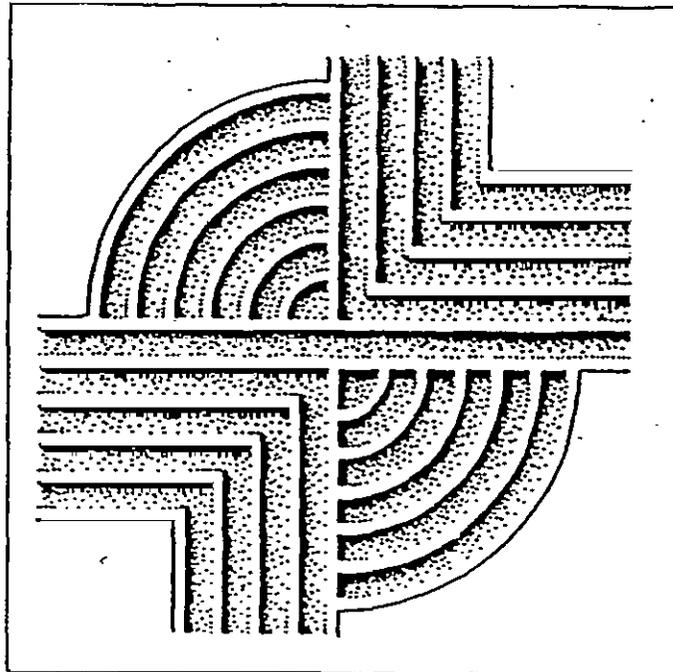


**MANAGEMENT SUMMARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL
MITIGATION AT 38GE291, WILLBROOK PLANTATION,
GEORGETOWN COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA**



RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION 45

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AT 38GE291, WILLBROOK PLANTATION,
GEORGETOWN COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

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Introduction

As a result of archaeological investigations conducted by Chicora Foundation in 1987 (Trinkley 1987), the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) found site 38GE291 to be eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (letter from Ms. Mary W. Edmonds, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer to Lt. Col. Stewart H. Bornhoft dated December 4, 1987). A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was prepared by the SHPO and distributed to the concerned parties on July 23, 1987. Chicora submitted a proposal for data recovery at four archaeological sites (38GE290, 38GE291, 38GE297, and 38GE340) to be impacted by the Willbrook development on September 11, 1989, with revisions at the request of the client made on November 13, 1989 and February 19, 1990. The revised proposal was submitted to and approved by Dr. Patricia Cridlebaugh, SHPO Archaeologist, on February 19, 1990. A contract between Chicora and The Litchfield Company to conduct the data recovery operations detailed in this proposal was signed on March 9, 1990.

This present management summary has been prepared immediately upon completion of the fieldwork at 38GE291 and does not contain information on artifact and specialized analyses. It is intended solely to provide a brief descriptive statement of the work conducted by Chicora and to allow the SHPO to verify that the proposed work has actually been accomplished. According to the MOA, such a management summary is minimally necessary for The Litchfield Company to obtain approval from the SHPO to continue development activities in the site area. This construction will destroy the site remnants and, of course, created the need for archaeological mitigation activities initially.

Site 38GE291 is recorded as an eighteenth century slave row associated with the Willbrook Plantation. It is shown on a 1798 plat of the plantation (Trinkley 1986:Figure 6) and previous investigations have provided a mean ceramic date of 1789.6 (Trinkley 1986:Table 4).

Archaeological investigations were begun at 38GE291 by a crew of five on March 19 and continued until March 21, 1990, during which time the program of auger testing was conducted. Excavations were begun on April 23, 1990 and continued through May 2, 1990. A total of 431.5 person hours were devoted to work at the site, while an additional 40 person hours were spent off site in the field laboratory processing specimens. As a result of this work 1500 square feet of site area have been opened and 1418 cubic feet of soil have been moved in primary excavations, all screened through 1/4-inch mesh.

Auger Tests

A series of 139 auger test grid points were laid out over the site at 25 foot intervals. The boundaries for this auger survey, established using Lepionka's (1986) testing data, previous work by Chicora (Trinkley 1987), and additional surface survey, included an area 375 feet north-south by 175 to 250 feet east-west. The auger used a 10-inch bit and tests were dug to the yellow sand subsoil. All soil was screened using 1/4-inch mesh and all cultural material (including brick, shell, and mortar) was collected. For the purpose of the computer density mapping, only the count of the historic materials and the weight of the combined brick and mortar were used. The computer mapping was prepared by Demiurge Electronics of Beaufort, South Carolina under a subcontract with Chicora and these maps were used to determine the placement of block excavations.

The mapping revealed a dense area of brick rubble and artifacts at the west edge of the site on a slight sand ridge. Additional, although smaller, concentrations were recorded at the north edge of the testing block. Elsewhere brick, mortar, and artifact densities were very low.

The previous surveys (Lepionka 1986, Trinkley 1987) revealed that the site area had suffered extensive damage from clearing and grubbing operations in 1985. The current auger testing indicated that this damage had been compounded by tree removal necessitated by hurricane Hugo cleanup operations. This extensive disturbance appears to be responsible for the low density of artifacts and poorly defined site area.

Excavations

The grid, established due north-south, was tied into several permanent Willbrook property markers in order to maintain long-term horizontal control. We were unable to locate any of Lepionka's previous datum points and are therefore unable to incorporate any of his excavations into this work. Vertical control was maintained through the use of a mean sea level datum (a nail in the base of an oak tree at the northeast edge of the site, 9.58 feet MSL).

