transit readings was used to record all data so revealed.

In many places throughout the site a series of parallel ditches were revealed, from six to eight feet apart, and from twelve to eighteen inches in width. Hardly a trench could be cut without encountering these ditches. An agricultural practice was indicated, but a puzzling fact was that the ditches were found both on the high ground, and in the low marshy areas, and it was difficult to imagine what crop could be successfully grown in both types of soil. On the suspicion that the ditches may represent vineyards, research into vineyard culture was undertaken, and a book on the art of the planting of vineyards, published in 1772, was found. This source stated that vineyards in South Carolina at that time were planted in straight parallel furrows, each of which was 1 1/2 feet broad, and 1 1/2 feet in depth, and spaced six feet apart, and that the vines would flourish in the low marshy ground as well as the higher terrain. The culture of the vine was said at that time to be well known at Charles Towne.17 The report of the Spanish spy Camunas stated that each lot in Charles Towne had a trellis for grapes, providing evidence that the vineyard ditches could date anywhere from 1672 to 1772 and later.18

One of these ditches when excavated produced a quantity of burnished Indian pottery, shell tempered red filmed Indian pottery (from the West Indies),
wrought nails, oyster shell midden, stamped Indian pottery, and a kaolin pipe of seventeenth century form, impressed on the heel with the letters "EB". This may be the mark of Edward Battle, who received his freedom as a pipe-maker in 1660. From the contents of the vineyard ditches, it appeared that they were seventeenth century in origin. Several midden pits were also found that contained the same cultural materials, "EB" pipes, wrought nails, Indian pottery and midden.

Pipes marked "EB" have been found in an Indian grave (in the late nineteenth century) by Mr. S. L. Frey of Palatine Bridge, New York; and by Mr. P. C. Hiller of Conestoga, Pennsylvania, in Lancaster County; and by Mr. Lott Van De Water in Hempstead, Long Island, while digging a well. They are not thought to have been made in Hull, England, though one was found in excavations there. In discussing Phillip Edwards (a Bristol pipemaker in 1649), John Pritchard says that he appears to have taught three lads the pipe making trade, one of whom was Edward Battle, who took his freedom in 1660. Some "EB" pipes were also found in excavations at Jamestown, Virginia.

In the area of the fifty yard neck joining the tip of Albemarle Point to the mainland, a series of parallel vineyard ditches were found, but no evidence of a palisade across the neck was seen. Rather, a large ditch was found extending up the center of the high ground of the neck instead of across it as had been traditionally thought from the reference of the neck "which now is pallizadoed." This ditch, measuring six feet wide and from two to three feet deep was found to extend to the marsh on the east, and tests were made in the marsh itself at the base of the high ground of the peninsula, and the ditch was located here also, indicating that it was once a water filled ditch or moat for 180 feet, clearly revealing its function as a fortification ditch, rather than as a property line or for drainage. A ditch at this position along the edge of Albemarle Point would have provided protection against a possible attack across the marsh from high ground to the north. From the edge of the marsh, the ditch continued for 810 feet where it was found to join another ditch, slightly smaller, which angled sharply toward the south, producing an acute angle at the junction of these ditches. Along this north ditch two re-entered angles were apparently designed to allow for cross-fire protection along the face of the fortification. On Culpeper's map of 1671, a property line for two and four acre lots joining Charles Towne on the north was shown. This line was seen to have an angle of 123°. The relationship between the north fortification ditch along two of its sides was found to also have an angle of 123°. This correlation between the 1671 map and the archaeologically revealed ditch provided evidence for dating the ditch as having been dug prior to 1671, and established it as the north property line and fortification ditch for the Charles Towne settlement mentioned as having been completed by September, 1670.

The west fortification ditch was dug prior to the north ditch which joined it, although this west ditch was not shown as a line on the 1671 map. This fact was revealed in the manner in which the north ditch angled sharply immediately before joining the west ditch, and became shallower, indicating that the west ditch was in existence when the north ditch was dug; thus both ditches were in existence by September, 1670. The west ditch continued in a
straight line to the marsh on the creek side of the peninsula, being 765 feet long. The total length of this fortification ditch along the land face of Albemarle Point was 1755 feet. The "low embrasure" mentioned by Camunas in 1672, behind which some sixteen artillery pieces were mounted, was no doubt, the embankment accompanying the north and west ditches here described.

