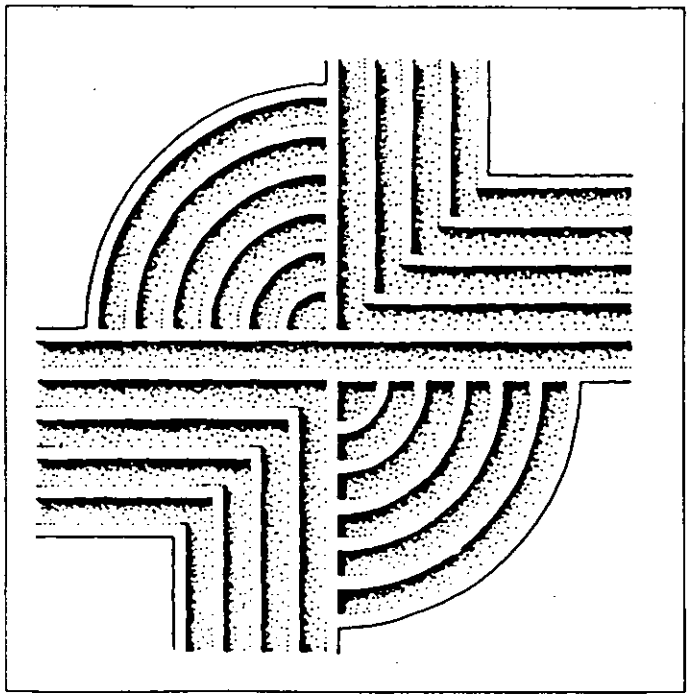
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF A 2.5 ACRE TRACT ON RIVER ROAD, JOHNS ISLAND CHARLESTON COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA



CHICORA RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION 252

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF A 2.5 ACRE TRACT ON RIVER ROAD, JOHNS ISLAND, CHARLESTON COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

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CHICORA RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION 251

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ABSTRACT

This study represents an intensive archaeological survey of a 2.5 acre parcel, called Tract B, on the west side of River Road about 1300 feet north of its junction with Maybank Highway (S.C. 700). The Housing Authority of the City of Charleston has proposed the construction of a small housing development on this land and this archaeological investigation was conducted because of federal funding involved in the project. The goal of this study was to identify and assess the archaeological sites present in the proposed project area.

No archaeological sites have been recorded in the project area by the S.C. Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology. The S.C. Department of Archives and History reports that there are no National Register of Historic Places buildings, districts, structures, sites, or objects in the study area, nor are any historic structures or sites present, based on the results of previous structures surveys. We do note that Fenwick Hall, placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972 is situated east of the tract, although the boundaries for the nominated property are approximately 1,300 feet distant.

The historical research was limited to a review of the documentation associated with the Fenwick Hall nomination and a review of pertinent maps for the project area in the Chicora files. While limited, this appears to provide a generally complete picture of the activities which have taken place in the project vicinity, especially when the results of this undertaking are compared to the results of the field investigation.

The field study consisted of the excavation of shovel tests in the project area at a maximum interval of 100 feet, as specified by the S.C. State Historic Preservation Office for high probability areas. Much of the property was actually investigated at greater intensity than that recommended. All fill was screened through ¼-inch mesh. No archaeological sites were identified in the study. The research did reveal a diffuse area of recent trash — bricks, concrete, aluminum frames, iron bed springs, bottles, and other debris — which appears to have been dumped in the area during the past 30 years. These debris, because of their recent age and the nature of the deposit, have not been recorded as an archaeological site.

No additional management activities are recommended for the project. As always, it is possible that unrecognized archaeological remains may be identified during construction. If so, the contractor should suspend work and notify either Chicora or the State Historic Preservation Office.

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INTRODUCTION

This investigation of the proposed Housing Authority of the City of Charleston development tract on Johns Island was conducted by Dr. Michael Trinkley of Chicora Foundation, Inc. for Mr. Don Cameron of the Housing Authority. The survey tract is situated southwest of downtown Charleston on Johns Island, north of Maybank Highway (SC 700) and east of River Road (SC 54) (Figure 1). The tract is situated in an area of heavy woods and is intended to provide additional housing units for the Authority. As such the project will involve the clearing and grubbing of the tract, house construction, development of a service road, and the excavation for utility lines. Such work could damage or destroy any archaeological sites present on the parcel and that, of course, spurred this investigation.

The parcel measures about 160 feet north-south by 450 feet east-west and incorporates about 2.5 acres, only about 2 acres of which are high ground. A slough runs through a portion of the tract, accounting for the wetlands at the western end (Figure 2). This tract is found entirely within a wooded area with a dense understory. Surface visibility is extremely limited, and its survey necessitated the use of shovel testing.

Ms. Sarah Fick of Preservation Consultants, Inc. initially contacted Chicora about the property on the behalf of her client, The Housing Authority of the City of Charleston. Since federal funds were involved in the proposed development the need for an investigation was recognized prior to any ground disturbing activities. A technical and budgetary proposal for the investigation was submitted on May 28, 1998, and was approved by the Housing Authority on June 5, 1998.

These investigations incorporated a review of the site files at the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology by Ms. Suzanne Coyle on June 15, 1998. No previously reported sites were recorded in or immediately adjacent to the project area. In addition, Dr. Tracy Power at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History was asked on June 15, 1998 to check the

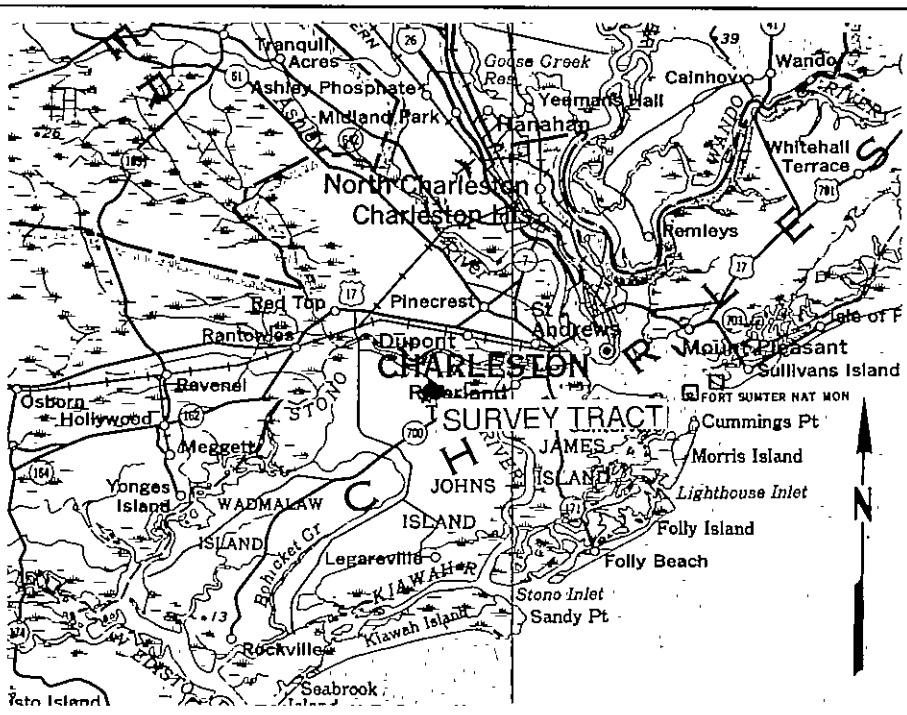

Figure 1. Project vicinity in Charleston County (from USGS South Carolina, scale is approximately 1 inch to 16 miles).

