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HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY ON THE COASTAL PLAIN IN THE POST-SOUTH ERA

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When *The Prehistory of North Carolina: An Archaeological Symposium* was being assembled, Mark Mathis and Jeffrey Crow solicited the essays with two purposes in mind. "First, they reflect the status of archaeological studies and knowledge in North Carolina in the 1980s. Second, just as importantly, they synthesize the nineteenth century and document the uncertain efforts to identify, interpret, and understand North Carolina's prehistory." (Mathis & Crow 1983:xiii). While it was successful in achieving these goals, the goals themselves were incomplete. Five hundred years of North Carolina's past were omitted.

Today's archaeology is not limited to the prehistoric past; it is a way of studying the entire past of North Carolina. From the time the first inhabitant knapped a fluted point right up until this author empties the wastepaper basket containing earlier drafts of this manuscript. Historical archaeology has much to tell us about the post-prehistoric period of the Coastal Plain.

To be fair to our predecessors, historical archaeology wasn't really established in the United States until the late 1960s. However, North Carolina has a long track record of work in historical archaeology. Stanley South, one of the leading scholars in the field worked on NC historic sites since the 1950s and 60s. Elsewhere in the country the idea of archaeologists digging on anything other than prehistoric sites was only beginning to be accepted. Some of the earliest work on the Coastal Plain took place at Fort Raleigh (Williams 1896; Harrington 1949, 1951, 1962, 1966), Tryon Palace (Williams 1961; Garlid 1978), the Newbold-White House (Garrow 1975; Stone 1970; South 1973), and Brunswick town (South 1958, 1962, 1967). A commitment on the part of the NC state government (both OSA and Historic Sites) to historic sites put NC in the vanguard of historical archaeology. However, a lot of the steam went out of the State program when Stanley South headed south of the border in 1968.

Since 1983, the coastal plain has seen a gradual shift in the principal practitioners of historical archaeology. In the twenty-first century the State is still a strong participant, though when the Division of Historic Sites gave up their archaeologists, the amount of actual fieldwork the State undertook on its properties declined. Fortunately, there were others to pick up the mantle.

Legislation in the late 1960s brought contract archaeologists into the picture. Although technically always covered by Sec. 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, historic sites, especially those more recent than the Civil War, were for many years under-reported by the profession or deemed non-significant. Much of this seeming neglect can be attributed to these sites not being seen as eligible for the National Register as well as the lack of qualified CRM personnel conducting Phase 1 and 2 investigations. However, by the early 80s this was changing and today most firms have at least one person on their staff that has some training in historical archaeology. In some firms, it is actually their primary focus.

In the decades since the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act, a great deal of historic data has been lost to development. Nowhere is this more true than along the coast where development during the last decade of the twentieth century was especially intense. An example of this kind of investigation can be seen in the chapter by Lautzenheiser et al.

The private firms were not the only archaeologists mitigating adverse affects to threatened cultural resources. Federal land managers had been charged with inventorying and assessing archaeological sites on their lands since the passage of Executive Order 11593 in 1971. The U.S. Forest Service, through their own archaeologists and contract private firms, have managed the resources of the Croatan National Forest on the Coastal Plain near New Bern. An example of such management-oriented work is that conducted at Civil War sites at Flanner's Beach and so-called Croatan Blockhouse (Daniel et al. 2000) on their property.

Another major player is the U.S. military. They take the management of the cultural resources on multiple bases in North Carolina seriously and have set up a civilian infrastructure to deal with them. Camp Lejeune, near Jacksonville, is a good example of this type of program

Ironically, the universities were actually the last player to fully engage in historical archaeology in North Carolina. In fact, Stanley South was academically shunned by his mentor, when he starting working on historic sites in the state. "I asked Joffre Coe about taking that job [archaeologist at Brunswick Town] and leaving Town Creek to move into historical archaeology. He said: Well, if you want to end your career in archaeology I guess you could do that." (Joseph 2010:134) David Phelps and Tom Loftfield both excavated historic sites, yet their primary interest was in the prehistoric period or studying the effects of European colonization on the indigenous peoples. Several historic sites or sites with historic components were excavated in the 80s, but little was published on them beyond the required reports to the sponsor. The amount of sustained field work increased when East Carolina University decided in the 1990s to develop a graduate program in historical archaeology. The resulting influx of graduate students seeking thesis projects has resulted in a profusion of historic site investigation. Many of these have built on the early excavations of Stanley South or discoveries made during CRM projects.