At several intervals inside the north fortification ditch of 1670, at a distance of five and one-half feet from the center, a small ditch was found paralleling the fortification ditch. This was a very shallow ditch, portions of which had been destroyed by the plow. The position of this ditch in relation to the fortification ditch was such that it fell directly beneath the center of the parapet which would have accompanied the fortification ditch. This parapet position is based on the assumption that the parapet would have been composed of the same amount of dirt that was thrown from the ditch. This parallel, accompanying ditch, therefore, apparently represents the bottom of a palisade ditch. A few postholes in the ditch and in alignment with it tend to support this interpretation.

Since we know that the north fortification ditch and palisade was constructed by September, 1670, as well as the west ditch, we may well ask why Culpeper did not show the west fortification ditch on his 1671 map as well as the north ditch. One reason is the fact that with the north ditch he was showing the relationship to two and four acre tracts of land lying just outside the town fortification, whereas on the west, "Behind the towne," he stated that Governor Sayle had set aside sixteen acres for himself, and four acres for a churchyard. (S.P., V, frontispiece). From this we see that Governor Sayle's sixteen acres joined the town, and since two and four acre lots were located on the town border on the north, Governor Sayle's property joined the town on the west. Since the governor's property and the churchyard were no doubt part of the town plan, the fortification ditch separating they may not have been shown by Culpeper for this reason.

Another reason Culpeper may not have shown the west fortification ditch line on his 1671 map may relate to Governor Sayle's death, and the subsequent building by Governor West of the plantation for the Lords Proprietor across Old Town Creek from Albemarle Point. Sayle died on March 4, 1671, and by the 21st, Governor West reported to Lord Ashley on the palisade enclosed area he was completing for the residence of the governor at that site. (S.P., V, 119, 297, 421; S.C.H.G.M., XVI, No. 2, 51). It may well have been that upon Sayle's death West knew that the sixteen acres previously used by Sayle as a plantation, could now be utilized as a part of the Charles Towne settlement. We know that Culpeper's map was being made prior to Sayle's death because of the mention of the sixteen and four acre tracts set aside by him. Also, the map indicates land owned by Capt. Joseph West, and inserted above West's name is the note "our present governour." This note tends to indicate that the map was still being worked on when Governor Sayle died and West took over as governor. It may be that West knew that the settlement would be expanded to include the sixteen acre tract previously held by Sayle, and may have instructed John Culpeper not to indicate the west fortification line on the map since it would no longer mark the boundary of the settlement. This then, may account for why this fortification line of 1670 was not shown on the Culpeper map of 1671.
Archeology tends to support this interpretation through the virtual absence of artifacts in the west fortification ditch as compared to the east ditch. The width of the west ditch is narrow, with virtually no indication of erosion, whereas the east ditch is wider and shows signs of being left open for some time, as well as containing artifacts dating to the second decade of the eighteenth century. Archeologically then, there is evidence that the west ditch was open for a very short time after 1670.

Events later in the year point in this direction also. Lord Ashley instructed in December, 1671, that the town be made more orderly and convenient (S.P., V, 360), and within six months the Council passed an "Act for the uniforme building of Charles Towne." (S.P., V, 393). And as a result, in July, 1672, people owning lots in Charles Towne came before the Grand Council and turned them in, and were issued new ones according to the new plan of the town. (S.P., V, 408). With sixteen acres coming available in 1671 with the death of Governor Sayle and the completion of the governor's residence across from Albemarle Point, plus the urging of Lord Ashley to re-design the town layout, plus the archeological data indicating a short time period for the west fortification ditch standing open, there is strong evidence for the expansion of the settlement toward the northwest, outside the original fortification ditch limits. In such an event the west fortification would only serve as an artificial barrier to free movement in this area, and would have been allowed to fill up, or even encouraged to do so after 1672. By 1674 a witness stated that the palisades of the fort were practically demolished (S.C.H.G.M. XXXVII, No. 3, 96), and in February of that year the Grand Council requested that the surveyor bring his instruments to run the line of "a new fortification about Charles Towne." (S.P., V, 462). This new fortification was undoubtedly further to the north than the original west fortification, and is yet to be located archeologically. It appears quite certain, therefore, that the west fortification ditch as discovered in this project, represents the Charles Towne fortification from 1670 to around 1672, and certainly no later than 1674. The north fortification ditch and palisade, however, was apparently still used as a part of the new 1674 fortification, and was still standing open as late as the second decade of the eighteenth century, judging from wine bottle fragments, tobacco pipes and other objects dating from that period found in the upper part of the ditch fill. By following the fortification ditch in its continued extension toward the north, future archeology could very likely reveal the location of the fortification and palisade constructed in the new survey of 1674.

