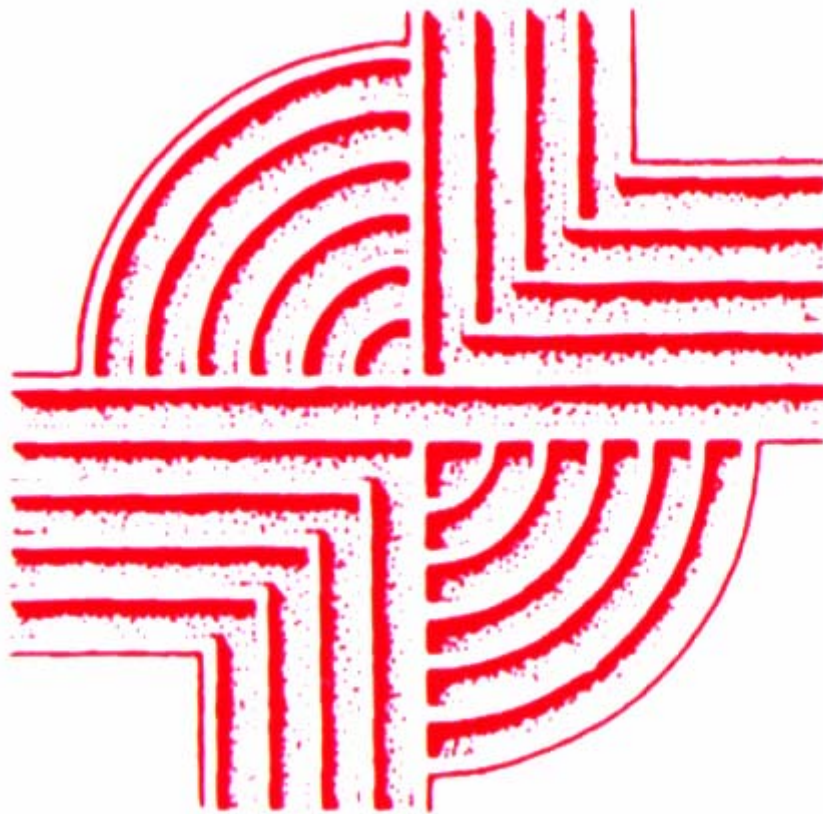


**MANAGEMENT SUMMARY OF DATA RECOVERY  
EXCAVATIONS AT 38CH1278,  
CHARLESTON COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA**



**CHICORA RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION 416**

**MANAGEMENT SUMMARY OF DATA RECOVERY EXCAVATIONS  
AT 38CH1278, CHARLESTON COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA**

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**Chicora Research Contribution 416**

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## ABSTRACT

This document provides a brief summary of data recovery excavations conducted by Chicora Foundation for Plantation Partners, LP at archaeological site 38CH1278, Belle Hall Plantation, under an existing Office of Ocean and Coastal Resources Management (OCRM) Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). The work was based on a data recovery plan submitted with the National Register assessment of the site conducted by Chicora archaeologists during the spring of 2004.

Historic research conducted prior to the data recovery plan revealed that the plantation's earliest ownership can be traced to a grant to John Stephenson in 1682. The property passed to Stephenson's widow and second husband, who sold the 600-acres to Joshua Wilks. Wilks passed the property to his son, also Joshua. The younger Joshua Wilks is described in various records as a planter and he probably resided in Christ Church Parish (although we can't be certain it was on this particular tract of land). In 1744 Wilks sold the property, by that time up to 837-acres to John Daniel for £2400. Daniels was a Charleston merchant and shipwright. At his death in 1747, Daniel's inventory reveals 49 slaves and various plantation products, such as potatoes, hogs, cattle, sheep, and fowl. There is, however, no evidence of a dwelling house. We believe that Daniel was an absentee owner, using the services of an overseer to manage the operations.

Site 38CH1278 produced a mean ceramic date of 1741 and an assemblage that was intermediate between what has been documented from eighteenth century slave and overseer sites. Consequently, the proposed research at 38CH1278 focused on the collection of information suitable for better understanding

a site type (if that of an overseer) for which there is very little historic or archaeological documentation.

The data recovery included close interval (10-foot) 12-inch power auger testing in the site core, originally defined as 60 by 60 feet. This was expanded in the field to cover an area 80 feet east-west by 140 feet north-south, for a total of 134 auger tests.

These tests were used to define areas of high artifact density. The data recovery plan specified that five 10-foot units were to be excavated in the area of greatest concentration. This work explored three concentrations using a total of 775 square feet (with the actual excavation of just under 750 square feet, allowing for tree baulks).

The excavations revealed extensive plowing across the site, with plow scars consistently running northwest-southeast. In addition, we identified what we believe are nineteenth century agricultural features representing cotton rows, which are cut through by the more recent twentieth century agricultural plowing.

The excavation units revealed only two possible cultural features – a shallow pit and a section of what may be a wall trench with interior post holes.

Artifacts include ceramics, primarily lead glazed slipware and Colono ware, tobacco pipe stems, buttons, lead flint wraps, one gun flint, a thimble, and similar items, generally in low densities, but clearly concentrated in the primary excavation area at 165-175R140-150, 185-195R150.

Mechanical stripping took place in four areas to further explore isolated auger tests producing dense remains, as well as the possible wall trench section. This work continued to reveal nineteenth and twentieth century agricultural activity, and one additional feature.

