

**SURVEYING AND ARCHAEOLOGY:
PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE TOGETHER**



CHICORA RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION 189

SURVEYING AND ARCHAEOLOGY: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE TOGETHER

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I appreciate being invited to speak with you today. Since I'm the director of a non-profit foundation I hope you'll excuse my brief commercial. Chicora is a public, non-profit foundation. We have been active in South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia for the past 14 years. We work with business partners and others to conduct archaeological studies and historical research. We also work with museums and libraries on technical preservation issues like pest control and fire safety. Chicora also has a very active educational program — last year we spoke to around 4,000 kids across South Carolina. In other words we are a broad based heritage preservation organization. Unfortunately, we are also a non-endowed foundation, meaning that no one has died and left us a million dollars. We have to get our funds the old fashioned way, by working for them. If anyone is interested in the foundation I am passing around some brochures and we would be delighted to have your support.

Moving on, I have to admit to you that it took me several days to decide what to say during the next 30 minutes or so. A number of different issues, topic, or points occurred to me.

For example, I want to better help you understand what archaeology is and why it is done. I want to explain the process of what is known as compliance archaeology and how it fits into the development process. All of this is important to me since, frankly, archaeology needs advocates. I hope that by the end of this morning I will have convinced a few of you, at least, that archaeology is worth the effort.

I want to spend some time talking about how surveyors and archaeologists have worked, and can work, together. I guess that this means, specifically, how surveyors can help archaeology and historic preservation.

I also want to spend some time talking about issues that we occasionally face together — the most common being graveyards. Those of you from the Charleston area know that cemeteries have been getting a lot of press recently. Those of you from the Beaufort area may remember some of the legal battles regarding cemeteries in that area.

And finally, I want to have a few minutes to address any questions you may have, that I don't cover during my talk. But, perhaps most importantly, I want to make sure that I get you out for the Exhibitor's social.

My own background in surveying is limited and self-taught. I came through a graduate program back when students were expected to be able to do a little of everything. My first exposure to surveying techniques was a 1910 textbook, *The Theory and Practice of Surveying* by J.B. Johnson and Leonard S. Smith — some of your grandfathers may have used this, it is so old. Over the years I have used theodolites, builders levels, optical transits, and plane tables. Until about two years ago the biggest technological jump I took was the excitement of using a direct reading Linker stadia. Only a couple of years ago did we graduate to a laser transit and, frankly, I'm still struggling to learn. My only point here, however, is that archaeology and surveying have a number of common threads.

Increasingly I am reminded of E.W. Zimmerman's quote that, "Resources are not; they become." Objects, ideas, and resources have no value unless we give them value. When there are no advocates, objects, ideas, and resources have no perceived value and are subject to strong attack. That is part of the challenge

facing us today in South Carolina -- our heritage has no strong advocate and the public as well as the government perceives little value. We see the same problem in Congress, where the assault on historic preservation has occurred because there is no organized constituency.

Buildings, historical sites, and archaeological sites are not revered in South Carolina — or America for that matter — the way they are in, say, England. There the public is a strong advocate of their heritage and these objects take on exceptional value. Site vandalism and destruction is nearly universally condemned.

So what is the problem? Why, in a state rich with history, does heritage seem to be a disposable commodity? Why do kids not understand their history? Why do adults not really care about preserving this heritage?

Clearly the problem begins with the professional community. As an English colleague bluntly told me after listening to several hours of presentations, "No wonder the public isn't interested in archaeology — you yanks make it so bloody boring." There seem to be relatively few professional archaeologists or historians who can make their chosen discipline come alive to the average person on the street. And frankly, not many of us try. The libraries are filled with evidence — unread books on historical minutia.

I also fear that we are not passing on much interest to the next generation. I rail against the notion that history is built on names and dates. We have a generation of kids pretty good at memorizing, but dismal failures at critical thinking. This became all too obvious as I was a judge at the recent South Carolina History Day program in Columbia. Too often the contestants were unable to make any linkage between their specific project and the broader themes or context of historical development. Their project was seen in isolation — full of facts, dates, and names, but devoid of any substantive meaning.

We need to make history (and by way of extension, archaeology) as exciting as Rudy Mancke has made learning about the natural environment. We need to challenge our kids with critical thinking, not rote memorization. And we need to help kids understand not only the thrill of their heritage, but also the basic utility.