Regarding the sixteen acres of Governor Sayle, and the four acres set aside for a church yard, it has been found that the land on Albemarle Point lying to the west of the west fortification ditch contains twenty acres of high ground bordered by marsh and streams. This twenty acres is broken into two natural tracts by a low marshy area extending itself toward the west fortification ditch from the Old Town Creek marsh. The southernmost tract is the highest point on Albemarle Point, presenting a beautiful view of Old Town Creek and the site of the governor's plantation across the creek. This smaller tract is four acres in extent, and is likely the same four acres
set aside by Governor Sayle for a churchyard. Extensive slot trenching here failed to produce evidence of graves or of a seventeenth century structure of any kind. The larger naturally contoured tract contains sixteen acres, and is no doubt, the tract set aside for Governor Sayle's plantation. This site today is a garden, and includes the home of Dr. J. I. Waring. Archeology on the high ridge to the west of the Waring home may well reveal the evidence for the Charles Towne houses not found inside the fortification of 1670 to 1672, and may well discover the ruin of Governor Sayle's home. This is also the site of the nineteenth century "Negro Settlement" shown on the 1836 map of the Jonathan Lucas Plantation. Excavation here should produce some interesting results, both from the seventeenth century Charles Towne settlement, as well as data for the interpretation of Black history as it relates to the plantation economy as revealed in the ruin of the eighteenth century Horry-Lucas plantation house. Hopefully such archeology will someday be undertaken.

In summary of the data revealed by the excavation of the ditch found along the land side of the tip of Albemarle Point, it appears that shortly after the colonists arrived at Albemarle Point in 1670, they began excavation of a ditch which would allow protection from possible Indian attack in this direction. Rather than placing a simple palisade across the fifty yard neck of land separating the tip of Albemarle Point from the mainland, they ran a fortification ditch with parapet and accompanying palisade in such a manner as to offer the maximum protection against attack by land. To have simply run a palisade across the fifty yard neck would have left the entire west side of the tip of Albemarle Point open to attack, for then a shallow marsh twenty to thirty feet wide would have been the only barrier against attack, and was hardly sufficient. The colonists were wise enough to recognize this obvious fact, and rather than palisade across the neck, they ditched and palisaded up the length of the neck, thus encompassing both of the tips of Albemarle Point, and eliminating the possibility of attack on one point from the other. This seems a clear and obvious interpretation based on the archeological data and the military necessities presented by a defense of Albemarle Point against a land attack. However, it also vividly illustrates how misleading the written word can be when used alone without corroborating archeological evidence. The reference to, "a small neck not exceeding fifty yards which now is pallizzadoed," would logically be, and has always been interpreted to mean, that a palisade extended across this neck. Only archeology could reveal that the reference was describing a palisade running up the length of the neck, which was found to have been the case. In such cases archeology provides an absolute check against continuing the historical bias resulting from a semantic trap. Some historians continue to argue for a palisade across the neck in the face of archeological evidence to the contrary, preferring the fickle word to the concrete reality.

The north fortification ditch was dug with two reentered angles so as to provide a crossfire cover in case of attack. This ditch also served as a property line for the area inside the fortification as well as for the two and four acre plots just outside this ditch. The west fortification ditch had no reentered angle, which is understandable in view of the fact
that considerable protection from marshes was afforded along this side of the area. A deed record of May 20, 1672, mentions that a three pole lot was bordered, "Westerly on the Towne fortificac'on or Palisadoes...", apparently a reference to the west fortification ditch found archeologically. This reference is the last we have to the west fortification until a new palisade was constructed in 1674. The fortification along the land face of Albemarle Point as discovered archeologically and interpreted in an explanatory exhibit on the site consisting of ditch, parapet and palisade, represents the first fortification of this area by the Charles Towne settlers, between 1670 and 1674.

