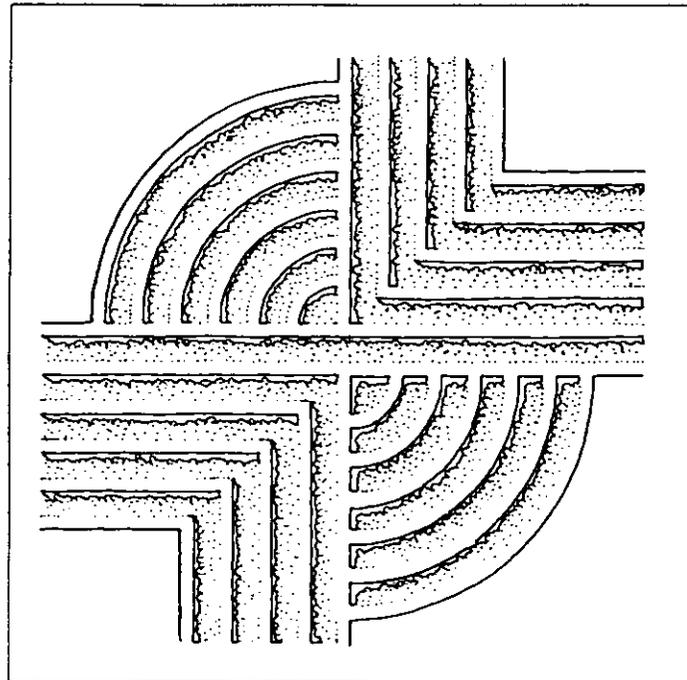


MANAGEMENT SUMMARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL
DATA RECOVERY AT 38CH1471,
SEASIDE FARMS, CHARLESTON COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA



CHICORA RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION 164

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MANAGEMENT SUMMARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL
DATA RECOVERY AT 38CH1471,
SEASIDE FARMS, CHARLESTON COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

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Chicora Research Contribution 164

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ABSTRACT

This study is a management summary for the excavations at 38CH1471, the John Whitesides main house settlement. It has been prepared upon the completion of the fieldwork at 38CH1471 and does not contain detailed information on artifact analyses or any detailed site evaluation. It is intended solely to provide a brief statement of the work conducted by Chicora and to allow the SC SHPO to verify that the proposed work has actually been accomplished.

A total of 1025 square feet were excavated at 38CH1471, providing a 7.1% sample of the overall site. Excavations revealed that the occupant was a relatively poor white planter. Artifacts date to the mid eighteenth through the early nineteenth century and consist primarily of kitchen related artifacts. Only one feature was encountered in the excavation, consisting of what appears to be the remnants of a chimney base set slightly above subsoil. Two posts were also encountered. However, based on their size, they are probably unrelated.

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

These investigations were conducted by Ms. Natalie Adams of Chicora Foundation, Inc. for The Beach Company between January 23 and February 8, 1995. The site is situated in Charleston County in the City of Mount Pleasant near the intersection of Rifle Range Road and the Isle of Palms connector (Figures 1 and 2).

The site (believed to contain the John Whitesides main house) was initially located by the author (Adams and Trinkley 1993) and determined by the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SC SHPO) to be eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Preservation.

Chicora Foundation was requested by The Beach Company to prepare a technical and budgetary proposal. This proposal for data recovery was submitted on July 20, 1993 and revised August 1, 1994. A data recovery plan was submitted to the SC SHPO (letter from Dr. Michael Trinkley to Ms. Mary Edmonds, September 30, 1994) and a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was formulated between the SC SHPO and The Beach Company, and was signed on January 18, 1995.

This management summary has been prepared upon the completion of the fieldwork at 38CH1471 and does not contain detailed information on artifact analyses or any detailed site evaluation. It is intended solely to provide a brief statement of the work conducted by Chicora and to allow the SC SHPO to verify that the proposed work has actually been accomplished. The management summary may minimally be necessary for The Beach Company to continue with the development of the land encompassing 38CH1471. This construction will destroy the site and, of course, created the need for archaeological mitigation activities initially.

The archaeological investigations were begun at 38CH1471 by a crew of five on January 23, 1995 and continued through February 8, 1995. Before excavations began, the site was auger tested at 20 foot intervals to provide detailed information on site boundaries and artifact densities. A total of 69 test were excavated and field density maps were created. Based on concentrations of artifacts, a metal detector survey was performed to locate possible structural areas. Placement of excavation units was based on a combination of shovel testing and the metal detector survey.

A total of 447.5 person hours were spent in the field with an additional 34 person hours spent on laboratory analysis and field processing. As a result of this work, 1025 square feet of site were opened and 882.5 cubic feet of soil was moved in primary excavations. A total of 16 pounds of shell and 75 pounds of brick were recovered at 38CH1471. Soils were screened through ¼ inch mesh. No shell midden layers were encountered.