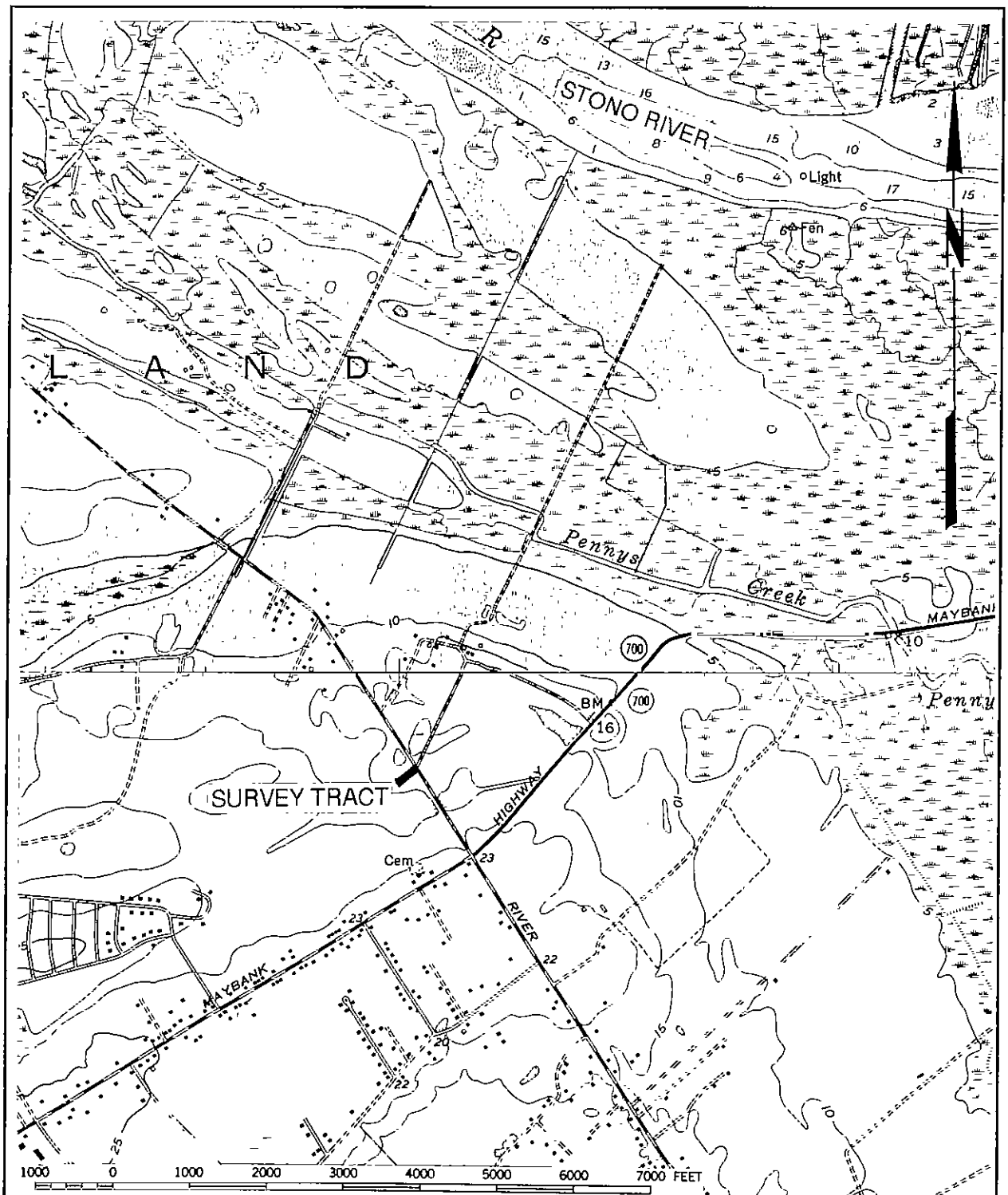

Figure 2. Project area shown on a portion of the Legareville and Johns Island USGS topographic maps.

master topographic maps at his office to locate any NRHP buildings, districts, structures, sites, or objects in the study area. In addition, his office was asked about the results of any structures surveys which might have been completed in the study area. On June 16, 1998 he informed us that no National Register sites existed in the immediate area, nor were there any recorded architectural or historical sites in the survey tract.

The survey, which was designed to identify prehistoric or historic resources which may be within the project boundaries, was conducted on June 12, 1998 by Dr. Michael Trinkley. A total of 8 person hours were required for this study.

NATURAL SETTING

Physiography

Charleston County is located in the lower Atlantic Coastal Plain of South Carolina and is bounded to the east by the Atlantic Ocean and a series of marsh, barrier, and sea islands (Mathews et al. 1980:133). Elevations in the County range from sea level to about 70 feet above mean sea level (AMSL).

In the project area elevations range from about 15 to 20 feet AMSL (see Figure 2). In general, the topography slopes to the west and southwest — toward a low drainage that runs southerly through the project tract. In several areas there are artificial ridges, apparently created by dozer activity and representing push piles. These are associated with the recent trash found during the survey.

The mainland topography consists of similar subtle ridge and bay undulations, is characteristic of beach ridge plains. Seven major drainages are found in Charleston County. Four of these, the Wando, Ashley, Stono, and North Edisto, are dominated by tidal flows and are saline. Nearby portions of the Stono were historically used for the cultivation of rice by such plantations as Fenwick Hall. The three drainages with significant freshwater flow are the Santee, forming the northern boundary of the County, the South Edisto, forming the southern boundary, and the Cooper, which bisects the County. Because of the low topography, many broad, low-gradient interior drains are present as either extensions of the tidal rivers or as flooded bays and swales. Examples of these are present in the project area, and include the slough found near the western boundary.

Geology and Soils

Coastal Plain geological formations are unconsolidated sedimentary deposits of very recent age (Pleistocene and Holocene) lying unconformably on ancient crystalline rocks (Cooke 1936; Miller 1971:74). The Pleistocene sediments are organized into topographically distinct, but lithologically similar, geomorphic units, or terraces, parallel to the coast. The project area is identified by Cooke (1936) as part of the Pamlico terrace, which includes the land between the recent shore and an abandoned shore line about 25 feet AMSL. Cooke (1936:7) notes that evidence of ancient beaches and swales can still be seen in the Pamlico formation and this likely contributed to the ridge and trough topography present in some areas of Johns Island.

Within the coastal zone the soils are Holocene and Pleistocene in age and were formed from materials that were deposited during the various stages of coastal submergence. The formation of soils in the study area is affected by this parent material (primarily sands and clays), the temperate climate, the various soil organisms, topography, and time.

The mainland soils are Pleistocene in age and tend to have more distinct horizon development and diversity than the younger soils of the sea and barrier islands. Sandy to loamy soils predominate in the level to gently sloping mainland areas. The island soils are less diverse and less well developed, frequently lacking a well-defined B horizon. Organic matter is low and the soils tend to be acidic. The Holocene deposits typical of barrier islands and found as a fringe on some sea islands, consist almost entirely of quartz sand which exhibits little organic matter. Tidal marsh soils are Holocene in age and consist of fine sands, clay, and organic matter deposited over older Pleistocene sands. The soils are frequently covered by up to 2 feet of saltwater during high tides. Historically, marsh soils have been used as compost or fertilizer for a variety of crops, including cotton (Hammond 1884:510) and Allston mentions that the sandy soil of the coastal region, "bears well the admixture of salt and marsh mud

with the compost" (Allston 1854:13).

Only two soil series occur in the project area: Seabrook loamy fine sands on the eastern half of the tract and Stono fine sandy loams in the western (Miller 1971:61). The Seabrook soils are moderately well drained and consist of an A or Ap horizon of very dark grayish-brown sand about 0.8 foot in depth. The underlying subsoil is a dark-brown to dark yellowish-brown sand. In contrast, the Stono soils are very poorly drained with a seasonal high water table within a foot of the surface. The soils, typical of reduced environs, have an A horizon profile of black sand, often to a depth of 1.6 feet. Under this is a B horizon of very dark gray soil (Miller 1971).

Climate

John Lawson described South Carolina in 1700 as having, "a sweet Air, moderate Climate, and fertile Soil" (Lefler 1967:86). Of course, Lawson tended to romanticize Carolina. In December 1740 Robert Pringle remarked that Charleston was having "hard frosts & Snow" characterized as "a great Detriment to the Negroes" (Edgar 1972:282), while in May 1744 Pringle states, "the weather having already Come in very hott" (Edgar 1972:685).

The major climatic controls of the area are latitude, elevation, distance from the ocean, and location with respect to the average tracks of migratory cyclones. Charleston's latitude of 32°37'N places it on the edge of the balmy subtropical climate typical of Florida, further south. As a result, there are relatively short, mild winters and long, warm, humid summers. The large amount of nearby warm ocean water surface produces a marine climate, which tends to moderate both the cold and hot weather. The Appalachian Mountains, about 220 miles to the northwest, block the shallow cold air masses from the northwest, moderating them before they reach the sea islands (Mathews et al. 1980:46).

The average high temperature in the Charleston in July is 81°F, although temperatures are frequently in the 90s during much of July (Kjerfve 1975:C-4). Mills noted:

> in the months of June, July, and August, 1752, the weather in Charleston was warmer than any of the inhabitants before had ever experienced. The mercury in the shade often rose above 90°, and for nearly twenty successive days varied between that an 101° (Mills 1972:444).

The area normally experiences a high relative humidity, adding greatly to the discomfort. Kjerfve (1975:C-5) found an annual mean value of 73.5% RH, with the highest levels occurring during the summer. Pringle remarked in 1742 that guns "sufferr'd with the Rust by Lying so Long here, & which affects any Kind of Iron Ware, much more in this Climate than in Europe" (Edgar 1972:465).

The annual rainfall in this portion of Charleston is about 49 inches, fairly evenly spaced over the year. While adequate for most crops, there may be periods of both excessive rain and drought. The Charleston area has recorded up to 20 inches of rain in a single month and the rainfall over a three month period has exceeded 30 inches no less than 9 times in the past 37 years. Likewise, periods of draught can occur and cause considerable damage to crops and livestock. Mills remarks that the "Summer of 1728 was uncommonly hot; the face of the earth was completely parched; the pools of standing water dried up, and the field reduced to the greatest distress" (Mills 1972:447-448). Another significant historical drought occurred in 1845, affecting both the Low and Up Country.

The annual growing season is 295 days, one of the longest in South Carolina. This mild climate, adequate rainfall, and long growing season, as Hilliard (1984:13) notes, is largely responsible for the presence of many southern crops, such as cotton and sugar cane.