In practice there is a lot of overlap in the archaeological practitioners of North Carolina. Sites initially excavated by the State have become fodder for the Academy's graduate students. And students that graduate and take a job in the CRM realm have sometimes returned to sites they investigated while in school. The result, at least on the Coastal Plain, has been a happy symbiosis between the State, the Private Sector, and Academia, with the Office of State Archaeology safeguarding important historic sites and the university students performing much needed interpretative investigation upon them.

HISTORIC SETTLEMENTS

Ft. Raleigh

The first site to be settled in NC was also the first to be investigated, beginning with Talcott Williams in 1895. Several decades of field research undertaken by J.C. "Pinky" Harrington under the sponsorship of the NPS found some 16th c. material, but uncovered little in the way of structural features (Harrington 1949, 1951, 1962, 1966). The search kicked into higher gear when Ivor Noel Hume and later Bill Kelso and Nick Lucketti come down from Virginia to find the lost colony. Hume eventually comes to the conclusion that everyone had been digging in the wrong place (Hume 1996). Into the 21st century, the search has been resumed by the First Colony Foundation, which has continued more of the same but other leads as well (Luccketti 2007, Watts 2008).

Exciting discoveries related to the "Lost Colonists' were made during the late 1990s at David Phelps' excavations at the Cape Creek site on Hatteras Island. Thought to be the site of

the principal village of the Croatan chiefdom, the site has yielded late prehistoric pottery and early historic European artifacts. The recovery of a 16th century flintlock and a gold signet ring from the site were especially intriguing (Figure 7-1).



Figure 7-1. Sixteenth-century Snaphaunce gunlock and signet ring from 31DR1.

Charles Town

South of Wilmington, on the Cape Fear lies the site of the failed settlement of some of the earliest colonists (ca. 1664) of North Carolina. The archaeological investigations of Charles Town, on the lower Cape Fear, though preliminary, were promising. Early efforts in the 1960s and 70s were focused on simply finding this early settlement. However, in 1987, UNC-W field schools, under the direction of Tom Loftfield, expanded the scope of the inquiry. Loftfield was interested in understanding the influence that Barbados played on the layout and character of the settlement. After five seasons of excavation, he was able to show that the colony failed for failing to adjust quickly enough to the different physical and cultural environment they encountered in North Carolina (Loftfield 2005).

Newbold-White house

The Newbold-White house was once believed to have been constructed by Joseph Scott around 1685. However, a recent (1994) dendrochronological study dated the structure to 1730, prompting a reexamination of the previous archaeology completed at the site (Stone 1970, Outlaw 1973 & 1993, South 1973, Garrow 1975, Clauser 1985, Hartley 1986, and Allen 1989-1994). This is where the academic-CRM partnership proved useful.

Stephanie Bandy in her MA thesis (ECU, Department of Anthropology 2000) reassessed the late 17th and early 18th century occupation of the site. She reviewed the work on the earlier component of the site and compared her findings with other contemporary sites in the region (e. g. Eden house site and Kings Reach, MD). She concluded that the original structure was a relatively modest earthfast structure with an associated outbuilding (possible tobacco house) and that traces of these had already been found, but not initially recognized as such, to the southwest

of the present structure near a reconstructed arbor. Bandy's thesis also serves as a research design to guide future research at the site.

Bath

Founded in 1705, Bath is North Carolina's oldest town (Watson et al. 2005). Today, the State owns a sizeable chunk of the town and interprets it as a State Historic Site. The archaeological projects undertaken in Bath, over the years, including those by Stanley South (1960a,b,c,d & 1965), have largely been of a CRM compliance-oriented variety, undertaken by Historic Sites archaeologists (Allen 1997, 1998, 2000; Beidleman 1976; Broadwater et al. 1979; Clauser 1990; Harper 1984, 1991; Lautzenheiser 1993; OSA 1963a,b,c; Oliver 1995; Payne & Dahlin 1987;). The town has not grown appreciably since its founding and therefore presented an ideal setting to pursue archaeological research into the Proprietary Period of North Carolina's history.