The proposed investigations at 38CH1471 consisted of auger testing at 25 foot intervals to provide intra-site information. To further refine and complement this study a metal detector would be used to isolate specific structural areas. Based on this information, excavation units would be placed. At the conclusion of excavation, areas of the site would be stripped, if deemed useful by the field investigators.

The work conducted by Chicora Foundation met these requirements. This management summary will initiate the consultation process with the SC SHPO.

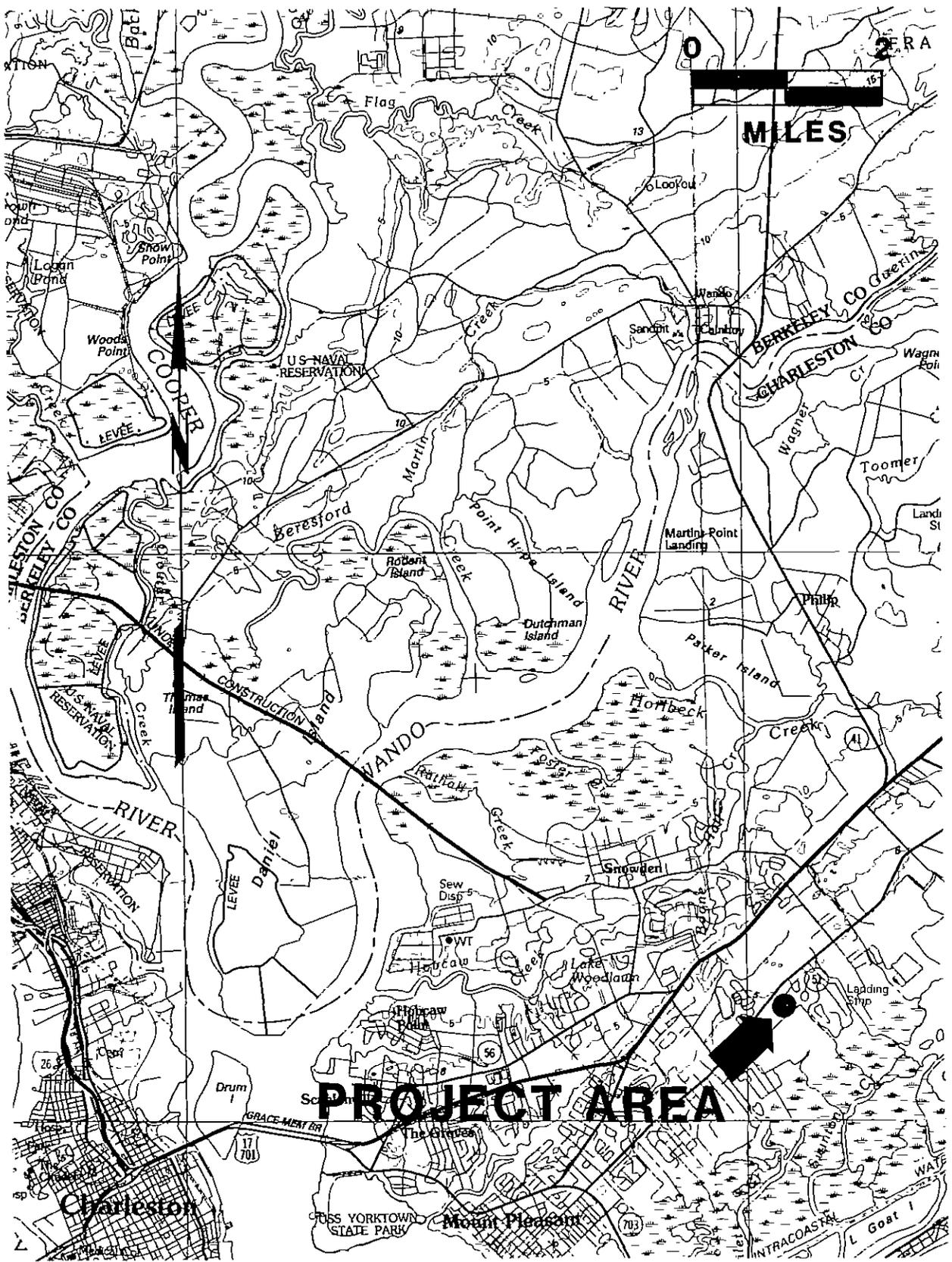


Figure 1. Location of 38CH1471 on the 1:100,000 scale James Island topographic map.