Floristics

The area of the study tract exhibits three major ecosystems: the maritime forest ecosystem which consists of the upland forest areas, the estuarine ecosystem of deep water tidal habitats,

and the palustrine ecosystems which consist of essentially fresh water, non-tidal wetlands (Sandifer et al. 1980:7-9).

The maritime forest ecosystem has been found to consist of five principal forest types, including the Oak-Pine forests, the Mixed Oak Hardwood forests, the Palmetto forests, the Oak thickets, and other miscellaneous wooded areas (such as salt marsh thickets and wax myrtle thickets).

Of these the Oak-Pine forests are most common, constituting large areas of Charleston's original forest community. In some areas palmetto becomes an important sub-dominant. Typically these forests are dominated by the laurel oak with pine (primarily loblolly with minor amounts of longleaf pine) as the major canopy co-dominant. Hickory is present, although uncommon. Other trees found are the sweet gum and magnolia, with sassafras, red bay, American holly, and wax myrtle and palmetto found in the understory.

Mills, in the early nineteenth century, remarked that:

> South Carolina is rich in native and exotic productions; the varieties of its soil, climate, and geological positions, afford plants of rare, valuable, and medicinal qualities; fruits of a luscious, refreshing, and nourishing nature; vines and shrubs of exquisite beauty, fragrance, and luxuriance, and forest trees of noble growth, in great variety (Mills 1972:66).

The loblolly pine was called the "pitch or Frankincense Pine" and was used to produce tar and turpentine; the longleaf pine was "much used in building and for all other domestic purposes;" trees such as the red bay and red cedar were often used in furniture making and cedar was a favorite for posts; and live oaks were recognized as yielding "the best of timber for ship building;" (Mills 1972:66-85). Mills also observed that:

> in former years cypress was much used in building, but the difficulty of obtaining it now, compared with the pine, occasions little of it to be cut for sale, except in the shape of shingles; the cypress is a most valuable wood for durability and lightness. Besides the two names we have cedar, poplar, beech, oak, and locust, which are or may be also used in building (Mills 1972:460).

The "Oak and hickory high lands" according to Mills were, "well suited for corn and provisions, also for indigo and cotton" (Mills 1972:443). The value of these lands in the mid-1820s was from $10 to $20 per acre, less expensive than the tidal swamp or inland swamp lands (where rice and, with drainage, cotton could be grown).

Today, virtually all of the project area's high ground evidences some form or another of disturbance. Along River Road a recent sewer line is evidenced by both the vegetation and also shovel tests revealing fill (Figure 3). Further to the west there are remnants of an oak forest, although the dense understory suggests second growth, perhaps reflecting of the episode of dumping (Figure 4). Interspersed are open areas, where the canopy has been disturbed and herbaceous vegetation has quickly grown up. Toward the western portion of the tract the dense lowland forest is dominant (Figure 5).

The estuarine ecosystem in the vicinity includes those areas of deep water tidal habitats and adjacent tidal wetlands, found exclusively at the southern edge of the project. Salinity in these areas may range from 0.5 parts per thousand (ppt) at the head of an estuary to 30 ppt where it comes into contact with the ocean. Estuarine systems are influenced by ocean tides, precipitation, fresh water runoff from the upland areas, evaporation, and wind. The system may be subdivided into two major components: subtidal and intertidal (Sandifer et al. 1980:158-159). These estuarine systems are extremely important to our understanding of both prehistoric and historic occupations because they naturally contain a high

Figure 3. View of the survey tract from River Road, looking to the southwest. Note the recently cleared sewer easement along the road edge and the maritime forest beyond.

Figure 4. View down a cut line along the south edge of the survey tract, showing the dense vegetation.

Figure 5. View of the swamp vegetation at the west edge of the survey tract.

Figure 6. Area of modern trash in the central portion of the survey tract, showing recent debris mixed in what appears to be a push pile. View to the northwest.

biomass. The estuarine area contributes vascular flora used for basket making, as well as mammals, birds, fish (over 107 species), and shellfish.

The last environment to be briefly discussed is the freshwater palustrine ecosystem, which includes all wetland ecosystems, such as the swamps, bays, savannas, pocisins, and creeks where the salinities measure less than 0.5 ppt — typical of the slough at the western edge of the survey tract. These palustrine ecosystems tend to be diverse, although not well studied (Sandifer et al. 1980:295). Many of these freshwater areas are likely associated with the various troughs scattered across the area. A number of forest types may be found in the palustrine areas which would attract a variety of terrestrial mammals. The typical vegetation might consist of red maple, swamp tupelo, sweet gum, red bay, cypress, and various hollies. Also expected in these areas would be wading birds and reptiles. It seems likely that these freshwater environs were of particular importance to the prehistoric occupants, but posed only a passing hinderance to the historic plantation owners.

PREHISTORIC AND HISTORIC OVERVIEW

Previous Research

There are, of course, a number of previously published archaeological studies available for the Charleston area to provide background (see Derting et al. 1991 for references to research in the Charleston area). Trinkley (1993), for example, provides detailed information on the history and archaeology of nearby Kiawah Island. Adams and Trinkley (1994) provide an overview of the Mullet Hall area on Johns Island, about 9 miles to the southwest, while Poplin (1991) explores the history and archaeology of the Gift Plantation tract about 6 miles to the northwest.

As stated earlier, an examination of the site files housed at the S.C. Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology revealed that while several sites were recorded for the area east of River Road, none were identified in the project area.

Although there are no National Register sites situated on or adjacent to the survey tract, the Fenwick Hall National Register site is situated about 1,300 feet to the northeast.

Fenwick Hall was nominated to the National Register in 1972 and the nomination form provides very little supporting detail or information. The nomination emphasized the extant main house, thought to have been built in 1730 — a two-story structure over a high basement. Stoney comments that the structure "marks the cresting of a wave of prosperity that came over the Low Country in the decade after the end of the Proprietorial Government" and recounts much of the lore and legend concerning the house (Stoney 1938: 57-59).

Although providing less detail, Lane (1984:31, 34-35) makes a valuable contribution by providing a ca. 1890 photograph of the structure while still occupied (Stoney's earliest photograph must have been taken about 1930 and shows the house abandoned and windows boarded up). He also notes that, "when the doorway, sash and window shutters were restored in 1931, the interior was 'improved' with additional 18th-century-style panelling and chimneypieces, and a hall partition was removed to create the historic hall-and-parlor plan" (Lane 1984:35). Like many "restorations" of the period, wealth northern patrons were disinclined to allow accuracy to interfere with their recreation of southern gentility.

Neither Lane nor Stoney provide much in the way of additional landscape information or economic history for the plantation, noting only that while one flanker is still present the other had "disappeared" at least by the time of Stoney's work in the 1930s.

Prehistoric Synopsis

Several previously published archaeological studies are available for the Charleston area that provide additional background, including those previously mentioned. A considerable amount of archaeology has been conducted in the Charleston area and these works should be consulted for broad overviews.

The Paleoindian period, lasting from 12,000 to perhaps 8,000 B.C., is evidenced by basally thinned, side-notched projectile points; fluted, lanceolate projectile points; side scrapers; end scrapers; and drills (Coe 1964; Michie 1977; Williams 1968). The Paleoindian occupation, while widespread, does not appear to have been intensive. Artifacts are most frequently found along major river drainages, which Michie interprets to support the concept of an economy "oriented towards the exploitation of now extinct mega-fauna" (Michie 1977:124).

The Archaic period, which dates from 8000 to about 1000 B.C., does not form a sharp

break with the Paleoindian period, but is a slow transition characterized by a modern climate and an increase in the diversity of material culture. The chronology established by Coe (1964) for the North Carolina Piedmont may be applied with relatively little modification to the South Carolina coast. Archaic period assemblages, characterized by corner-notched and broad stemmed projectile points, are rare in the Sea Island region, although the sea level is anticipated to have been within 13 feet of its present stand by the beginning of the succeeding Woodland period (Lepionka et al. 1983:10).

To some the Woodland period begins, by definition, with the introduction of fired clay pottery about 2000 B.C. along the South Carolina coast. To others, the period from about 2500 to 1000 B.C. falls into the Late Archaic because of a perceived continuation of the Archaic lifestyle in spite of the manufacture of pottery. Regardless of the terminology, the period from 2500 to 1000 B.C. is well documented on the South Carolina coast and is characterized by Stallings (fiber-tempered) and Thom's Creek (sand or non-tempered) series pottery (Figure 7).

The subsistence economy during this early period on the coast of South Carolina was based primarily on deer hunting, fishing, and shellfish collection, with supplemental inclusions of small mammals, birds, and reptiles. Various calculations of the probable yield of deer, fish, and other food sources identified from shell ring sites such as Lighthouse Point on adjacent James Island, also in Charleston County on James Island, indicate that sedentary life was not only possible, but probable.

Although no shell ring sites are known from Johns Island, Edmund Ruffin, who was a careful and exacting observer, noted in 1843 the location of the Lighthouse Point shell ring on James Island and then commented, "there are two others, which have been described to me, one on John's Island, & the other on a small island in the marsh attached to Edisto" (Mathew 1992:113). The marsh ring, of course, must be the Fig Island shell ring. Unfortunately, the John's Island ring has never been identified.

