

NORTH CAROLINA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER

Data Recovery at 31CV183

United Carolina Bank Site, New Bern, North Carolina

Coastal Carolina Research, Inc., conducted an archaeological data recovery program at site 31CV183; the proposed location of the United Carolina Bank in New Bern, Craven County, North Carolina. The data recovery was conducted for United Carolina Bank. The recovered artifacts are currently on display in the lobby of the new United Carolina Bank building in New Bern. I served as Principal Investigator and Mary Ann Holm served as field director.

Site 31CV183 was identified during a survey and testing program conducted by Coastal Carolina Research, Inc., in December 1992. During the demolition of the automobile dealership that had been located on the site, substantial looting had taken place. The testing revealed that no wells or privies survived on the site, however the site did contain intact deposits dating to the mid- to late-eighteenth century and was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. This period was important in the history of New Bern and the state of North Carolina as New Bern was the colonial capital during this time. The site is located on Tryon Palace Drive (formerly South Front Street) in the New Bern National Register Historic District. The tract contains parts of three lots which were depicted on the 1769 Sauthier map and lots 20 and 21 as shown on the 1834 Price map of the town.

The data recovery was conducted from March 1 to March 31, 1993. The initial task of the data recovery effort was the removal of the two to three feet of sterile fill. By using a bulldozer, these deposits were stripped from the site area (the front third of the site). The area stripped measured approximately 70 x 160 feet. Below the sterile fill, additional removal of the compact demolition zone was undertaken using a backhoe with a toothless bucket.

Over 100 features were encountered during the data recovery program, and a sample was excavated.

Features associated with two main areas were targeted for excavation. A ballast stone foundation and a large trash pit were the focus of the excavations.

During the excavation, an approximate 10 x 10 foot section of the trash dump (Feature 102) was excavated to a depth of 5.8 feet below the surface, or approximately 3.8 feet below the fill zone. The trash pit contained eighteenth century deposits which are not only stratified chronologically, but also appear to contain evidence of status differences in deposition zones.

A total of 2,153 ceramic sherds were recovered from the trash pit. The ceramics were analyzed by Patricia Samford, who was able to reconstruct a number of vessels which are now on display. The trash pit appeared to have accumulated over a 70 year period of time, from around 1740 to 1810. Six distinct soil layers in the trash pit reveal the different stages of dumping.

The earliest layer, Zone 6, contained the fewest artifacts, mostly utilitarian redwares. One piece of Whieldon creamware, however, can be dated to 1740 and provides an initial date for the deposit. Zone 5 contained a layer of washed sand, evidence of the devastating hurricane that struck New Bern in 1769. All of the artifacts from below the sand zone date before the hurricane.

The trash pit contained a number of ceramics which suggest that the household was wealthy. Recovered were finely painted overglaze Chinese porcelain tea and tablewares, a pearlware molded dessert service, a pearlware rococo shell-edge gravy boat, a black basalt teapot, and a Chinese porcelain tea jar. Also recovered were pieces of several Chinese porcelain punch bowls.

A well-preserved collection of animal bones were recovered from the site. A collection of over 2,300 bones from the lower three zones of the trash pit were

(continued on next page)

analyzed by Mary Ann Holm. This represents the only substantial analyzed collection of historic period faunal remains from the state. The bones indicate that the colonists in New Bern ate mostly pork and beef as their meats. The types and conditions of the bones also suggest that the residents may have purchased meat from a butcher shop instead of keeping larger animals in the backyard.

The majority of the ballast stone foundation was excavated, indicating that the structure had originated as a 20 x 20 foot structure. A rear addition, measuring approximately 10 x 20 feet, had been added to the original structure sometime late in the eighteenth century. The foundation also included coquina blocks. The coquina and ballast stones provided a water-proof foundation which prevented moisture from wicking up into the soft bricks. The presence of plaster adhering to the interior of the ballast stone suggests that this was a basement room which was used as a livable space rather than merely as basement storage.

Several features within the structure were defined and excavated. These include an interior fireplace foundation in the center of the original structure and a later brick addition to the west of the ballast stone structure. The rear addition contained a large fireplace, probably from the kitchen. The chimney pad and hearth were underlain by a deep zone of oyster shells. The oyster shells were probably used to prevent mice and other pests from burrowing up through the sandy soil beneath the hearth into the fireplace. A curved exterior wall on the northwest corner of the structure apparently was the location of a beehive-style bake oven which was integrated into the framework of the structure. A zone of ash in the interior of the fireplace and the bake oven contained numerous artifacts dating to the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. This zone suggests that the house was burned or demolished in the early twentieth century.