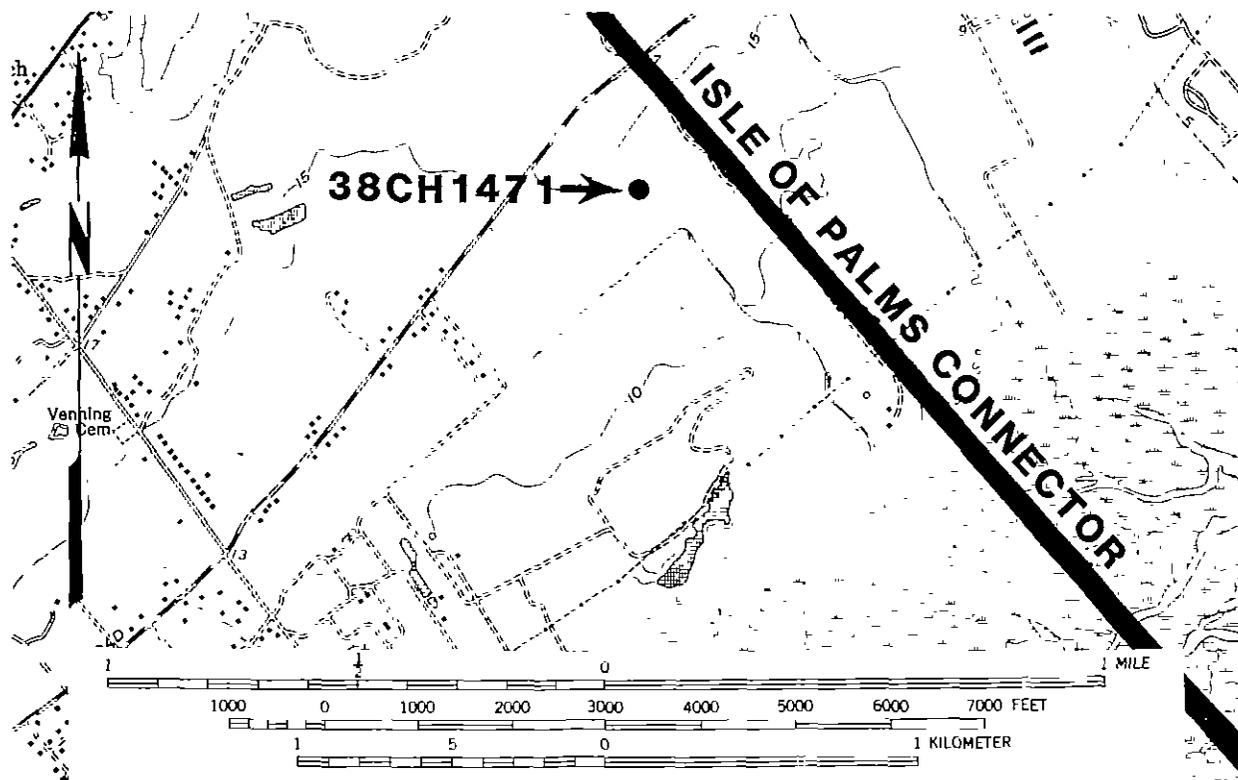


Figure 2. Location of 38CH1471 on the Fort Moultrie USGS quadrangle map.

Previous Investigations

Site 38CH1471 was first identified by the author (Adams and Trinkley 1993) during the initial survey of the Seaside Farms tract. The site was described as a scatter of eighteenth century historic remains. The location of this site corresponded with a 1798 plat (Figure 3) showing a main house settlement associated with John Whitesides. A total of 28 shovel tests were excavated with three containing artifactual remains. In addition to these shovel tests a four foot square test unit was placed in what was believed to be the core of the site. These shovel tests and the test unit yielded artifacts with a 1788.7 mean date of manufacture (Adams and Trinkley 1993:58-60).

Although plowing was suspected (based on the small size of the artifacts), the site was not believed to be deeply plowed since no plow scars were identified at the base of the test unit. This plowing was perhaps accomplished by mule plowing.

The site was recommended as eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. The site represented an early Sea Shore plantation main house area. With the Charleston County area developing quickly the site was believed to take on greater significance since these small plantation sites are becoming increasingly scarce.

Research questions the site was thought to be able to address were questions relating to:

- Euro-American and African-American architecture;

- Effects of the economic base of cattle ranching on personal possessions;
- Euro-American and African-American foodways;
- Urban/Rural relationships; and
- Elite landscape alteration (i.e. construction of gardens, fences, paths, and roads).

EXCAVATIONS AT 38CH1471

Auger Testing and Metal Detection

After the site had been bush hogged by the client and after we had roughly defined the site boundaries based on shovel testing the site at 25 foot intervals in a cruciform pattern, a 20 foot auger grid was established. Although we had initially proposed 25 foot auger intervals, we decided that since the site was so sparse and small, closer intervals may be needed to provide the desirable detail.

A total of 69 auger tests were placed across the site and the soils were screened through ¼ inch mesh. These tests revealed that the core of the site was located in the center of our grid in an area encompassing roughly 80 by 80 feet (Figure 4). Based on our density map, a metal detector survey was conducted using both the all metals and the discrimination mode. Neither setting produced any readings, revealing that any architectural features which might exist were likely ephemeral. In addition, the structure was most likely built using peg construction.