Toward the end of the Thom's Creek phase there is evidence of sea level change, and a number of small, non-shell midden sites are found along the coast. Apparently the rising sea level inundated the tide marshes on which the Thom's Creek people relied.

The succeeding Refuge phase, which dates from about 1100 to 500 B.C., suggests fragmentation caused by the environmental changes (Lepionka et al. 1983; Williams 1968). Sites are generally small and some coastal sites evidence no shellfish collection at all (Trinkley 1982). Peterson (1971:153) characterizes Refuge as a degeneration of the preceding Thom's Creek series and a bridge to the succeeding Deptford culture.

The Deptford phase, which dates from 1100 B.C. to A.D. 600, is best characterized by fine to coarse sandy paste pottery with a check stamped surface treatment. Also present are quantities of cord marked, simple stamped, and occasional fabric impressed pottery. During this period there is a blending of the Deptford ceramic tradition of the lower Savannah with the Deep Creek tradition found further north along the South Carolina coast and extending into North Carolina (Trinkley 1983).

The Middle Woodland period (ca. 300 B.C. to A.D. 1000) is characterized by the use of sand burial mounds and ossuaries along the Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina coasts (Brooks et al. 1982; Thomas and Larsen 1979; Wilson 1982). Middle Woodland coastal plain sites continue the Early Woodland Deptford pattern of mobility. While sites are found all along the coast and inland to the fall line, sites are characterized by sparse shell and few artifacts. Gone are the abundant shell tools, worked bone items, and clay balls. In many respects the South Carolina Late Woodland period (ca. A.D. 1000 to 1650 in some areas of the coast) may be characterized as a continuum of the previous Middle Woodland cultural assemblage.

The Middle and Late Woodland occupations in South Carolina are characterized by a pattern of settlement mobility and short-term occupations. On the southern coast they are

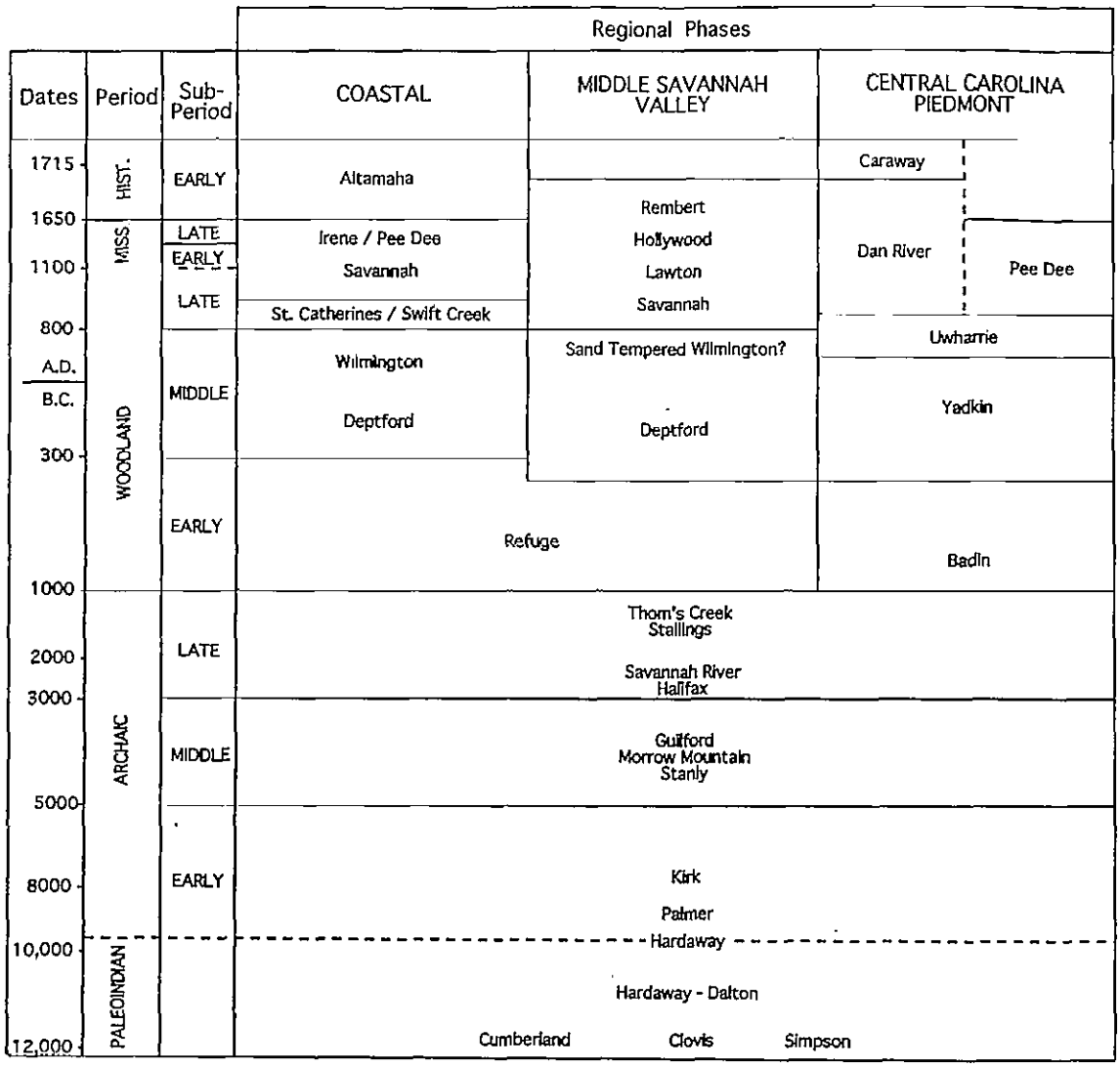

Figure 7. Cultural periods for the South Carolina area.

associated with the Wilmington and St. Catherines phases, which date from about A.D. 500 to at least A.D. 1150, although there is evidence that the St. Catherines pottery continued to be produced much later in time (Trinkley 1981). On the northern coast there are very similar ceramics called Hanover and Santee.

The South Appalachian Mississippian period (ca. A.D. 1100 to 1640) is the most elaborate level of culture attained by the native inhabitants and is followed by cultural disintegration brought about largely by European disease. The period is characterized by complicated stamped pottery, complex social organization, agriculture, and the construction of temple mounds and ceremonial centers. The earliest coastal phases are named Savannah and Irene (A.D. 1200 to 1550). Sometime after the arrival of Europeans on the Georgia coast in A.D. 1519, the Irene phase is replaced by the Altamaha phase. Altamaha pottery tends to be heavily grit tempered, the complicated stamped motifs tend to be rectilinear and poorly applied, and check stamping occurs as a minority ware. Further north, in the Charleston area, the Pee Dee or Irene ware is replaced by pottery with bolder designs, thought to be representative of the protohistoric and historic periods (South 1971).

Although there has been very little archaeological exploration of historic period Native American groups in the Charleston area, South has compiled a detailed overview of the ethnohistoric sources (South 1972).

Historic Research

Just as there are a large number of sources recounting the prehistory of the project area, the history of Charleston County has been extensively reviewed, summarized, and critiqued. There should hardly be any need to do more than point the interested reader in one or two directions for additional information and details. Simple, and readily available, summaries include *A Short History of Charleston* (Rosen 1982) and *Charleston! Charleston!* (Fraser 1989). An excellent overview has been prepared by Fick and her colleagues as part of Charleston County's historical and architectural survey (Fick 1992).

There is no specific history for Johns Island, although a local avocational historian, Betty Stringfellow, promises that one is about to be published.

It appears that the survey tract was originally part of the Fenwick Hall Plantation grant, although the Fenwick Hall nomination provides relatively little insight. In fact, the nomination itself explains only:

> The house was built for John Fenwick, a wealthy South Carolina planter, in 1730. In 1787 it was purchased by his cousin, John Gibbes, who altered it somewhat. The house was used as headquarters by the commanding officers of invading armies during both the Revolution and the Civil War, and thus survived both conflicts without serious damage. In 1931 the house was restored by Victor Moraweta of New York City (Fenwick Hall National Register Nomination, S.C. Department of Archives and History).

Stoney provides more information, noting that the plantation passed from John Fenwick to his son and heir, Edward Fenwick. In fact, Stoney suggests that it was Edward who built the flankers, perhaps because at least one was used to house Edward's stable of thoroughbreds (Stoney 1938:58). The property passed from second Edward Fenwick to his cousin and neighbor, John Gibbes, in 1787 as a result of a family lawsuit.

The Fenwick Hall nomination references a probable plat of the property, dated 1770. When carefully examined, this plat reveals the margin note:

> By virtue of a Precept under the hand and Seal of John Brimar Esqr., District Surveyor, bearing the date the day of June 1770

> and to me directed Requiring a Resurvey of a tract of Lands of Edward Fenwick Esqr. Granted to Governor Robert Gibbes for 3000 Acres but on my Resurvey I find to be 4000 acres Situate on Johns Island in Colleton County butting and bounding to the North on Stono River to E on Mr. Stoutinbouzough to the West on Mr. Stanyards Land to the South on Mr. Fenwicks Land. Certified By William Davis the 12d of June 1770 (S.C. Department of Archives and History, Colonial Plats, vol. 11, page 549-550; Figure 8).