An ECU MA thesis by Dan Baicy (2003a) constructed a regional research design to guide planned archaeological investigations for the community. He divided the research into thematic areas (Backyard Archaeology, Feminist Archaeology, Plantation & Slave Life, Commercial/Industrial Archaeology, and Civic Life), which have been incorporated into ECU's current projects in Bath. This thesis has served as a guide for East Carolina University's ongoing archaeological investigations in the town.

From 2001-2010 East Carolina University archaeologists have been conducting research in Bath, NC. Initial work examined the area of the 3rd courthouse (Baicy 2003b) and the alleged site of John Lawson's house (Mullens 2010). In the summer of 2005, East Carolina University Anthropology students began a systematic survey of the area enclosing the 18th-century town of Bath. Like similar surveys undertaken at St. Augustine (Deagan 1981) and St. Catherine's Island (Thomas 1993), the Bath survey has both immediate and long-term goals. The immediate goal is to identify areas of social activity during the early 18th century. A brick cellar revealed during the survey became the current focus of the 2009 field school (Figure 7-2). A summary article briefly discussing the ECU archaeological program in Bath was published in the NC Historical Review (Ewen 2010).



Figure 7-2. Eighteenth-century cellar excavation at Bath, NC.

New Bern

Though the town of New Bern and its environs were settled in the early 18th c., archaeological work has centered primarily on Tryon Palace, the governor's residence, which was completed in 1770. Virtually no work, including the ECU summer field schools in the late 20th c. have investigated the Proprietary period settlement. An exception to this was Stanley South's (1963) search for Brice's Fort, an area south of New Bern where settlers fled to during the Tuscarora uprising. In the late 80s, a large contract project mitigated the impacts of airport development on the Freedman's colony at James City (Hargrove 1986, Abbot 1988, and Wheaton et al. 1990). While large CRM projects were conducted at sites in the city of New Bern such as: Christ Church (South 1964), Attmore-Oliver House (South 1962b), Gabriel Rains House (Espenshade and Elliot 1990), Tannery (Garrow and Joseph 1985), United Carolina Bank (Lautzenheiser and Eastman 1993), and Tryon Palace (Kelso et al. 1994, Joy 1997).

Kim Zawacki, in a report prepared for the Kellenberger Foundation (1997b -Appendix), compiled the historical archaeology that had been completed in the area. She subdivided geographically into five areas: Reconnaissance Surveys, South of New Bern Archaeology, Historic District Archaeology, Palace Archaeology, and Underwater Archaeological Investigations. She used this previous work to help construct a research design for New Bern archaeology (Zawacki 1997b).

A multi-year research project at Tryon Palace by East Carolina University began in 1994. The ensuing 5 years examined the Robert Hay House (Ewen 1996, Heath 199, Magoon 1998) (Figure 7-3), the New Bern Academy (Zawacki 1997a, Zawacki et al. 2000), and the Palace gardens (Ewen et al. 2002). This resulted in a couple of MA theses including another research design (Zawacki 1997c), which synthesizes the known history and archaeology and one that specialized on the Civil War earthworks (Joseph 2001) in the vicinity.



Figure 7-3. Excavation of the front porch of the Robert Hay House, New Bern, NC.

Edenton

In 1663, Charles II granted governance of the Carolinas to eight Lords Proprietors. Settlement, though, was still sporadic through the 17th century. In 1672, the Quakers established the first stable church in the Albemarle, though this became problematic after the Anglican Church gets a foothold in the region. The result was Cary's Rebellion. Still, profitable settlement occurred in the Albemarle with the establishment of Roanoke, which was renamed Queen Anne's Town. It became the region's focus by 1710. By 1722 the town had been renamed Edenton and designated the capital of North Carolina.

A number of the historic properties in and around Edenton have been actively restored and our presented as historical attractions. Being under State care, many archaeological projects (e.g. Iredell House, Cupola House) have been conducted in the area to comply with state and Federal mandates. While Beaman (2008) presents an excellent summary all of this work, two of the larger undertakings are discussed below.