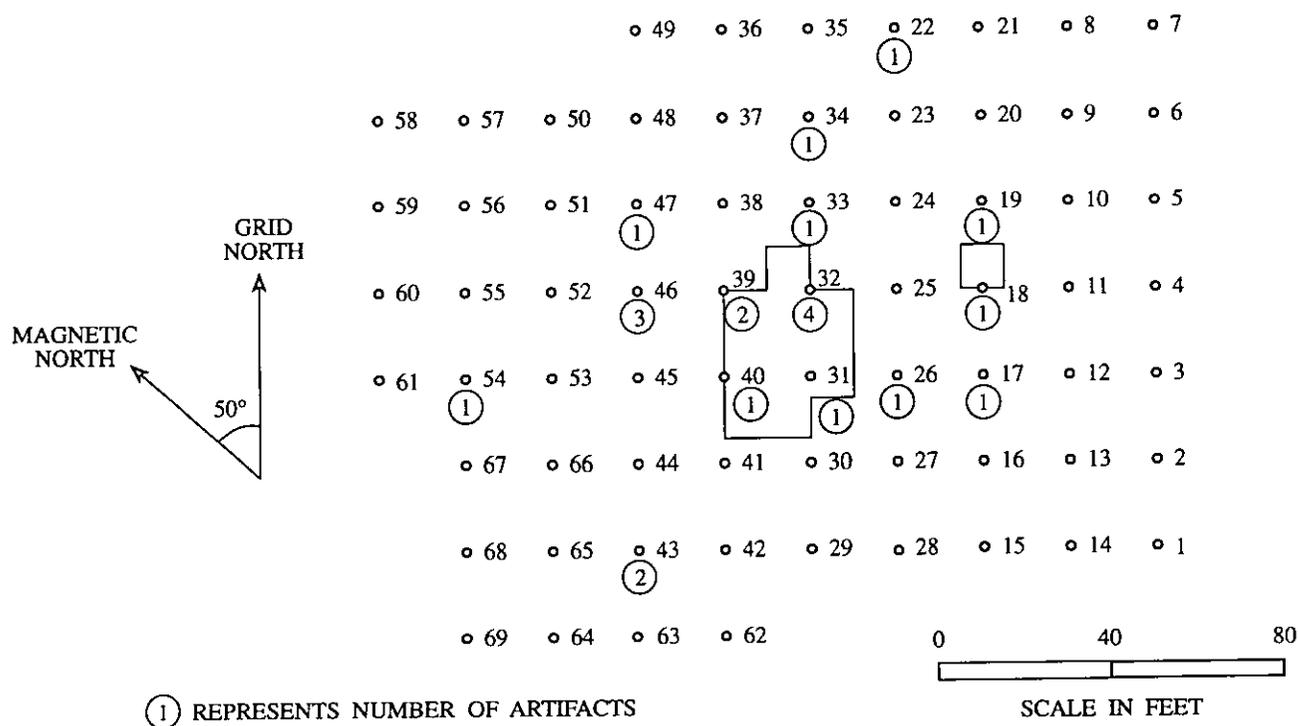


Figure 4. Auger tests at 38CH1471 showing density of artifacts.

Excavations

The work at 38CH1471 involved the excavation of 1025 square feet consisting of nine 10 foot units, one 10 foot unit with a five foot square blocked out (75 square feet) due to a large tree stump, and one 5 by 10 foot unit. All of these units were excavated in 5 foot quadrants and the soils were screened through ¼ inch mesh. All units, except TU1, were part of a block excavation concentrated on the core of the site (Figure 5). Excavations at TU1 revealed no features, although architectural features were initially suspected based on the presence of brick in adjacent auger tests.

The site grid was oriented N50°E which roughly corresponded to the alignment of the settlement shown on the 1798 Purcell plat (Figure 3). Elevations at the site were tied into a survey marker found along the Isle of Palms connector right of way. The elevation of the survey marker was at 12.62 feet mean sea level.

Units were excavated in natural stratigraphic zones. Only one zone (Zone 1) was identified at the site consisting of a very dark grayish brown (10YR3/2) soil. Subsoil across the site varied in color and moisture content from a reduced dark grayish brown soil (10YR4/2) to a dark brown soil (10YR3/3) to a grayish brown soil (10YR5/2). In general, subsoils were primarily dark brown (10YR3/3). The Charleston County soil survey (Miller 1971:map 45) shows the soils in the site area as consisting of poorly drained to very poorly drained Rutlege loamy fine sand and somewhat poorly drained Scranton loamy fine sand. Profiles and soil colors at 38CH1471 suggest that both soil types are present, although Rutlege soils predominate. Artifacts consisted primarily of kitchen related materials dating from the mid eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries.