Near the tip of Albemarle Point where the deep water channel of Old Town Creek touched the high ground, a ten foot wide exploratory trench crossed a disturbed area seventeen feet wide. At first this was thought to be a cellar outline, but upon excavation this disturbed area proved to be a ditch seven feet deep and five feet wide at the bottom. In the fill of this section of the ditch an "Eb" pipe of seventeenth century form was found. Exploratory trenches were cut following this ditch, and it was found that it extended from the marsh on the east side of Albemarle Point to the marsh on the west side, some six hundred feet. Near the center was a reentered angle, allowing for a crossfire against the entire area of the tip of the point. This feature was apparently a major fortification ditch, much more impressive than that found along the land face of the peninsula.

With the discovery of these fortification ditches, the preliminary five week exploratory project was brought to a close. A report was prepared on this phase of the project, and recommendations were made for further archeological work to begin on the first of April, 1969. This extended project was designed to excavate the fortification ditches both on the water side and the land side of Albemarle Point, with the ditches to remain open, and the dirt taken from them placed in position where the original parapet had been. The palisade along the land side of the point was to be replaced in the position indicated by the ditch paralleling the fortification ditch. This explanatory exhibit has now been completed.

The plowed soil zone was stripped from the area of the fort ditch by using a front loader, after the trees were cut and the stumps removed. The chevron shaped "V" ditch was found to form a smaller "V" near the creek end, clearly indicating where the entrance into the fort was located, and revealing that vessels were unloaded near this entrance and goods passed through it into the fort.

During excavation of the contents of the ditch, it was necessary to sift much of the dirt through window screen in order to recover the small lead shot and blue and white seed beads found by the hundreds. Some areas, however, were so devoid of any type of artifact that no sifting was carried out. The profiles of the ditch revealed a thin humus layer at the bottom apparently representing the first accumulation of humus, probably leaves, that were deposited after the ditch was excavated in 1670. Above this were alternating layers of water laid sand and clay containing no artifacts, and humus filled areas representing periods
of stabilization of the mound, during which leaves, weeds and other organic matter were being deposited as the ditch filled up through the years. The top of the filled ditch, in the area just below the plowed soil zone, a dark humus layer was seen, and it was this layer that contained a quantity of seventeenth century pipes, musket balls, straight pins, a Louis "XIITH" jetton, seed beads, Delft, and Bellarmine jug fragments.

Immediately in front of this ditch, between the point of the re-entered angle and the "V" of the entranceway, a circular ditch was found. This ditch was from ten to twelve feet wide and was in the shape of a fan, the center orienting at a 90° angle off the fort ditch and measuring 65 feet from one side to the other. Ten feet inside this large ditch was a smaller one measuring from six inches to one foot wide, also in the shape of a fan. In the center of the area inside this ditch was a large posthole 2½ feet across, and beside this hole was abundant evidence of the presence of many fires. These fires had baked the ground to a black and red brick-like hardness. In the ash and burned soil of this hearth area, lead casting sprues for swan shot were found, along with a large quantity of wrought nails, many bent, indicating that the wood for the fires was apparently being salvaged from some razed structure. Several small "L" shaped wire pins were also found in the ashes of this hearth. A brass drawer handle and fragments of an escutcheon plate were found in the dirt taken from the posthole. As excavation of this feature progressed, it became apparent that these ditches represented an artillery redoubt in front of the main body of the fort. The small ditch represented the position of vertical timbers no more than six inches wide, and the outer ditch was a fortification ditch from which dirt was obtained for an embankment between the two ditches. The central posthole was apparently designed for a post no larger than eighteen inches and, since it was in the center of only a twenty foot span from one side of the small ditch to the other, it was obvious that the central post was designed to support a heavy weight, no doubt an artillery piece. The fire burned area represented a seventeenth century hearth area around the central post, apparently used by those who were charged with the operation of the artillery piece on the platform above. The archeological evidence, therefore, clearly indicated enough architectural data to allow for a good idea as to the appearance of this feature. From the large dry redoubt ditch almost no artifacts were recovered from the top two-thirds of the ditch. The bottom layer, however, was rich with large pintles, hinges, fragments of Delft tiles, lead fragments, and many handfuls of casting sprues for lead swan shot, and musket balls. Such a quantity of discarded sprues would seem to be a waste of good lead, but apparently there was enough on hand so that the sprues could be discarded rather than being melted again to make more shot. One fragment of lead sheeting had the word "Gray" written in script, and likely was once owned by Thomas Gray who was a Charles Towne leader from 1670 until 1673. He was a military leader, as well as a member of parliament and
the council. He lead expeditions against the Kussoes, Westoes and Stonos. He lead civil disturbances in 1673, and his property was seized by the government, and he fled the Province. It appears then, that the lead sheet with the name "Gray" would date between 1670 and 1673. The transfer printed Delft tiles, wine bottle fragments, and other artifacts dating to almost 1800, found here also, reveal how long the redoubt ditch stood open.