This plat, therefore, indicates that the property was originally granted to Robert Gibbes (1644-1715), one of the "Goose Creek Men" who rose to political prominence, becoming governor when Edward Tynte died in 1710. Gibbes was the father-in-law of John Fenwick, who married Elizabeth Gibbes, and it may have been through this marriage that Fenwick acquired what would become Fenwick Hall. Like may other early Carolina merchants and planters, after having made his fortune, Fenwick retired to London, where he died in 1747 (Edgar and Bailey 1977:244-245).

Edgar and Bailey comment that Edward Fenwick inherited nearly 13,000 acres in South Carolina "which included the plantations Fenwick Hall on Johns Island and Old Place at the head of the Ashepoo River" (Edgar and Bailey 1977:242). He had at least 500 slaves working seven plantations and staffing is Church Street house. Edgar and Bailey also comment,

> His wealth enabled him to enjoy the luxury of operating a stud on his Johns Island plantation. Between 1756 and 1773 he imported 14 thoroughbreds for his stables and in 1758 was one of the founders of the South Carolina Jockey Club (Edgar and Bailey 1977:242).

Edward Fenwick died in 1775, but apparently his eldest son, Edward Fenwick, Jr. inherited much of his estate. Unfortunately, there were, in total, at least 15 other sons and daughters and this likely led to the eventual sale of the property to settle the estate.

Bull (1991:242-243) provides some additional information regarding the Fenwicks, although his comments only deepen the questions surrounding the ownership of the plantation. For example, he notes that Edward Fenwick disinherited his eldest son, disapproving of his marriage to Chrisitiana Stuart, daughter of royalist John Stuart. In addition, the senior Fenwick's estate was held in trust for the children by John and Robert Gibbes — the only executors who were willing to accept the responsibility. Consequently, there is much in this early history which is still poorly understood.

The John Gibbes (b. 1765) which acquired the property was likely the son of Robert Gibbes (1732-1794), grandson of John Gibbes (1696-1764). A very quick overview has failed to indicate that John Gibbes was specially active in either politics or plantation society, so little can be added at this point to his ownership of Fenwick Hall.

Our lack of knowledge for this early period is compounded by the lack of information provided by early maps. Neither the three principal early maps — DeBraham's 1757 *A Map of South Carolina and Part of North Carolina*, Cook's 1773 *A Map of the Province of South Carolina*, or Mouzon's 1775 *An Accurate Map of North and South Carolina* — shows any settlement in the project area. Of course several of these maps were based on subscriptions and the decision to include plantations and settlements was certainly influenced as a result.

Nevertheless, the earliest map showing the Fenwick or Gibbes settlement is the ca. 1780 *A Sketch of the Environs of Charlestown in South Carolina* (National Archives RG 77, Map I-14; Figure 9). This map, showing the British advance on Charleston. As Fick notes:

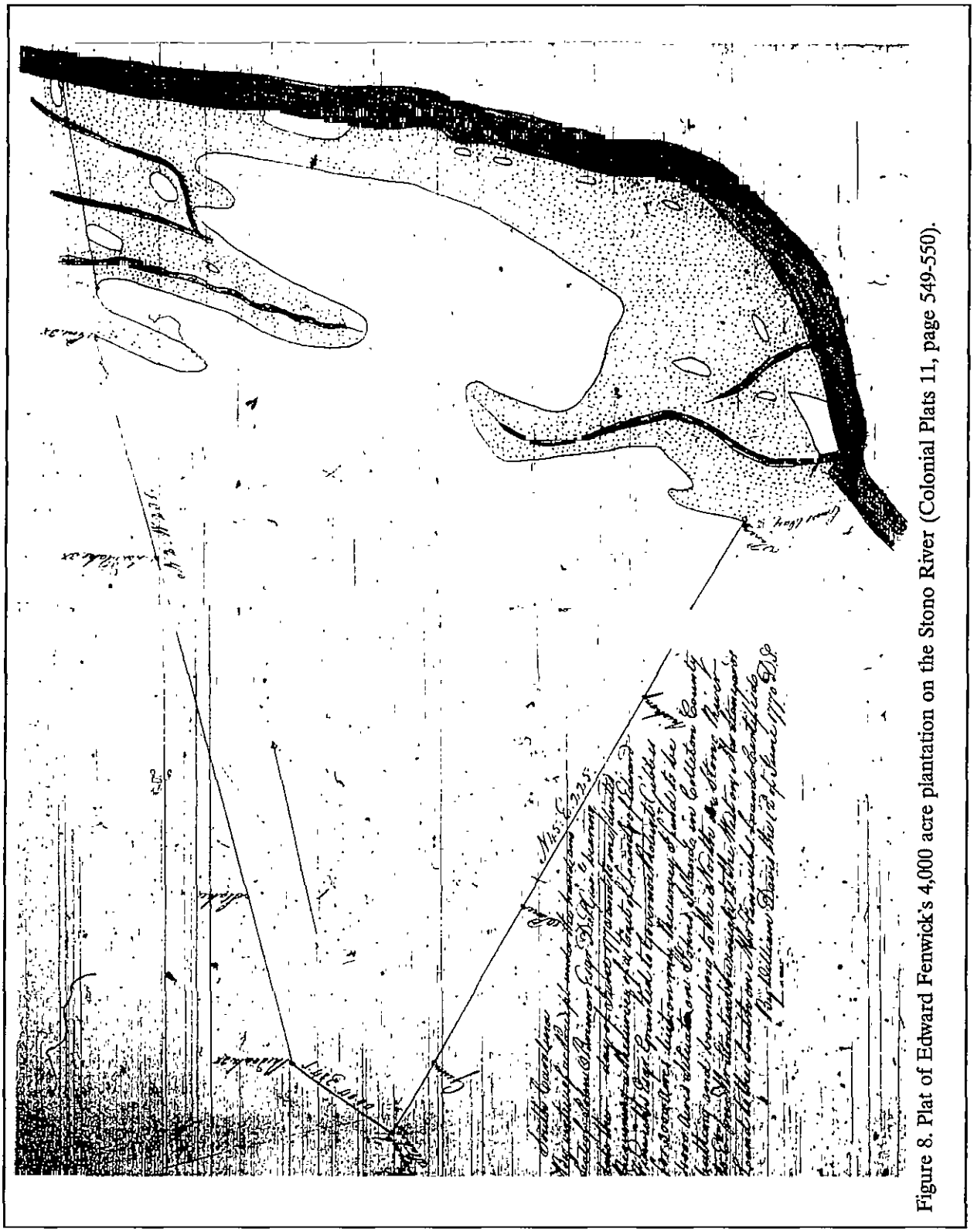

Figure 8. Plat of Edward Fenwick's 4,000 acre plantation on the Stono River (Colonial Plats 11, page 549-550).

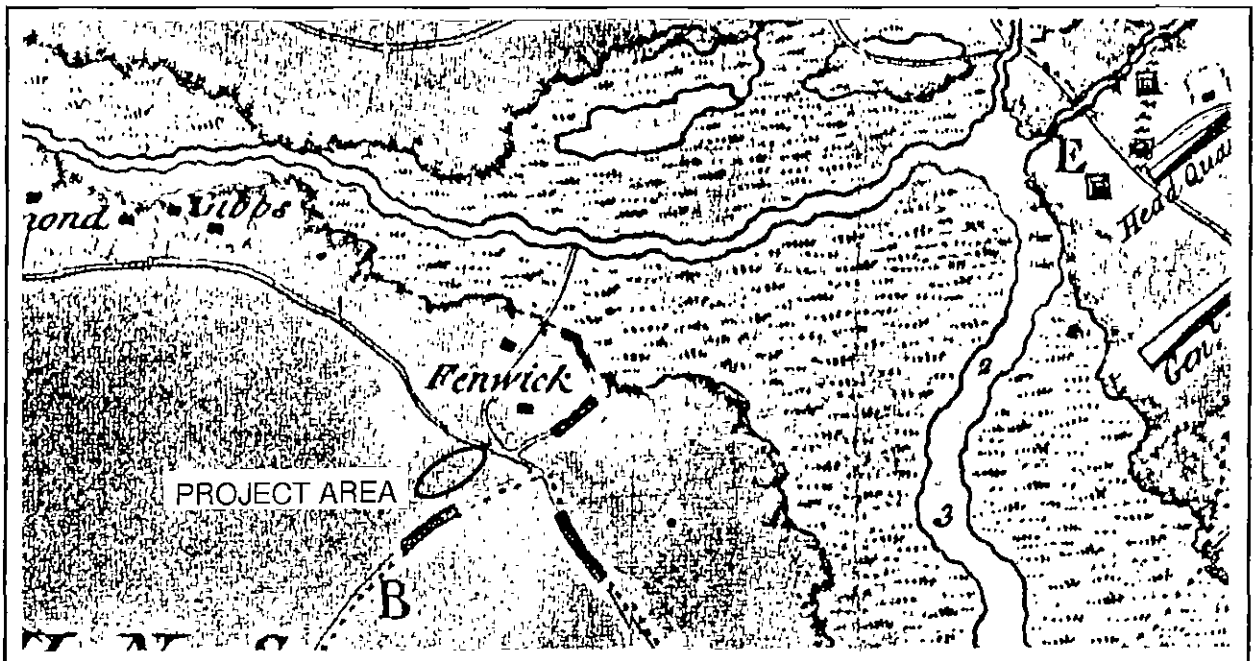

Figure 9. A portion of the ca. 1780 *A Sketch of the Environs of Charlestown*, showing the Fenwick Hall area and British camps (National Archives RG 77, Map I-14).