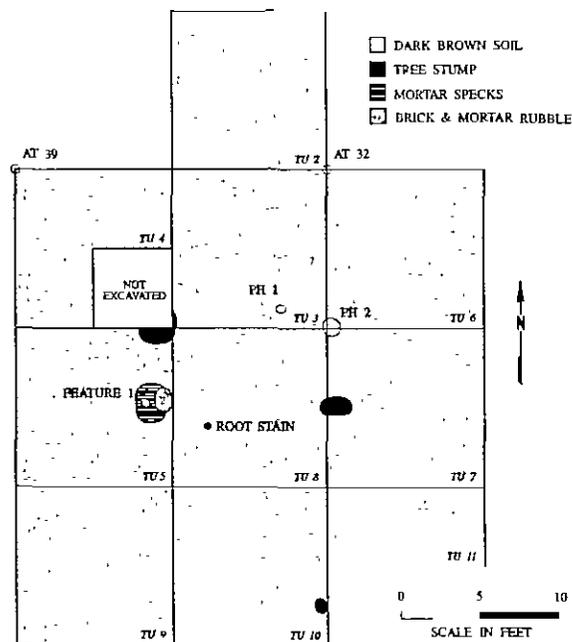


Figure 5. Block excavation at 38CH1471.

Only one feature was encountered in the excavations (Figure 6). This feature appears to represent the remnants of a chimney base set about 0.1 feet above subsoil. Plowing at the site had badly damaged the remains as evidenced by the lack of whole brick or very large fragments of the chimney base mortar pour. The mortar in Feature 1 is believed to be part of a pour layer based on the fact that the fragments are relatively thick and are uneven on the underside. Soil around this feature was collected for pollen analysis which may provide information about the types of plants that occupied the site before the structure was built.

Two posts were encountered at the site. Post Hole 1 measured about 0.8 feet in circumference and extended 0.9 feet into the subsoil. Artifacts consisted of bottle fragments, creamware, and yellow combed slipware. This provides a terminus post quem (TPQ) of 1762 which is the beginning manufacture date for creamware (South 1977). One additional post (Post Hole 2) was encountered. It is much smaller than Post Hole 1 (0.4 feet in circumference and 0.6 feet deep) and appears to be unrelated (see Figure 5).

Based on the sparsity and fragile nature of features at 38CH1471 it was decided that stripping would not likely provide any additional significant information. Since the brick architectural feature was set above subsoil, stripping would have most likely obliterated any evidence of additional brick features.

Field notes were prepared on ph neutral, alkaline buffered paper and photographic materials are being processed to archival standards. All original field notes, with archival copies will be curated at the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology.

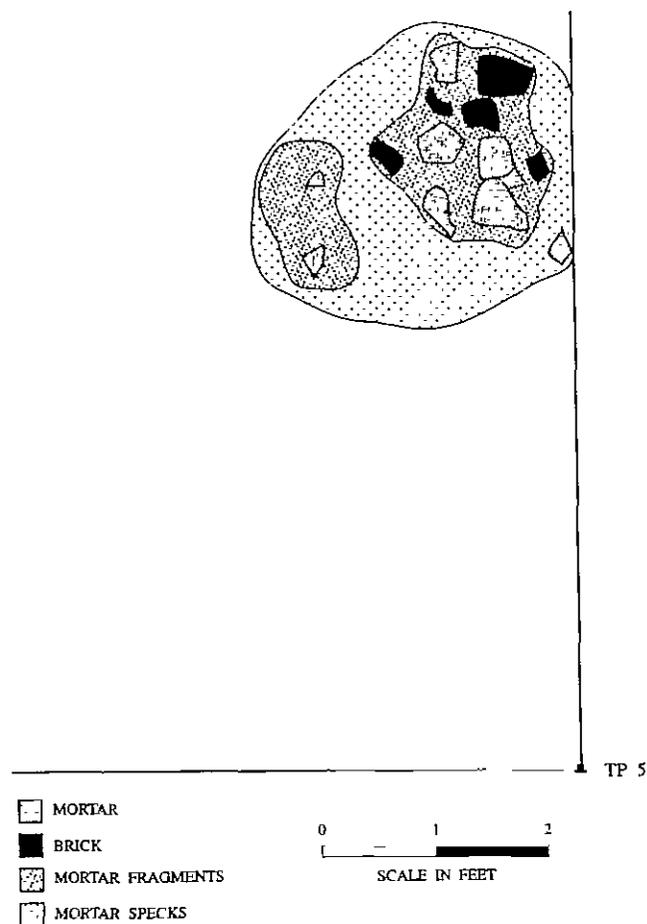


Figure 6. Close-up view of Feature 1, brick and mortar smear.

INTERPRETATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Auger testing revealed that artifacts were scattered across a 120 by 120 feet (or 14,400 square feet) area, although the core of the site was determined to be approximately 80 by 80 feet (or 6,400 square feet). These investigations have explored a relatively small percentage of the total site area, excavating 7.1% (or 1025 square feet) of the total 14,400 square foot site area.