Eden House Site

One of the earliest historic sites excavated in the Albemarle is Eden House. The site is named after former North Carolina Governor Charles Eden, who had a plantation at this location in the early eighteenth century. The archaeological project came about as the result of a highway project designed to widen US 17 and replace the bridge over the Chowan River (Lautzenheiser et al. 1998). Coastal Carolina Research, Inc. (CCR), was contracted to conduct extensive archaeological excavations at the site. The earliest historic occupation, represented by a small stockaded settlement with at least four structures, is believed to date as early as 1660. Besides the report, CCR worked with the North Carolina Department of Transportation to construct a website to share the results of their research with the general public (http://www.ncdot.org/doh/preconstruct/pe/ohe/archaeology/edenhouse/).

Chowan County Courthouse

The 1767 Chowan County Courthouse is a National Historic Landmark. A series of archaeological excavations were begun in 2001 by State Historic Sites archaeologists to assist with its interior restoration. Excavations were also conducted underneath the main courtroom to better understand the construction techniques and identify features predating the courthouse (Carnes- McNaughton and Beaman 2003).

This restoration project also involved the excavation of trenches in the rear yard, around the nineteenth century jail and associated residence. Additional investigations around the 1767 Courthouse have included the discovery of the original ground level and number of steps to the street along the front of the structure (Clauser 1996), as well as the subterranean reservoir for a later structure behind the West Wing (Clauser and Joy 1993). East Carolina University graduate student Wesley Willoughby (2007a) utilized the data recovered from the courthouse to compare with other courthouses on the east coast to develop a public structure pattern.

PLANTATION ARCHAEOLOGY

Somerset Place

Somerset Place was one of the largest plantations in North Carolina prior to the Civil War. The Collins family owned over 300 slaves and 14,000 acres of land at the height of its prosperity. However, after the Civil War, the plantation quickly declined, dwindling to just 4,428 when the state acquired it in 1950. The main house and a few outbuildings now stand as a restored historic site.

Since the early 1950s archaeology has been used to reveal undocumented information about Somerset Place. Early work focused on the areas around the main house and gardens (Tarlton 1954). In the late 90s, Carl Steen (1995, 2001, 2002) investigated the African American aspect of the plantation's history to complement the historical research. The end result was the public interpretation of several buildings in the slave community. Other work has also been undertaken by State and ECU archaeologists (Byrd 1992; Byrd & Heath 1996; Carnes-McNaughton 200, 2001, 2002; Carnes-McNaughton and Harper 2003; Harper 1994, 1997, 1998; Wilson 1985) culminating with an M.A. thesis/research design by Robert Penny (2003).

Hope Plantation

Hope Plantation is located in Bertie County, in the northeastern region of the state's coastal plain. The site is best known for its renovated plantation house, which was built around 1803 by David Stone, a prominent politician at both the state and national level. Archaeological evidence suggests that a domestic structure was built on the property before the house that stands today, sometime in the eighteenth century. Today, the Historic Hope Foundation, Inc owns a 47-acre parcel of land surrounding the house, and operates the site as a public historical attraction.

The Hope Plantation site has been the focus of a number of archaeological projects over the past half century. The initial work focused on the existing plantation house (Demmy 1966, Phelps 1980, Stone 1970). However, in recent years, an effort has been made to address other topics as the subject for archaeological projects at Hope Plantation, and a comprehensive research design has been developed for the site (Joyce 1998).

One of the first stages of implementing the research design for Hope Plantation was the completion of an overall survey of the available land surrounding the site (Buck 1999a). In addition to this project, a variety of historical and archaeological resources have been analyzed in an attempt to reconstruct the historic spatial layout at this particular plantation (Buck 1999b). Spatial patterns in general are an important element to consider in any analysis of plantation systems, and this subject factors considerably in the implementation of the research design for the site.

Foscue Plantation

To foster a growing local interest in archaeology, Craven Community College formed a partnership with East Carolina University to conduct an archaeology field school at Foscue Plantation in Jones County, North Carolina. Foscue Plantation dates to the early nineteenth century, and was a producer of cash crops and naval stores. Archaeological excavations were initiated at Foscue Plantation in 2005, in conjunction with an archaeology field school offered by

Craven Community College (CCC) in partnership with East Carolina University (ECU). The 2005 excavation resulted in the production of Master's thesis (Seifert 2006) entitled The Possibilities of Foscue Plantation: A Management Plan for a Nineteenth Century Naval Stores Plantation.