History doesn't belong to historians. It belongs to all of us. We carry it around with us in the stories we've been told, in the memories that help us know who we are and where we came from. History shapes and enriches our lives. You will see this as a recurrent theme in many of Chicora's programs..

It also enriches our community, because history doesn't just live in the pages of a book or in the words on a bronze plaque. It's in the sea island cotton plantations or the up state cotton mills where our grandparents worked, in the rowhouses or small farms where we grew up, in the Main Street stores and the churches and courthouses that give our hometowns their unique identify.

Another problem we face is that our heritage is at least as fragile as our natural environment. And more importantly, it can't recover from poor management. With most biological organisms there is usually the chance, through proper management, that they can reproduce and perhaps even repopulate. Not so with historical resources or archaeological sites. They are finite in number and no matter how good the management we can't create more. Oh, we can create look-alikes, Disney versions — but not the real thing. When a plantation is bulldozed for a housing development, when a Paleoindian site is hauled off for fill sand on a highway project, the loss is permanent. And that loss screams volumes about our concern — or lack of concern — for the past.

But we face more problems than simply making our kids, and the public, more aware of South Carolina's heritage. There is the problem that too often South Carolina is promoted only in the context of "sun, fun, and sand." That approach, I suppose, is great if you are here at Myrtle Beach or on Hilton Head, although many would point out the environmental degradation caused by beach renourishment or the lack of

ecologically sensitive development. Regardless, the concept itself doesn't work as well if you are inland — where there are fewer golf courses and no sandy beaches. We have tried, without much success, to get South Carolina's governmental agencies beyond this simplistic approach to tourism. Heritage-based tourism can be ecologically sensitive tourism; it can promote cultural diversity, appealing to a broad range of people; and it can help ensure the long-term preservation of South Carolina's history, by helping define the value of our heritage in dollars and cents.

Just by way of an example, the black travel market is worth \$15 billion a year — and growing. African Americans made South Carolina what it is today. The sweat of African slaves cleared the land, built the grand mansions, raised the crops, constructed the roads, and formed the landscape. The social and economic fabric of South Carolina was woven by their toil. Today South Carolina has the potential for exceptional black heritage tourism — but that resource is barely tapped. In fact, if the efforts to attract the heritage-based tourist, whatever their race, were compared with the efforts to attract the golfer, there would be little contest — either in funds or program development.

When I talk to groups about archaeology another of the points I make is that archaeology is not, and should not, be opposed to legitimate development. Some preservationists have gotten a bad reputation — they seem to be opposed to everything — they epitomize the little old lady in sneakers chaining herself to a derelict house. They want the world to remain as it was 50 years ago and that just won't happen.

Chicora Foundation has been fortunate to work with some very good clients — business partners who are interested in quality development and interested in incorporating the past into their development plans. Groups like Kiawah Resort Associates and The Beach Company, among others.

In my 14 years with Chicora, and in my 8 previous years as the Senior Archaeologist with the Highway Department, I have never seen a project canceled because of archaeology. In fact, I defy anyone to present me with a documented case where development was "killed" by archaeology. If archaeology had any hand in the death of a development it was because the developer failed to plan ahead — a problem that many of you are probably painfully aware of in your own work.

Archaeology, like tree and topos, or like sewer lines, is a cost of doing business. The cost isn't excessive, and the process isn't painful. In fact, I've passed out a four page flyer, the first two pages of which provide a simplified outline of laws and regulations governing historic preservation.

There are both federal and state requirements for archaeological studies. The federal requirements come into play only if there is federal funding, federal licensing, or federal permitting involved in the project. The federal law is designed to ensure that nothing the federal government does, or permits to be done, damages or destroys our heritage. There are very similar state laws which require archaeological studies when there is a need for a state permit. Combined, these laws blanket the coastal zone, but get increasingly spotty as you move inland. By the time you get to Greenville County, for example, you find very little archaeological protection. In addition, none of these laws cover what a private individual, using their own money, does to an archeological site when no permitting is required. In other words there is virtually no involvement with property rights issues — contrary to what some politicians would have you believe.