Excavations suggested that although the site had been plowed, this plowing was not deep enough to penetrate the subsoil. However, plowing had disturbed a brick and mortar architectural feature that was set approximately 0.1 feet above subsoil. This brick and mortar architectural feature was the only feature encountered and appears to represent the remnants of a chimney base. Brick and mortar at the site was sparse (75 pounds) indicating that it was robbed from the site to be used elsewhere after the settlement was abandoned. The brick and mortar that was recover concentrated in the vicinity of the chimney base feature (Figure 7).

Shell at the site probably represents primarily architectural shell that was probably a constituent of the mortar, although some of this shell may have been food related. It also concentrates in the vicinity of the chimney base feature (Figure 8) which supports the belief that the shell is architectural. Only 16 pounds of shell was recovered from 38CH1471.

Artifacts at 38CH1471 were primarily eighteenth and early nineteenth century kitchen remains. Both kitchen and architectural artifacts concentrated in the same area of the excavations, slightly northeast of the chimney base feature (Figures 9 and 10). Table 1 presents a generalized artifact pattern for the site. This falls within the Carolina Slave Pattern published by Wheaton et al. (1983) which has a range of 70.9-84.2% for kitchen related artifacts and 11.8-24.8% for architectural artifacts.

Table 1.
Generalized artifact pattern for 38CH1471

Group	#	%
Kitchen	1584	75.9
Architectural	330	15.8
Other	174	8.3
Total	2088	100.0

While the artifact pattern suggests that the site was occupied by a slave, European ceramics were more common than colonowares. As a number of researchers have noted (e.g. Ferguson 1992; Lees 1980) colonowares are the majority wares at slave sites of the eighteenth century. This suggests that the individual that lived at 38CH1471 was most likely a poor white person. Since the 1798 Purcell plat suggests that 38CH1471 represents John Whitesides' main house complex, apparently he was not financially successful. Alternatively, he chose to spend his money on things other than personal possessions.

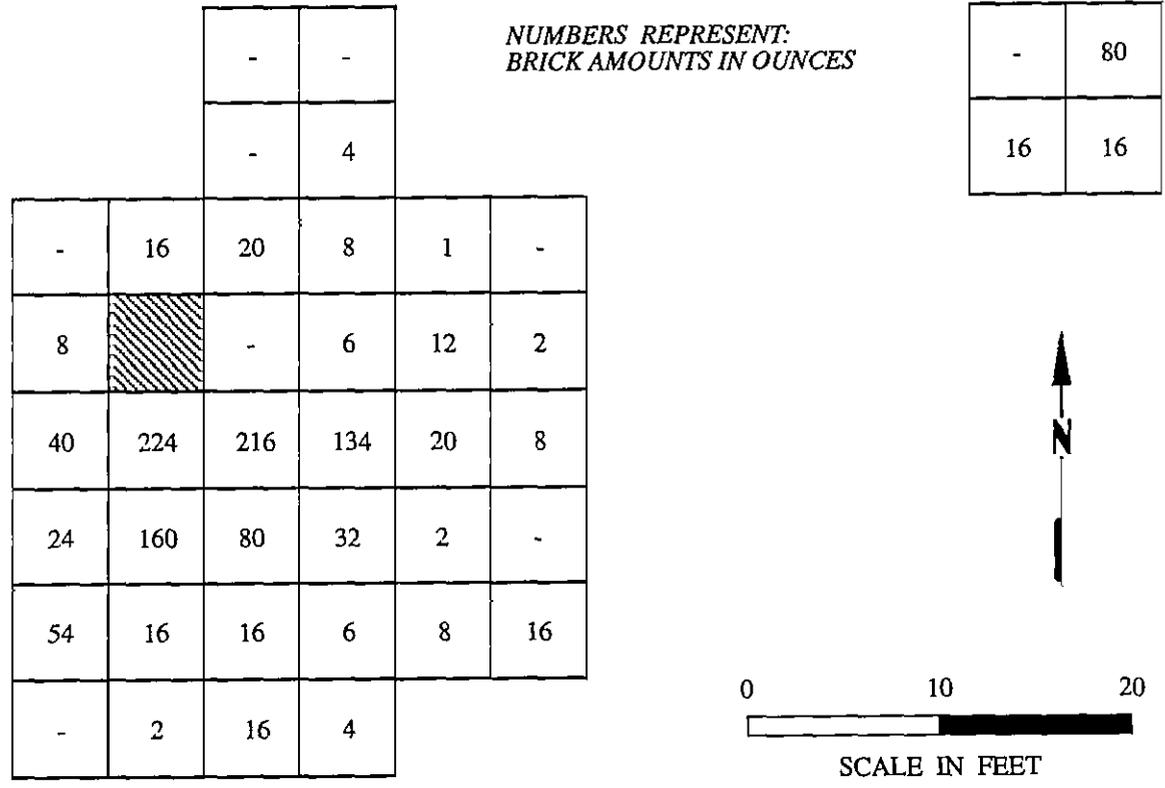


Figure 7. Brick densities at 38CH1471 (ounces).