Figure 10. A portion of Mills' 1825 *Charleston District* showing the vicinity of Fenwick Hall, labeled Headquarters.

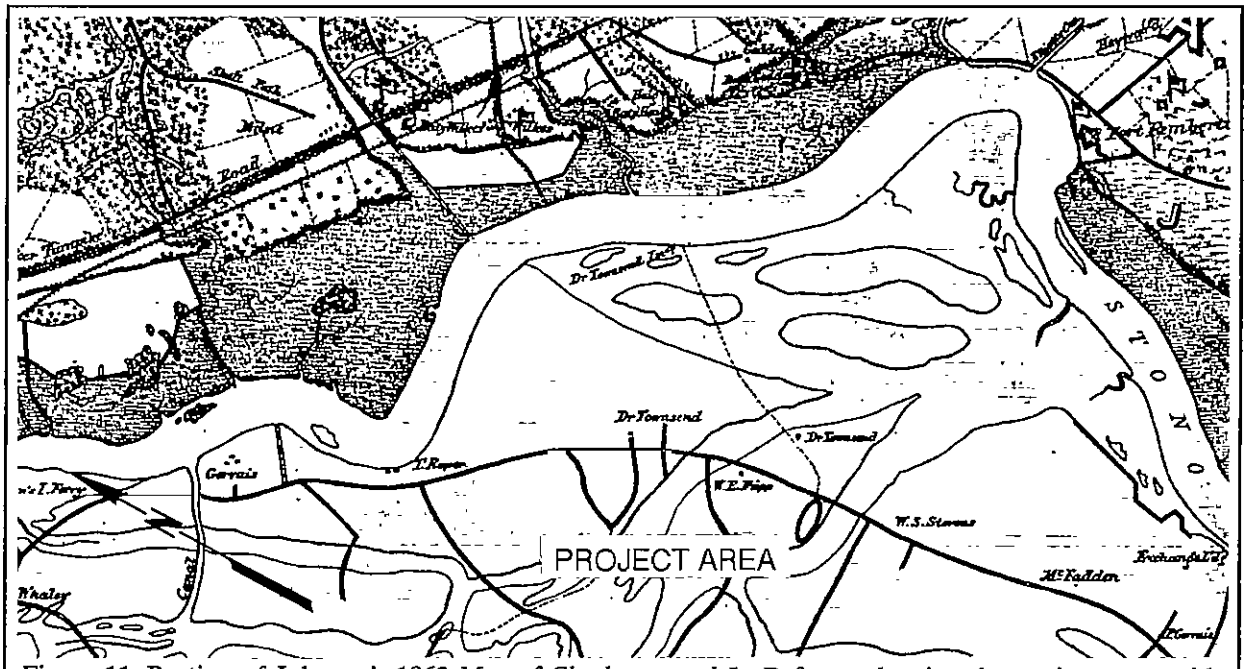

Figure 11. Portion of Johnson's 1863 *Map of Charleston and Its Defences* showing the project area, with Fenwick Hall now identified as "Dr. Townsend."

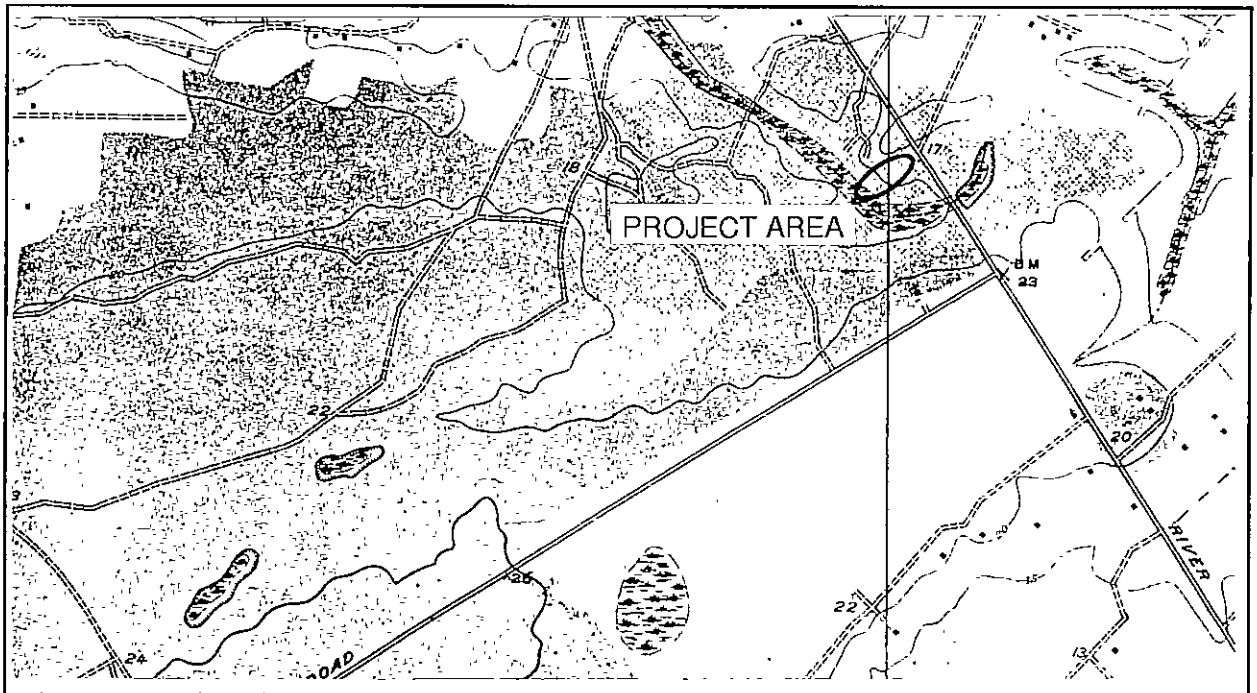

Figure 12. Portion of the 1918 Legareville topographic sheet showing the project area (scale is 1:21120).

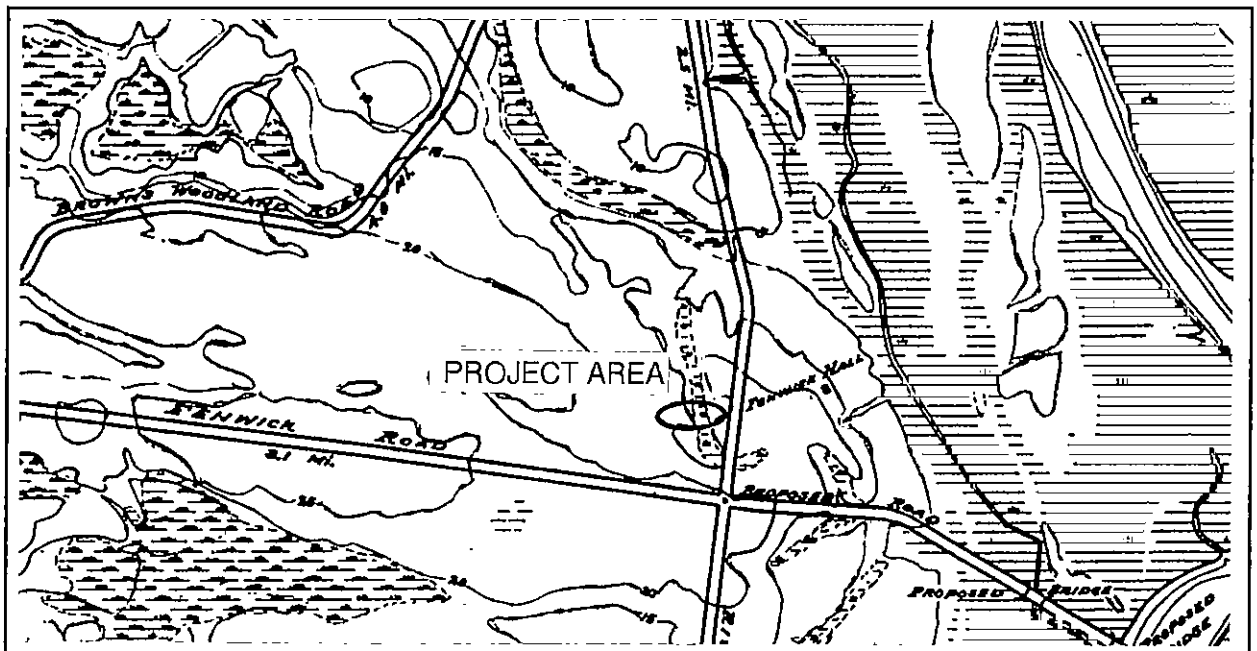

Figure 13. A portion of the 1929 *Sanitary and Drainage Commission Map of Charleston County* showing the project area (scale 1½ inches to 1 mile).