This report established the working research map for the plantation. Subsequent work focused on locating the area of the original plantation house (Willoughby 2007b, Flood et al. 2008, Schleier 2009, McMillan 2010, Keeny 2011) (Figure 7-4). Another thesis (Seeman 2011) investigated the original family vault. Not only did it recover more individuals than documents suggested, but also provided osteobiographies of elite rural families as well.



Figure 7-4. Excavations at Foscue Plantation, Jones County, NC.

MILITARY SITES

Though coastal North Carolina has been spared much of the ravages of war, there still are sites of that have been investigated. Beginning with the conflicts between the early colonists and the local inhabitants and continuing through the Civil War, Battlefield Archaeology has been practiced both on land and under the sea. The next three sites are examples of the terrestrial side of the conflict, while evidence of naval conflict will be discussed by Richard Lawrence (this volume).

Neoheroka

The Tuscarora War essentially marks the end of indigenous habitation of eastern North Carolina. After the conclusion of the conflict in 1715, colonial settlement stabilized as the native threat was eliminated and a more stable, Royal Governor was put in place. Neoheroka Fort, constructed by Tuscarora, was the location of the largest and most important battle of the war. The fall of the fort in 1713 was the climax of the Tuscarora War and essentially ended the conflict.

Excavations at the site of the fort were conducted by David Phelps of East Carolina

University during the decade of the 1990s (Heath & Phelps 1998). This research spawned a survey that searched for the towns and forts along Contentnea Creek that comprised the bulk of the Tuscarora settlement of the area (Byrd & Heath 2004). Other Tuscarora War-related projects include preliminary investigations at Ft. Barnwell, Ft. Hancock and the Lillington property in Bath (Ewen 2005) that supposedly burned during the war.

Fort Macon

Fort Macon is North Carolina's most visited State Park. Its placement next to a beautiful beachfront may have something to do with its popularity, however, the structure itself is impressive and worth visiting. Built in the early 19th century, Fort Macon was the 3rd attempt to fortify Beaufort Inlet. The earth and masonry fortification appears impregnable, but actually fell to Union forces after an 11 hour bombardment with siege guns. Only limited, compliance-oriented archaeological work had been undertaken prior to the 21st century (Mintz & Beaman 2001).

In 2000 an ECU field school was undertaken in cooperation with Fort Macon State Park. The archaeological goals of this project were to locate the remains of the Eliason House, a two story frame house, located outside the fort walls, built during the construction of Fort Macon in 1827. Lieutenant William A. Eliason was the chief engineer of the fort and lived in the house during his tour of duty at the fort. Later the house was used as the commandant's quarters.

From May 14 to June 19, 2001, The East Carolina University field school undertook excavations at the Eliason House site at Fort Macon State Park. The area was cleared and the grid from earlier test excavations reestablished. To assist in unit placement, both Paul Branch's earlier auger tests and five types of remote sensing were used. Remote sensing consisted of magnetometry, resistivity, magnetic susceptibility, ground-penetrating radar, and electromagnetic conductivity. Excavation revealed the rear portion of the house and recovered over 14,000 artifacts (Bregger et al. 2003). Follow excavations in 2011 established the footprint of the house and provided additional insights into the inhabitants of the house and the siege of Fort Macon.

Fort Branch

After Union forces captured Roanoke Island, Elizabeth City and Edenton, Confederate forces on the interior coastal plain became increasingly concerned over the safety of the railroads. Fort Branch was constructed on the Roanoke River to protect the strategic hub at Weldon. However, the confederates were not able to find sufficient troops to defend it. So, in early 1865, when the Union troops advanced, the small Confederte force hastily abandoned the fort after dumping their cannon into the river.