From the archeological evidence, therefore, it would appear that what is represented here is a redoubt constructed of vertical timbers placed in a ditch, forming a chamber for the storage of equipment and supplies for the artillery piece above it. If a normal weight were placed over the top of this chamber there would be no necessity for a central supporting post for the twenty foot span from one wall to the other. However, if an artillery piece were placed overhead, a central supporting post would be necessary. The arc of the fan shape of the ditches of the redoubt would indicate the arc of fire to be covered by the artillery piece. The fact that only twenty feet of space was available over the chamber in which to operate the artillery clearly indicates that only one piece was involved. The fact that the redoubt face was shaped in an arc would indicate that the artillery piece would not have been mounted on a ship carriage, which would have allowed only a limited range of fire, but would have been mounted on a trail type field carriage. This fact is apparent even though there is reference only to ship carriages being brought into Charles Towne. The evidence of many fires around the central supporting post for the chamber, plus the presence of casting sprues for making swan shot, would indicate that the men who were manning the artillery piece were melting the lead and casting shot inside the chamber. The fires were likely kept fairly small to prevent setting fire to the central post. Access to this chamber beneath the artillery piece was likely by a ladder through a trap door in the floor of the gun chamber. The outside of the chamber wall was protected by earth thrown from the fan-shaped fortification ditch surrounding the chamber.

The artillery piece which sat in this redoubt was likely a demi-culverin which was the longest range piece at Charles Towne. In 1669, when the Carolina expedition was being equipped, the following was loaded on the vessels:

…four iron demi-culverin and eight sacres, with ship carriages, ladles, sponges and linstocks & 12 rounds of shot for each....

The barrel of a demi-culverin weighed 3600 pounds, and was the reason for the necessity for the central supporting post in the redoubt. The demi-culverin on a trail carriage would have allowed a sweeping fire of the entire area of deep water in front of Albemarle Point. The ship carriage mounted guns behind the parapet of the main fort.
ditch would have provided protection only if the enemy came within the line of fire. A redoubt with a demi-culverin on trail carriage in front of the main fort would have provided the flexibility of fire not possible with the fixed position ship carriage mounted guns.

This arrangement of the fort was not unique in that it employed methods for defense well known at the time; however, the utilization of only a reentered angle with no bastions, and a separate redoubt providing flexibility of fire in front of the fort, is a unique adaptation of fortification principles to fit the particular need at Charles Towne, and an exact parallel is unknown. The "V" shaped reentered angle at the entrance would have provided an excellent means of protecting the entrance into the fort with crossfire. A similar entrance through the reentered "V" angle is seen in details from Clampe's Plan of the Newark siege during the First Civil War in England in 1646.28

The consultant for the interpretive reconstruction of the redoubt was Harold L. Peterson of the National Park Service. The original interpretive drawing was based primarily on archeological data and revealed a central chamber with earth from the surrounding ditch thrown up against the vertical timber walls of the chamber for protection. After the archeologist had executed this drawing, Harold Peterson found a drawing made by Thaddius Kosciuszko, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, showing Redoubt #4 at West Point.29 This drawing of two sections of the West Point Redoubt, though one hundred years later than the Charles Towne Redoubt, is the closest known parallel to it. The West Point Redoubt was apparently much larger than the one at Charles Towne, and instead of a single supporting post for the gun platform, there were several. The outer wall of the redoubt was constructed of timbers placed horizontal to the ground in a cribbed manner, and the area between the outer cribbed wall and the inner chamber wall was filled with earth. The height of this cribbed wall was at least six feet above the level of the gun deck to provide protection for the gun and crew. The guns were fired through openings in this cribbed, earth-filled wall. Since one hundred years had elapsed between the construction of the Charles Towne Redoubt and the West Point Redoubt drawing, it is unwise to draw identical parallels between the two features. However, horizontal cribbing would not reveal archeological evidence of its existence and therefore, the interpretation of such a feature must come from drawings rather than from archeology. Since we know that the chamber beneath the gun at Charles Towne was likely at least six feet high, and, since the protective wall for gun and gun crew above the chamber would have had to have been about six feet high to effectively offer protection, we can safely say that there had to be a protective wall at least twelve feet high around the redoubt chamber. An earthen wall this high on only a ten foot base could most effectively be kept in place by means of a cribbed log wall such as shown in the West Point Redoubt. It is thought, therefore, that the Charles Towne Redoubt very likely had a cribbed log wall similar to that shown for the West Point Redoubt.