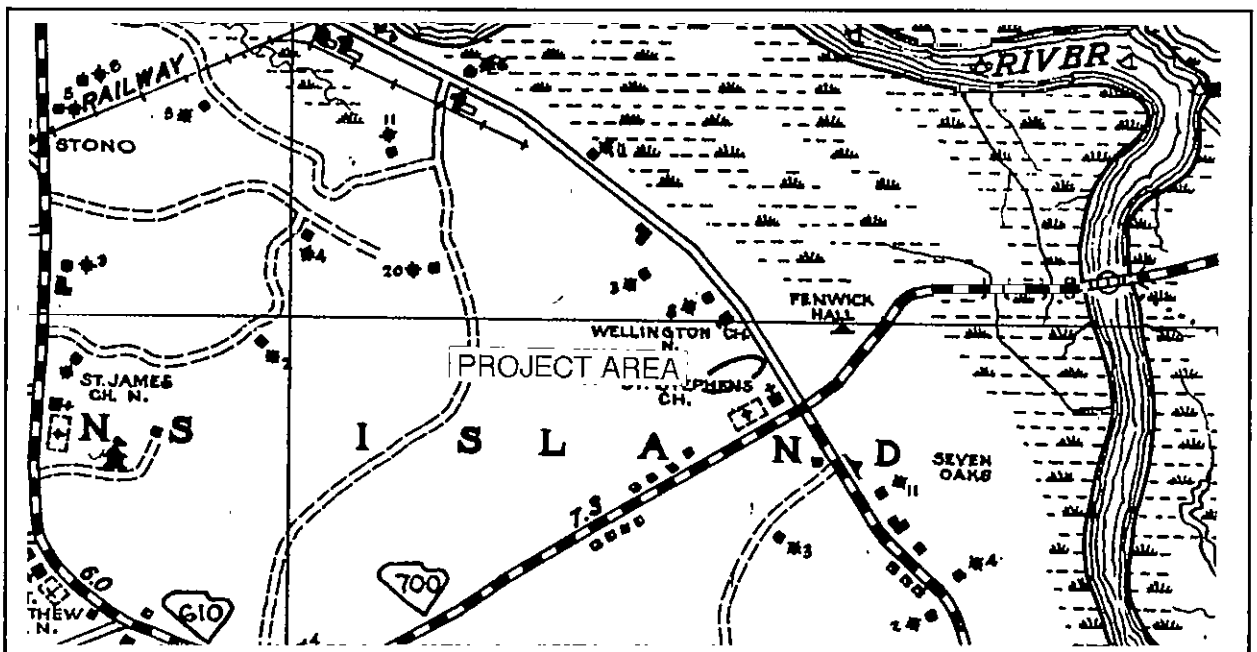

Figure 14. Portion of the 1938 *General Highway and Transportation Map of Charleston County* showing the area around Fenwick Hall.

In February 1780 the British came to Charleston County in force. General Sir Henry Clinton landed troops at Seabrook Island, secured the upper Stono, and moved across to Johns Island where he established a temporary headquarters at Fenwick Hall. He then ordered the army across the Stono River to James Island. They took Fort Johnson, and built a bridge across Elliott's Cut to move troops and guns to the mainland. On April 8, the British fleet entered Charleston Harbor. Charleston surrendered May 12, 1780 (Fick 1992:Appendix D-16).

Figure 9 shows two settlements, suggesting either another nearby plantation or that there may have been a secondary occupation area. Regardless, both of these are east of River Road and the survey tract. Moreover, the map suggests that British camps, while in the vicinity of Fenwick Hall, may actually have been on the various roads to the south, east, and west of the plantation. Again, there is no indication of military activity in the project area.

The Fenwick Hall nomination (as well as such architectural sources as Stoney and Lane) fails to provide any information on ownership after the American Revolution and by the 1820s, Fenwick Hall appears to have been known as "Headquarters," apparently a reference to the British use of the main house (Figure 10). In addition, Mills' *Atlas* shows another plantation to the north-northeast, known as Reynolds, which may correspond to the second settlement shown on the earlier, Revolutionary War map. There is, however, no indication of settlements on the west side of River Road in the project area.

By the time of the Civil War, maps for the project area show the plantation being owned by Dr. Townsend. For example, Johnson's 1863 *Map of Charleston and It's Defences* illustrates not only the main settlement for Dr. Townsend (at the Fenwick Hall site), but also reveals a road cutting through the marsh and across an island to the Stono River, apparently a landing for the plantation (Figure 11). What is today Maybank Highway, however, has maintained it's earlier name — Fenwick's Road — even as the plantation name appeared to be fading.

The Townsend referred to by this map is not known, although there were several very wealthy individuals with that name. For example, John Townsend was the owner of Bleak Hall on the north side of Edisto Island (Bailey et al. 1986:1629). Arnold Townsend was a major Charleston merchant, owning a drygoods store on

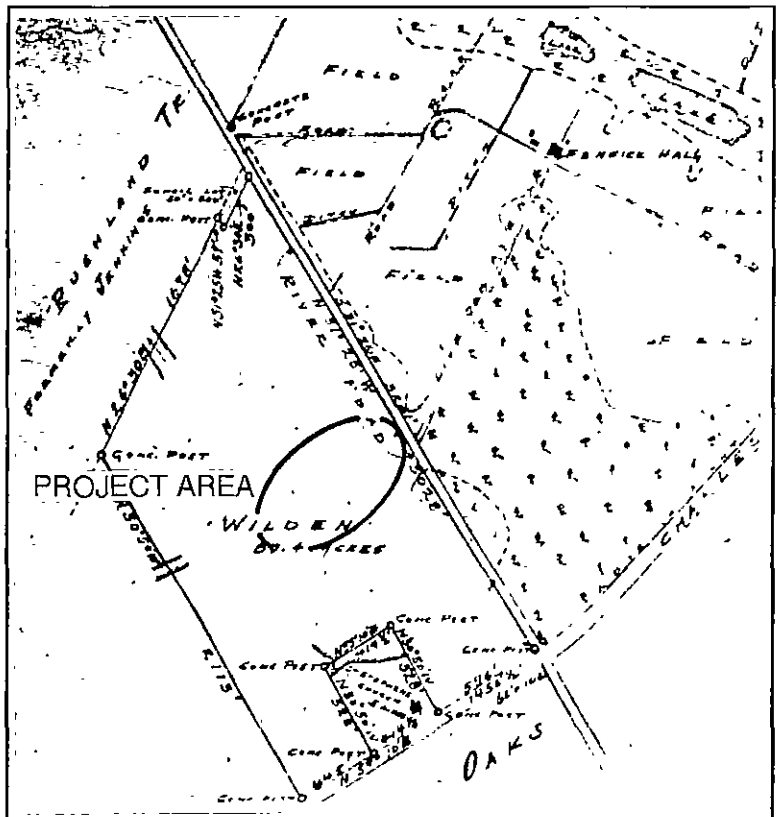

Figure 15. Portion of the 1956 *Map of Fenwick Hall Plantation* (Fenwick Hall National Register Site Research File, S.C. Department of Archives and History).

Market Street in the late 1850s.

The next available map for the project area is the 1919 Legareville topographic sheet (Figure 12). Although showing just a portion of the main Fenwick Hall settlement, it does illustrate the project area in considerable detail. No activity at all is shown for the survey tract, which is wooded.

By 1929 the plantation was again identified as Fenwick Hall, but there is no indication of any activities to the west of River Road (Figure 13). The 1938 *General Highway and Transportation Map of Charleston County* reveals that Fenwick Hall was being used as a "camp or lodge," perhaps a reference to the activities on the property of Claude W. Blanchard (Figure 14). Kollock's *Property Map of Charleston County*, prepared between 1932 and 1934, reveals that the plantation was still true to the boundaries shown in 1770, perhaps even a little larger.

The only detailed plat identified for the property is the 1956 *Map of Fenwick Hall Plantation* prepared for C.W. Blanchard. By this time the 80 acre portion of Fenwick Hall west of River Road had been sold off to Wilden (Figure 15).

FIELD METHODS AND RESULTS

Fields Methods

To identify sites within the tract, a strategy of shovel testing was necessary given the dense vegetation. Based on the S.C. Department of Archives and History's *Guidelines and Standards for Archaeological Investigations* at least the western portion of the survey tract, because of its low, wet soils, could have been shovel tested at an interval of every 200 feet, while the eastern half, on higher ground would likely have required testing at 100 foot intervals.

The study tract, however, was so small that these intervals would have produced as few as five shovel tests on the property — hardly enough to be able to determine if archaeological remains were present. As a result, shovel tests were excavated at 100 foot intervals east-west, but at about 80 foot intervals north-south. This allowed the eastern half of the study tract to be examined through the excavation of nine shovel tests (except for along the road, where the sewer line easement revealed extensive disturbance and only one shovel test was excavated) (Figure 16).

On the western half of the study tract, low wet soils were immediately obvious and only four additional shovel tests were excavated — at roughly 100 foot intervals east-west and 80 to 160 foot intervals north-south. The lowest portion of the slough was not shovel tested since there was standing water in this area.