The laws many times do require a developer to conduct an archaeological survey. The goal of such a survey, which combines historic research with field studies, is to identify the locations of prehistoric and historic sites. These may include scatters of pottery, shell middens, piles of brick rubble denoting old house sites, entire plantations, or graveyards.

Once identified, the sites must be assessed by the archaeologist. The process is deceptively simple. Is the site significant? Can it address significant questions? As simple as it sounds, this can often be difficult. Based on a few small holes and a handful of artifacts the archaeologist is being asked whether this site should

be further investigated — at additional cost to the client — or whether it should be ignored and eventually bulldozed — with the entire state losing this part of its history. It can often be a tough call. And it is a decision which can result in legal action by those who disagree with the assessment.

The archaeologist's recommendation is reviewed, at least in theory, by the state historic preservation office in Columbia. A branch of the S.C. Department of Archives and History, this agency is supposed to be the regulatory agency with oversight. As many of you might guess, they frequently are more interested in avoiding problems than dealing with them — a characteristic of government in general. I try to explain to clients that while I make a recommendation, it is the state historic preservation office (and the federal or state agency granting the permit) which actually has the power. But, of course, I'm usually closer at hand, as well as the proverbial "bearer of bad news."

With an archaeological site is found which is "significant" it may be green spaced — left intact for future generations — or it may be excavated, with the information it contains collected by the archaeologist. This latter process is called "data recovery."

As you might imagine, data recovery is more costly than an archaeological survey. I explain to clients that the decision to green space as opposed to data recovery is quite simply a business decision. If it costs \$50,000 to conduct the archaeological data recovery, but the lots the site is situated on are worth \$250,000 then the decision to excavate is sound. If, on the other hand the excavations will cost \$100,000 and the lots are worth only \$50,000, green spacing makes much more business sense.

Good business dictates that you know what you are getting into, before you close on the option to purchase a development tract. As a result, we are seeing more firms interested in what we call a reconnaissance study — collecting enough information to allow them to reasonably guess what sorts of archaeological issues might face development.

The bottom line, here as in virtually every other aspect of business, is planning. The business partner who plans ahead, gets studies done ahead of need, budgets reasonable sums for the work necessary, and keeps open lines of communication is the individual who isn't constantly complaining about archaeology. Strange how this works.

So, how do or can archaeology and surveying work together. To begin with, I have been relying on surveyors for the past 20 years. Archaeologists first come across surveyors in the process of historical research. Individuals like Payne, Diamond, and Purcell were prolific in their production of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century plats. Their accuracy, at least to me, is astonishing. Working with nothing more than a compass and chain, how they were able to beat their way through impenetrable low country swamps stretches my imagination. But time and time again, I can take a nineteenth century plat and lay it over a modern version and see little difference. I have had the pleasure of working with a surveyor who was able to take nineteenth century plats for the Congaree Creek area and tie them into modern maps, replicating the exact boundary lines. We have even used historic plats and maps to prepare cartographic surveys of Georgetown, Beaufort, and Greenville counties predicting the location of historic sites. Typically we are within 100 to 200 feet of where historic sites lie, simply using these early documents.

Beyond the simple accuracy and boundaries, these early plats are exceptional in the cultural detail they offer. Plats provide the location of main plantation settlements, slave settlements, rice and other agricultural fields, dikes, roads, ferries, landings, lime kilns, brick kilns, grist mills, cemeteries, and barns. They have been used not only to understand landscape and building patterns, but also to evaluate vegetative changes based on the use of boundary trees. I am not exaggerating when I say that archaeology would be far less precise without these resources.

Once in the field, I have more than once been thankful that survey crews came before us, creating

transects or cut lines for us to follow in our work. The presence of tree and topo maps, as well as mean sea level datums are equally essential in our work. One of the most complex jobs we collaborated on was the preparation of a tree and topo map of the Crowfield Plantation gardens in Goose Creek. Still present were earthworks, a bowling green, and a mound, all designed to interact together in the total garden setting. Only by the use of fine mapping skills was it possible to see, and understand, the complexity of this site.

Some of you may have worked on the mapping of military fortifications, such as the earthworks built by the Confederates to defend Charleston, or further south, to contain the Union troops after their landing on Hilton Head. Similar fortifications exist across the state and their complexity becomes obvious only after the work of a competent topographic surveyor.