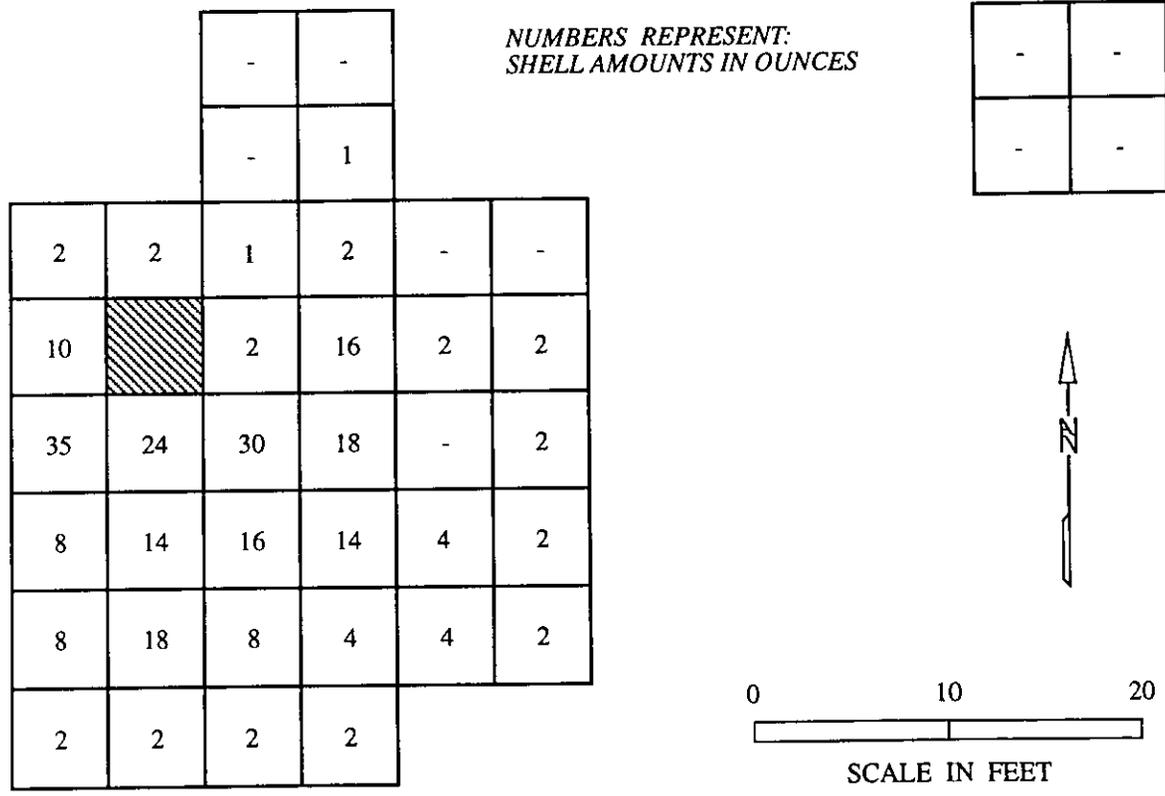


Figure 8. Shell densities at 38CH1471 (ounces).