All of the shovel tests were about 1-foot square and the fill was screened through ¼-inch mesh to recover any artifacts which might be present. The tests revealed soil profiles appropriate for the identified Seabrook and Stono soils. In the eastern half of the tract the typical profile was 0.85 foot of dark grayish-brown (10YR3/2) loamy fine sand overlying a dark yellowish-brown (10YR4/4) fine sand subsoil. At the slough in the western half of the tract, the typical soil profile was 1.3 foot of black (10YR2/1) muck grading into a very dark gray (10YR3/2) sand.

A total of 14 shovel tests were excavated in the 2 acre parcel or about 7 per acre.

Results

No archaeological remains were identified in any of the excavated shovel tests. In walking the transects a scatter of recent historic materials, measuring 90 by 60 feet, was noted in about the center of the property (see Figures 6 and 16). Materials present in this area included concrete block fragments, modern bricks, glass bottles (all screw closures), aluminum frames, and iron bed springs. The materials appear to be well under 50 years in age, perhaps dating to the 1950s or early 1960s.

Seemingly associated with these remains are also two low earthen berms, running approximately parallel to the property boundaries and defining the northern and southern limits of the refuse. These berms are consistent with bulldozer push piles, although there may have been a road just beyond the northern berm (the area was too overgrown to be certain).

Because of the recent age of the materials, the failure to encounter any materials in shovel tests, and the association of the refuse with what appear to be push piles, this scatter was not recorded as an archaeological site. Nor are the remains recommended as eligible for inclusion on the National Register. No additional management activities are recommended for this particular scatter.

Also noted were three round to oval depressions, each about six feet in diameter and upwards of 2 to 2.5 feet in depth. There was little or no contouring or piling of spoil around the edges. Each had considerable leaf litter in the base,

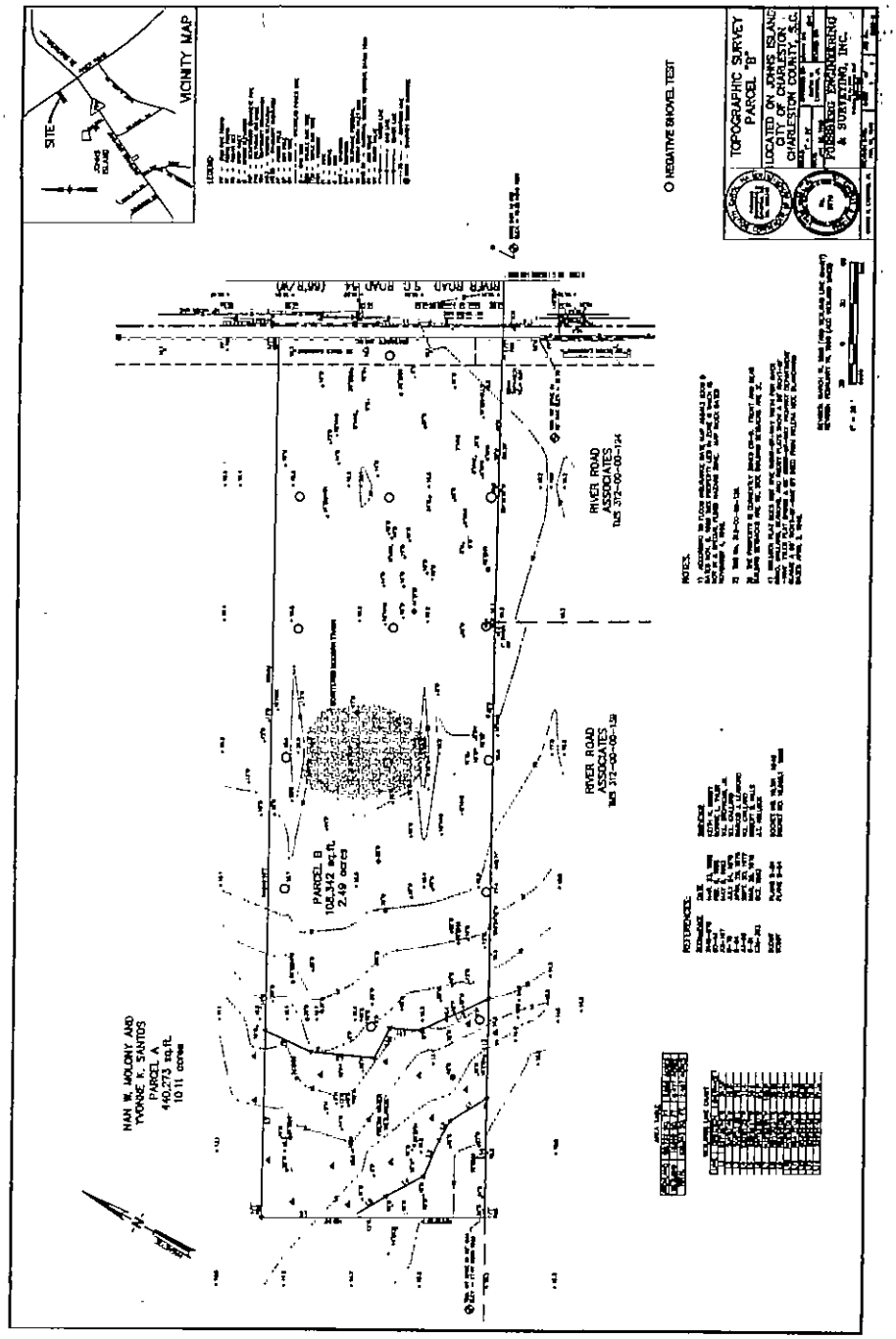

Figure 16. Plan view of the survey tract showing the location of the shovel tests and modern trash scatter.

although there were no especially large trees growing in any of the depressions. Nearby shovel tests failed to identify any remains. As an added precaution an area approximately 20 feet around two of the depressions was metal detected. The only materials recovered were modern debris.

The origin or function of these depressions is unknown. While they may be cultural, we have been unable to recover any associated artifacts. As a result, they have not been identified as an archaeological resource. We not recommend any additional management activities in or around these depressions.

It is always possible that undetected archaeological remains may be uncovered during construction activities. As a result, the contractor for the job should be warned that if any concentrations of bricks, pottery, ceramics, bottles, arrowheads, or bones are encountered, work should be stopped and either Chicora Foundation or the State Historic Preservation Office should be notified.

CONCLUSIONS

The primary goal of this research was to identify and evaluate any cultural resources which might be found in the survey tracts. Neither the S.C. Department of Archives and History nor the S.C. Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology reported any known sites in the project area. An overview of immediately available historic maps failed to identify any evidence of historic settlement in the study tract. Based on our knowledge of prehistoric site locations the study tract was evaluated to have a relatively low potential for archaeological remains (primarily because of the distance to a flowing water source).

In spite of the apparent low potential for archaeological remains, we decreased the sampling interval to under what is typically recommended by the S.C. State Historic Preservation Office. The shovel tests in the study tract failed to identify any cultural remains earlier than the past 30 to 40 years.

The only materials found were trash deposits, apparently dumped on the site from elsewhere, and several depressions of uncertain origin or function. Neither the trash dump nor the depressions were recorded as archaeological sites. Neither are recommended as eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. As a result, no additional management activities are recommended for this particular tract.

It is important to note that one National Register site, Fenwick Hall, is situated to the northeast, in the general vicinity. The nomination for this property does not establish any boundaries. Assuming the 9 acres nominated form a square surrounding the main house — which would ensure that the main settlement (including the main house, flankers, and probable outbuildings) were included — this would result in a square about 627 feet on a side. This nearest edge of this square would be approximately 1,300 feet from River Road and the study tract. Consequently, it is unlikely that the proposed project will have any primary impact on the National Register property.

As mentioned earlier, although unlikely, it is always possible that previously unrecognized archaeological remains may be encountered during construction. If this occurs, construction activities should be halted while the newly discovered site is evaluated.

In addition to these management activities, the study also helps document site settlement activities in the Fenwick Hall area. The failure to recover historic sites in the study tract is likely a function of not only the tract's small size, but also its association with one plantation through most of its history. There is certainly the possibility of both Revolutionary War and Civil War activity in the project area, but no archaeological evidence was encountered.

The failure to identify prehistoric sites is, again, likely the result of the tract's small size, as well as its distance from either flowing water or the marsh edge. Similar relatively low, interior areas tend to exhibit rather modest numbers of prehistoric sites. In fact, there may be some suggestion that John's Island has a low density of prehistoric sites, since Poplin found only two prehistoric sites in his survey of the 72 acre Gift Plantation tract (Poplin 1991).

Although offering only limited, negative, data, this study tends to confirms previous research on probable site locations and their association with either roads (if historic) or drainages (if prehistoric). Although no startling new information was derived from the research, the confirmation of previous findings should help move survey methodology of the upper coastal plain into more cost-effective approaches.

The limited data available for Johns Island also suggests that this area should be targeted for

additional historical research to help identify significant sites prior to development pressure. For example, cartographic research for Johns Island would help identify a broad range of eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth century sites.

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