Since surveyors go on property before archaeologists, many of you have come up to me and told me about piles of brick, old buildings, arrow heads, and even graves that were found out in the middle of nowhere. In theory, I should have been able to find all of these without being told. But in practice, that is unlikely — the odds are that you will see a lot more than I have the chance to. Consequently, I greatly appreciate the help that survey crews have provided in the past. On one recent survey they even flagged a pile of brick, making it impossible for me to miss.

Sometimes survey crews worry that by pointing things out they will be making life harder for their client. I understand, and appreciate, that concern. On the other hand, consider what happens if the site you might know about isn't found during the archaeological study. And let's say that it is reported to the press by an angry adjacent property owner who doesn't want the development built. The damage that will cause — bad press, legal repercussions, and delays in building — are far worse than knowing about a site and dealing with it upfront. I consistently tell clients, there is nothing that we can't deal with — up front and with planning. What none of us want are surprises down the line when there is no longer any flexibility. So, please, if you find sites when you are out in the field, note them, pass the information on. If nothing else, it will help absolve you of any responsibility.

And this is a good point to turn to cemeteries. I have worked with a number of surveyors on cemeteries, have been retained as an expert witness in several court cases, and have worked on several dozen historic cemeteries. They can easily become your worst nightmare — I'm sure everyone has seen poltergeist, right?

First off, let me mention that cemeteries, graveyards, and burial grounds — including Native American graves — are protected under South Carolina law. Section 16-17-600 et seq. which makes it a felony to destroy, damage, remove, or desecrate human remains, as well as to vandalize, destroy, deface, or otherwise damage graveyards, tombs, mausoleums, gravestones, memorial monuments, markers, park area, fencing, plants, trees, or shrubs. In other words, just about anything you do to a cemetery, a grave, human remains, or any marking found in a cemetery, is likely to be illegal.

Cemeteries are a problem for all us since they are often hard to see. Small family cemeteries may be out in the middle of the woods marked with only a few stones. African American cemeteries are even more difficult to recognize. Frequently these cemeteries are not marked at all, or very few graves will be marked. A couple of recent cases remind us of this issue. In Charleston one of my colleagues failed to mention a cemetery that the City was planning to build on. The local citizens were incensed, the archaeologists were called back in and found over a hundred graves. This generated a lot of bad press for the City and for this particular archaeologist. In another case, another colleague used a bulldozer to locate graves — nearly 200 of them — in an African American cemetery. This didn't set too well with the descendants either.

A number of years ago I was involved as an expert in a case involving a cemetery which was recorded by the surveyor as very small on the property owner's plat. It was alleged that the owner requested the cemetery be "made smaller" and the surveyor obliged. The property owner claimed the cemetery had eroded

away over the years and that was why it was so small. We were able to show, using aerial photographs and old plats that erosion was not significant and that the cemetery was, in fact, much larger than shown on the plat.

You may find a few African American graves still marked with wood sticks or planks, although the last I know of were mowed down by an enthusiastic landscaper some years ago on Waccamaw Neck. Railroad irons were also used, as were pipes and other machinery parts. Sometimes graves will be marked by clusters of artifacts — goods which were placed on top of the grave. Others are marked by plantings. And many more, going back into slavery, have no marking at all. These African American cemeteries are very different from white cemeteries. They typically are not park-like, but are wooded. This is because the attitudes toward death and burial are quite different. What is important is the general place, not the specific plot. And while it is important to mark graves for the current generation, it is not necessary to memorialize the grave for hundreds of years.

Cemeteries involve a wealth of emotional, ethical, social, political, and religious issues. Establishing boundaries represents a potential land mine for both archaeologists and surveyors. Since delimiting the boundaries really shouldn't be your responsibility, the best advice I can offer is to locate what is obvious and offer no guarantees. Generally, the boundary you can see will be about half of what it actually turns out to be. You can, however, be of exceptional assistance in noting graveyards on plats since this helps bring their existence to everyone's attention.

I hope this gives you a better feel for archaeology. I also hope that it illustrates at least of the few convergences between of respective disciplines and how your work, on a daily basis, can help archaeology. On the back of the hand-out there is a list of some of our publications, so if you're interested you may find something you would like to read. And if there are any questions, I'll be happy to talk with you.