It was these cannon that attracted the first archaeological interest. A group of Civil War enthusiasts recovered several hundred shot and shell and three cannon from the river. These were later confiscated by the State and more professional archaeological investigation initiated (Watts et al. 1979). In 1973, and again in 1990, limited work was undertaken within the confines of the fort by David Phelps and students from East Carolina University (Phelps & Pennington 1990). Meanwhile, the Underwater Archaeology Branch was able to recover additional cannon from the river in 1987. This work has been summarized and a research design for future archaeological investigation prepared by Keith Heinrich (2004) in his M.A. thesis.

CEMETERY WORK

The increasing needs of space for the living often take precedence over the needs for space for the dead. In the spirit of service learning, ECU archaeology classes have undertaken a series of cemetery studies, which include the relocation of unmarked graves. St. Peters Episcopal (Russ & Ewen 2001, Cherry Hospital (Potts & Smith 2003), Beebe Park (Wilde-Ramsing) and the Sara Howser (Amato 2008) project were the larger among the undertakings.

The most ambitious project concerned the relocation and excavation of former governor Richard Caswell's grave. Caswell was a hero of the Revolutionary War and North Carolina's first Federal Period governor. His exact resting place, though thought to be in Kinston, had been lost over the intervening years since his death in 1789.

Initial clues prompted a project in downtown Kinston in Caswell's original family cemetery, now abandoned. Excavations were undertaken in the Fall of 2000 by an ECU Public Archaeology class under the direction of Charles Ewen. Two iron coffins were discovered, which dated to the mid-19th century (Jorgenson et al. 2001). These were later exhumed and transported to the Smithsonian, where a team of pathologists examined the remains and determined them to be two middle-aged women, one of whom may have been Luisa Hernadez (Ewen 2007).

The discovery of an early 20th century photo, placing the grave in Caswell's second family cemetery in the western part of Kinston, prompted another project. Led by ECU graduate student Sheri Balko (2009), investigations were directed to the space between Caswell's first and second wives. An unmarked grave was delineated and excavated to a depth below the water table. Shockingly, only the bottom of a rough wooden coffin was found leaving most spectators to believe the grave had been robbed (Figure 7-5). Further analysis of the soil by Balko, however, revealed that the coffin and its inhabitant had simply decayed away due to the rising and lowering water table. This demonstrated that a grave *had* been found and that it was probably that of Caswell. Skeptics still abound, though.



Figure 7-5. Bottom panel from what is believed to be Governor Richard Caswell's coffin.

PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY

Most of the projects presented in the original *The Prehistory of North Carolina* were done by archaeologists, for archaeologists. If anyone else saw them, it was a bit of serendipity. Times change, however, and the majority of the projects in this chapter were done under the watchful eyes of the general public. Indeed, rather than viewing the public as an impediment to doing archaeology, most archaeologists today go out of their way to include them or at least make their interpretations more accessible.

Public interpretation of archaeology is being accomplished in a number of ways. University presses ask their authors to write in a way that the material is accessible to interested lay persons. Many universities and large projects have websites that present their findings. John McGowan, an independent scholar working out of his home, has been digitizing and posting old archaeological reports relating to the coastal Algonkians (http://homepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~jmack/algonqin/algonqin.htm).

Archaeologists at ECU have begun looking at how to bring together site documentation and dissemination is through the development of video podcasts. The podcasts will allow visitors the opportunity to learn about archaeological work at a site, even when there is no excavation going on. The podcasts can be carried to sites to allow visitors to visualize the work that has gone on there. The podcasts can also be used in the classroom, from elementary and secondary school classes studying local history to college classes studying archaeological processes and findings. Most of the podcasts are short, about five minutes at most. By using this short form archaeological vignettes can easily be incorporated into class lectures or posted on websites. It allows for the examination of the individual parts of the archaeological process, from surveys to excavations to analysis. Various artifacts and features can be highlighted and local informants interviewed. Best of all, this information can be easily archived on a DVD or on-line.

CONCLUSION

Archaeology is alive and well on the coastal plain of NC. In fact, the past 25 years have witnessed an explosion of archaeological activity along the coast by many different agencies. CRM projects record dozens of new sites each year, which the State faithfully manages. Universities in the east continue to expand their research into historic archaeology and their students have undertaken research on sites from Corolla to Cape Lookout. Good thing there is a lot for them to do!

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