Loretta Lautzenheiser
Coastal Carolina Research



Trash pit (Feature 102) at 31CV183
United Carolina Bank Site, New Bern.



Close up of oyster shell and
ballast stone foundation of
late eighteenth century house, 31CV183
United Carolina Bank Site, New Bern.

Cape Fear Comprehensive Survey

In the fall of 1993 the North Carolina Underwater Archaeology Unit (UAU), in conjunction with the Wilmington District, United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE), conducted a systematic submerged cultural resources survey of the Cape Fear and Northeast Cape Fear Rivers as part of a year long planning study. Additional dredging activities, proposed to start by the year 2000, were deemed necessary according to a May 1991 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' report. Their findings indicated that existing channel depths were inadequate for the vessels that called at the Port of Wilmington.

The survey was designed to locate and identify any submerged cultural resources that may be effected by the deepening project. Historical and cartographic data, compiled by maritime historian/archaeologist Claude V. "Sandy" Jackson, helped identify historically significant areas to be surveyed from the Cape Fear Ocean Bar to the Northeast Cape Fear River above Wilmington. The total length of the project area was 35 miles.

The Underwater Archaeology Unit, headed by Richard Lawrence, selected ten areas of historical significance within the rivers and priorities the field work schedule according to their potential to yield cultural sites, known shipwreck sites and survey accessibility. The UAU provided the list of priority sections of the river to the USACOE for use in conducting a magnetometer survey. Using a dual-channel proton precession magnetometer, the

USACOE survey team generated magnetic contour maps for each section. The magnetic contour maps were then evaluated by the UAU to identify magnetic anomalies that could potentially be cultural material. Glenn Overton served as principal investigator for field operations with an underwater archaeological crew including Julep Gilman-Bryan, Martin Peebles, and Howard Scott. Each target was relocated by the field crew using a magnetometer and a 500 kHz sidescan sonar with positioning equipment provided by the USACOE. Divers investigated the magnetic and acoustic anomalies and determined the nature of the targets.

Over 150 dives were made during the three month field investigation on approximately 80 different sites. Most targets proved to be modern debris, but 14 sites were determined historically significant and warrant further study. Several unrecorded vessels were located during the survey. Included were the Civil War iron clads, *North Carolina* and *Raleigh*, the blockade runner *Kate*, and the early twentieth century schooner-barge *Belfast*. In addition to these wrecks several sunken barges, and unidentified nineteenth-century steamer, vessel steam machinery and river obstructions were located. A major maritime historical report on the Cape Fear River and the findings of the remote sensing survey is being prepared for the Army Corps of Engineers.

NC Underwater Archaeology Unit

From the President

During the past two years since our consolidation, we have seen many positive developments within the North Carolina Archaeological Society. Our membership is expanding and there is a growing enthusiasm for "responsible archaeology" in many local communities. However as a larger and stronger organization, we must now accept an even greater responsibility in the ongoing efforts to enhance public education and to preserve archaeological sites. We will be calling upon our members to take an active part in these efforts; helping to organize local chapters, talking to school groups and communicating our interests to state legislators are examples of what we need from all of you. With your continued support, we can keep building upon the gains that we have made in these last two years.

Richard Terrell

New NCAS Chapter

We welcome the Tarheel Archaeological Society as a new chapter of the North Carolina Archaeological Society. The Tarheel Archaeological Society meets on the third Monday of every month at May Memorial Library in Burlington at 7 pm. For more information please write to the Tarheel Archaeological Society, PO Box 1216, Burlington, NC 27215-1216.

Board Members

Board member elections were held at the November meeting in Raleigh. Vice-president Richard Terrell replacing Kirby Ward as president with Bill Moxley moving to vice-president. New board members include Anne Poole and Larry Rose replacing Loretta Lautzenheiser. Thank you Kirby and Loretta for a job well done.

NCAS Newsletter Publication Schedule

All NCAS members are encouraged to submit articles and news items to Dee Nelms, Associate Editor, for inclusion in the *Newsletter*. Please use the following cut-off dates as guides for your submissions:

Spring Issue	March 31
Summer Issue	June 30
Fall Issue	September 30
Winter Issue	December 31

Please note that the 1993 edition of the NCAS journal *Southern Indian Studies* is running well behind schedule. We apologize for the delay and hope to get it to you within the coming month or so.

SPRING MEETING SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 30th -- SEE INSERT

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NCAS Officers

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