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Archeological evidence supporting this is the fact that from the redoubt ditch artifacts dating throughout the eighteenth century were recovered, indicating that the ditch was not filled until around 1800, whereas artifacts from the main fortification ditch do not date after the seventeenth century. One of the prime reasons why the smaller redoubt ditch should stay open one hundred years longer than the deeper and broader main fortification ditch, would be the presence of a cribbed log wall supporting the sand thrown from the redoubt ditch. The main ditch, not being cribbed, would erode with every rain and stroke of the farmer's plow, whereas the cribbed redoubt would stand virtually untouched until rot finally released the burden of sand held within the cribbed logs, allowing it to wash into the redoubt ditch, finally filling it about 1800. Thus we have archeological support for the cribbed log redoubt interpretation as well as the Kosciuszko drawing of the Redoubt at West Point.

With this information from archeology, and the redoubt drawing, the question was raised as to whether reconstructing the Charles Towne Redoubt from the interpreted archeological drawing was justified. The project was estimated to cost between $35,000.00 and $40,000.00 to rebuild the redoubt, which would have been possible using broad ax and adz craftsmen to hew and fit the logs. If the West Point drawing had not been one hundred years later than the known date of the Charles Towne Redoubt, no hesitation at rebuilding the redoubt would have been encountered. However, although it was very likely that the conjectural drawing resulting from the joining of the archeological and documentary data bore a close similarity to the appearance of the original redoubt, it is extremely unwise to undertake full-scale reconstructions with such a time gap between the archeological and documentary evidence. For this reason a rebuilding of the redoubt was not recommended. Instead, the earth parapet accompanying the main fort ditch, and a mound of dirt around the redoubt circle, was recommended as a means of interpretive explanation to the visiting public. This interpretive explanation has been carried out and the entire fort sodded with grass. Since the Spanish spy Camunas mentioned in 1672 that there were twelve artillery pieces facing the deep water and the port by which they entered, eleven openings were cut into the parapet, with the twelfth gun being on the redoubt. The position of these openings is not known, and were placed at what appeared to be appropriate and practical locations along the parapet. This may appear to some to be carrying the interpretive explanation too far, but, as Harold Peterson has pointed out, to avoid placing such openings for artillery pieces because the exact position of the original is not known, would be a greater error than placing such openings at assumed locations along the parapet.

It is assumed that there would have been a bridge across the dry ditch at the entrance "V", and some means for the gun crew to get from the redoubt to the inside of the fort. Therefore, visitor access bridges should be constructed at these two points to allow access to the
top of the redoubt mound and to the area in front of the fort.

There may have been palisades accompanying the fort parapet, or perhaps a fraise fastened into the rampart of the fort and redoubt, but no archeological or historical data definitely associates such a feature to the Charles Towne fort on the point. The references to palisades were apparently to the palisade found to have extended around the land side of the fortified area. The West Point Redoubt #4 drawing shows that redoubt furnished with a fraise, but it is unwise to apply this feature to the Charles Towne interpretation without further supporting evidence.

In summary of the fortification evidence for the Charles Towne settlement of 1670-74, we know that a broad ditch with a redoubt in front was designed to protect against possible Spanish attack by water, and a small ditch with an accompanying breastworks and palisade was located along the land side of the tip of Albemarle Point, providing a fortified area from which the town could be protected. It is interesting to note that Lord Ashley in discussing the fortification necessary for a port town said:

A Pallisado round the Towne with a small Ditch is a sufficient Fortification against the Indians. 30

The palisade and small ditch found through archeology fits this description well, and the mound accompanying the "small Ditch" along the mainland side at Charles Towne was seen and described by Camunas in 1672 as a "low embrasure." 31