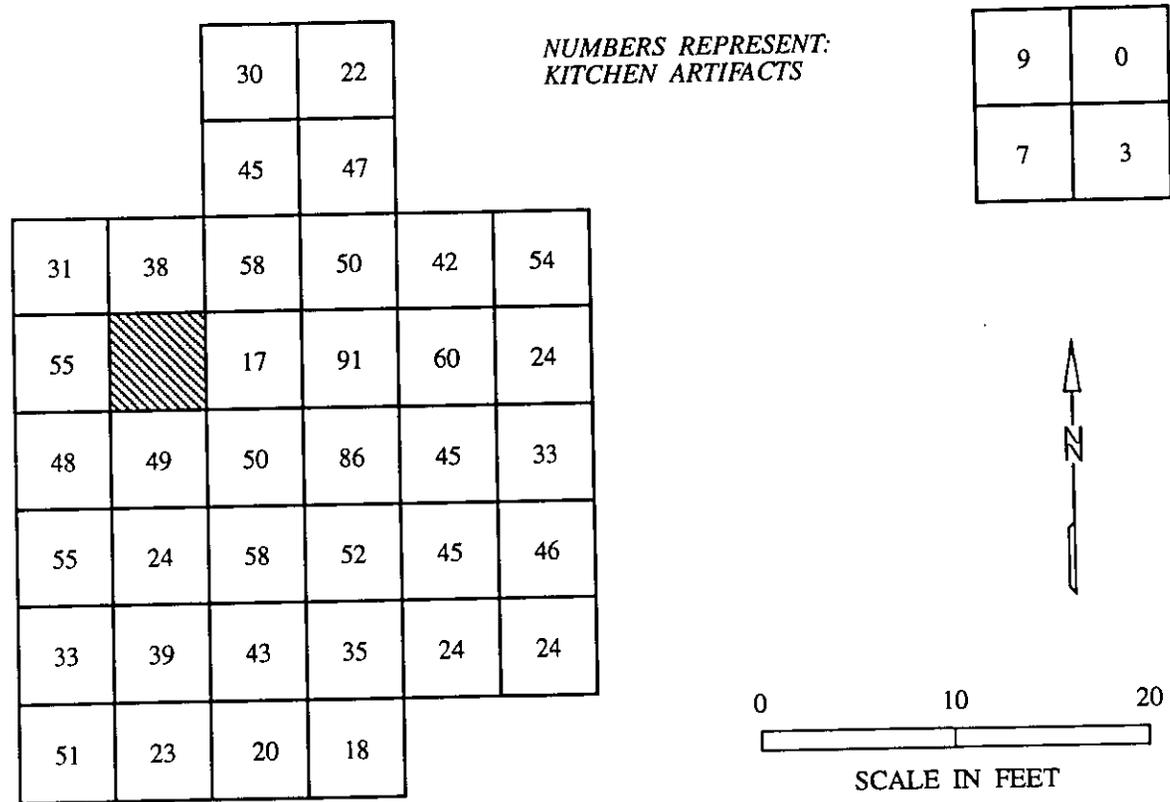


Figure 9. Kitchen related artifacts at 38CH1471 (counts).

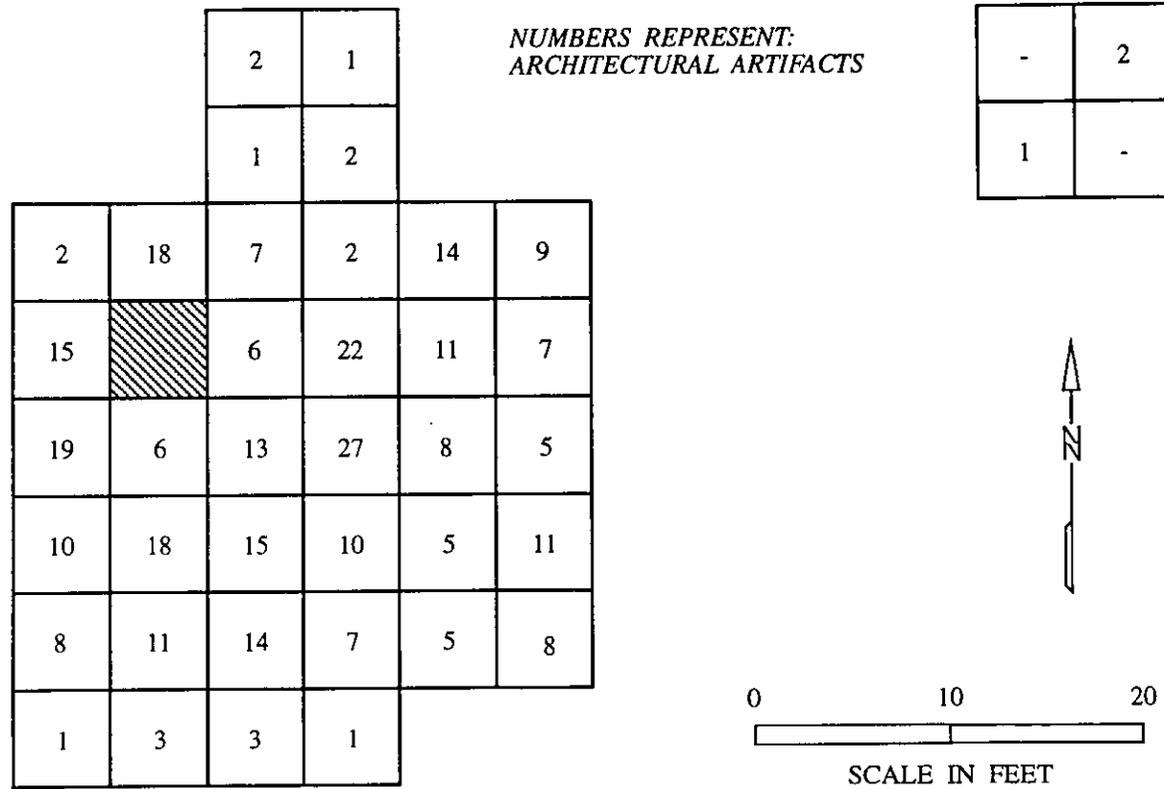


Figure 10. Architectural artifacts at 38CH1471 (counts).

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