The site area had been marked out in 25 foot grid units for the auger survey, with each point numbered in succession from south to north and west to east (excepting several areas where the grid was expanded as boundaries were revised). Horizontal control was maintained through a modified Chicago 10-foot grid system with the OR0 point established at Auger Test 1 on the southwest edge of the site. Units are designated by their southeast corner. Thus, the southeast corner of square 50R100 would be located 50 feet north and 100 feet right (or east) of the OR0 point. Soil was screened through 1/4-inch mesh using mechanical sifters. Units were trowelled at the base of the plowzone, photographed in b/w and color slides, and plotted. Soil samples were retained from all

units. All brick, mortar, and rubble from the excavations was weighed prior to being discarded. In addition, several units were selected for detailed sampling using a 2.25 by 2.25 foot block. All shell from these blocks was quantified and collected for additional analysis.

Field notes were prepared on pH neutral, alkaline buffered paper and photographic materials were processed to archival standards. All original field notes and a duplicate copy, prepared to archival standards, will be curated at The Charleston Museum, along with the collections, as Accession Number 1990.20. All specimens will be evaluated for conservation needs and will be treated prior to curation.

The first block excavation, at the central west edge of the site, opened 1000 square feet and includes 200-230R50-60, 230R70-80. The area revealed a brown sandy plowzone, about 0.7 to 1.0 foot in depth, overlying a yellow sand subsoil. The plowzone was found to contain abundant shell, brick, mortar, and plaster rubble, along with architectural and domestic remains. Small quantities of faunal remains were found preserved in the plowzone soils. These remains reflect an eighteenth century date (lead glazed slipware, creamware, and colono ware ceramics) and initial analysis suggests a middling status domestic structure. The material collected does not appear to represent a "typical" slave assemblage. Although this block evidenced only minimal disturbance (primarily from plowing), no features were encountered.

The second block area, consisting of 200 square feet, incorporated units 290R120-130 in the central north area of the site. The computer mapping had indicated a high density of artifacts and brick rubble in this area. Excavation, however, revealed a zone of recent bulldozed fill up to 1.0 foot in depth overlying the old plowzone about 0.8 foot in depth. At the base of the plowzone extensive areas of bulldozer disturbance were encountered. Materials in this area included the similar eighteenth century architectural and domestic remains, although colon ware appears to be more common. No features were encountered.

The third block area consists of a single 10-foot unit (315R175) and two 10-foot units (330-340R160) situated to avoid trees at the northeast edge of the site. Unfortunately, these units revealed even greater disturbance than the previous block. Unit 315R175 consisted of up to 1.5 feet of bulldozed fill over occasional patches of plowzone about 0.4 foot thick. Unit 340R160 revealed bulldozer disturbance to a depth of 1.5 feet whereupon mottled yellow subsoil was encountered. Artifacts from this block are consistent with those from in the 290R120-130 block and appear to represent an eighteenth century slave assemblage. No features were encountered.

No further excavations were conducted at this site based on

the extensive disturbance and our inability to locate features.

Interpretations

While it is clear that this site has suffered heavy damage, primarily as a result of cleanup from Hugo, this is not to imply that the site had lost all elements of its original significance. The assemblage recovered represents two very similar, although distinct components.

The largest block has revealed a collection that could not immediately be identified as resulting from slave occupation. Although the materials present are generally considered utilitarian and "low-status," the quantity of remains, as well as some of the items themselves (such as window glass, higher quality buttons, and furniture hardware) tend to suggest a status above that of an eighteenth century slave.

Additional historical research was conducted as a result of this work. A 1794 plat of Willbrook was located by our architectural historian, Mr. Colin Brooker, at Litchfield Plantation. This plat, although essentially identical to the 1798 plat previously identified, is different in one very significant detail. The plat illustrates a small house, labeled "Wilson's," in the immediate vicinity of this block excavation, although it is clearly on the Willbrook Plantation property. An examination of the Georgetown County RMC revealed no deeds for any Wilson during the appropriate time period, although a Hugh Wilson was indexed as an executor for several wills and an early nineteenth century death notice (with burial in Georgetown, not at All Saints) was found for a Mrs. Wilson.

It seems likely that Wilson was an late eighteenth century overseer at Willbrook Plantation. The middling status remains is consistent with this explanation, as is the quantity of materials recovered. Although no features were encountered, it is possible to deduce that the structure contained glassed, rather than shuttered, windows, that it was of wood frame with extensive pegging (based on the presence of abundant 5d to 10d nails, but a near absence of larger nails), and was constructed on brick piers with a brick chimney.

The remaining two block excavations provide our only insight into the late eighteenth century slave row known to exist at this location. Unfortunately, this area has been heavily damaged and no features were encountered. The collection, however, will provide data for both mean ceramic date calculations and artifact pattern analyses. Colono ware ceramics predominate the collections, with only minor quantities of Euro-American ceramics and other items. Brick density is much less in the slave area than in the overseer's area, suggesting that while brick piers may have been used,

chimneys were either absent or were of wattle and daub construction. The structures were frame, probably with shuttered windows.

The excavations at 38GE291, therefore, provide significant information on the lifestyle of both overseer and slave in the Waccamaw Neck region during the eighteenth century. These are the first excavations in this region to provide such data (cf. Zierden and Calhoun) and are essential to our understanding of early slavery in the area.

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