The broad trench of the main fort facing the water entrance to Albemarle Point brings to mind the reference which stated that the town:

...may easily be strongly fortifyed with a broad trench, it contains about 10 acres of Land. 32

The land lying between the broad trench at the redoubt and the small ditch along the land side of the area is found to contain slightly over ten acres. The archeology at Charles Towne has clearly revealed, therefore, the location of the fortification constructed by the first colonists around a ten acre tract of land for the protection of the Charles Towne settlement. Positive evidence for "some lodgings" inside and outside of this fortified area which "were built at first when they began to settle for fear of the Indians," 33 was not found archeologically. Evidence for the location of the major town itself, outside this fortified area to the northwest, will have to await further archeological exploration in the years to come.
FOOTNOTES


3S.P., V, 332, 339, 254, frontispiece.

4S.P., V, 93.

5S.P., V, 120, 179, 283.


7S.P., V, 283.


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21 Thomas Sheppard, Early Hull Tobacco Pipes and Their Makers. September, 1912, 3-39. (Mr. Sheppard also states that the Hull "EB" pipe had a milled line below the rim, as does the Charles Towne specimen. He says it is a later 17th century pipe.).


[The above notes, 18-22, are from a collection of papers owned by Elias Bull, and presented to the South Carolina Archaeological Society.]

23 Ivor Noël Hume, personal communication.

24 A. S. Salley (ed.), Records of the Secretary of the Province and the Register of the Province of South Carolina 1671-1675. (Historical Commission of South Carolina, Columbia: 1944), 27. Hereinafter cited as Records of the Secretary.

25 S.P., V, 222, 342.

26 S.P., V, 93.


30 S.P., V, 343.


32 S.P., V, 309.

33 A.G.I., 61-1-18.
Figure 1

A Map of the Exploratory Excavations at the Site of the 1670-1680 Settlement of Charles Towne on Albemarle Point at Kyawaw on Ashley River in South Carolina - November 12 to December 20, 1968.

In 1969, a nine month excavation was carried out on this site resulting in the discovery of a redoubt fortification ditch. A detailed drawing of this feature is seen in Figure 2.

(See Map in Jacket Pocket)
Figure 2

The Archeological Plan and Profile of the Redoubt Area at the 1670 Fort at Charles Towne (CH1-1) with the Interpretive Architectural Section Including a Tracing of a Drawing by Thaddius Kosciuszko of the Eighteenth Century Redoubt #4 at West Point, New York.

(See Map in Jacket Pocket)
Figure 3
The Junction of the North Fortification Ditch in 1670 (to the left) Excavated and Left Open with its Accompanying Embankment, with the Unexcavated West Fortification Ditch (to the right) Just Prior to Excavation. Machines were Used to Strip the Disturbed Plowed Zone from the Excavated Areas to Reveal the Fortification Ditches and Related Features. The Bottom of the Palisade Ditch Accompanying this Fortification Ditch was Found in Several Places Along the North Ditch, Directly Beneath the Center of the Rebuilt Embankment.

Figure 4
The Junction of the North and West Fortification Ditches After Accompanying Embankments Were Rebuilt and Stabilized with Sod. An Irrigation System Supplied Water for the Sod Until it was Firmly Established.
Figure 5

The Palisade Wall Replaced in the Original Position Along the North Fortification Ditch at Charles Towne.

Figure 6

Inside View of the Main Fortification at Charles Towne Showing the Rebuilt Parapet with Firing Step Stabilized With Rolls of Sod. Explanatory Exhibits Such as This Clearly Reveal the Location of Archeologically Determined Fortification Features.
Figure 7
Profile of the Main Fortification Ditch at Provenience Area 172. Artifacts from the Ditch Reveal that it was Probably Filled by Around 1700.

Figure 8
View of the Main Fortification Ditch with Circular Redoubt Ditch in Front, with the Deep Water Channel of Old Town Creek in the Background. The Size of the Accompanying Parapet Embankment was Determined by the Volume of the Soil Found to Have Been in the Original Fortification Ditch. Historic Site Development Through Such Explanatory Exhibits Are an Excellent Means of Bridging the Gap Between the Archeological Fortification Ditch as Seen by the Archeologist and the Visitor to the Historic Site. With Accompanying On-Site Map Markers and Visitor-Center Interpretation, Fortification Features Such as This Can be Interpreted in a Meaningful Manner.