Although artifact analysis is on-going, the research continues to suggest an overseer's site on the Daniel plantation. The possibility of an isolated slave site continues to be explored, but we are inclined to dismiss this explanation - at this point in time - based on the apparent artifact pattern and the absence of typical slave architecture. We believe the absence of "English" architectural remains may be explained by the structure's above grade construction using small piers. Similar architectural findings have been identified by Chicora at the dwelling of a yeoman planter in Christ Church Parish from the late eighteenth century.

Additional historical research is also on-going, with particular attention to the pre-1770 period of site ownership, as well as examination of eighteenth century overseer data. We hope to provide a historic context for these very rare archaeological sites.

All aspects of the field investigation are complete - as documented by this management summary - and we believe it is now appropriate to release the site area to the project sponsor for development activities.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Background

The data recovery investigations were conducted by Dr. Michael Trinkley of Chicora Foundation, Inc. for Mr. Mark Regalbuto of Plantation Partners, LP of Charleston, South Carolina. The field studies were conducted from August 17 through September 1, 2004 with a crew of four archaeologists (Tom Covington, Katherine Morse, Julie Poppell, and Nicole Southerland), plus the Principal Investigator (who was on-site throughout the project). A total of 349.5 person hours were spent on the project. Additional eighteenth century documentary research is being conducted by Charleston historian, Sarah Fick; overseer data is being collected by Sarah Fick and the author.

Site 38CH1278 was first encountered during a 1991 survey of the Belle Hall tract by Brockington and Associates. The site was situated in an old agricultural field adjacent to a farm road on moderately well drained to somewhat poorly drain Charleston Series soils. The site is about 1,000 to 2,000 feet southwest of the marshes of Rathall Creek to the

west and Foster Creek to the northeast (Figure 1).

Testing of the site, however, was limited to 19 shovel tests, 15 of which were positive (Figure 2). Although the artifacts were not available for examination, the site form specifies that they included Colono, slipware, and white salt-glazed stoneware, and the site was identified as a "domestic slave/overseer occupation with intact midden" (Southerlin and

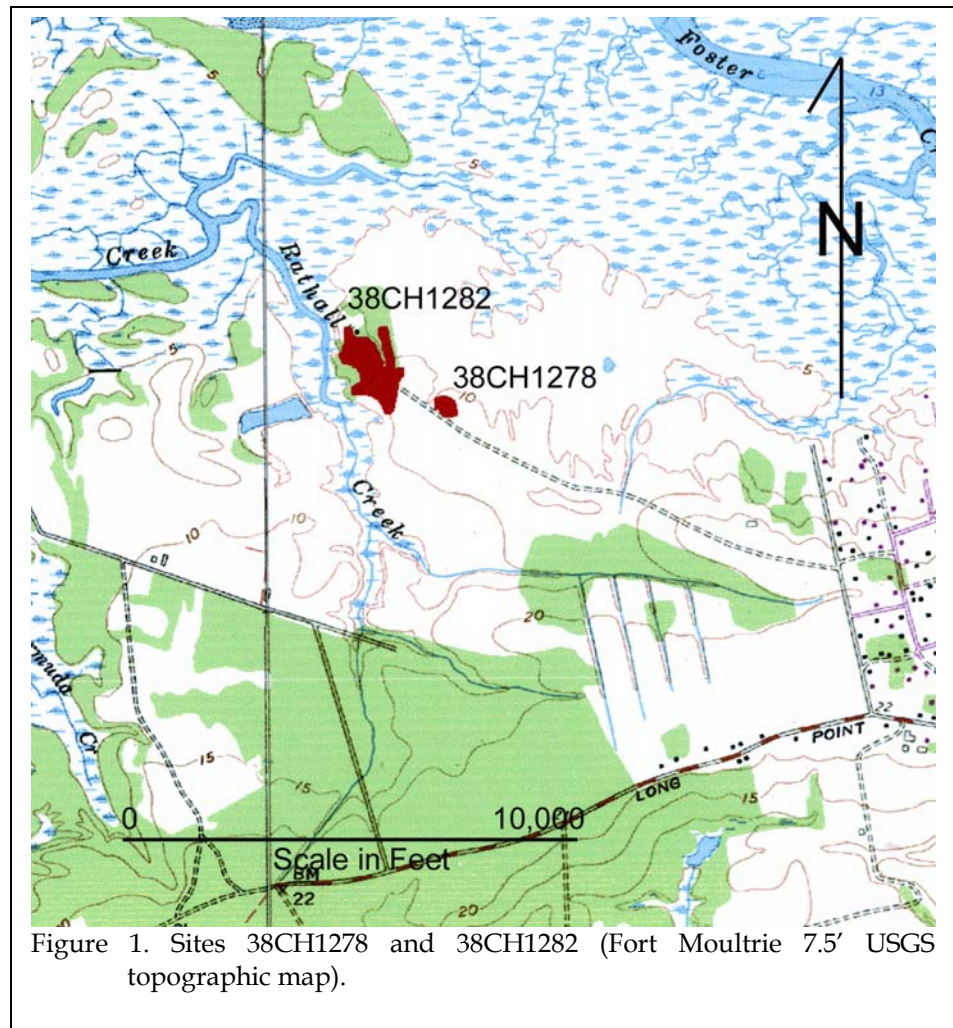


Figure 1. Sites 38CH1278 and 38CH1282 (Fort Moultrie 7.5' USGS topographic map).



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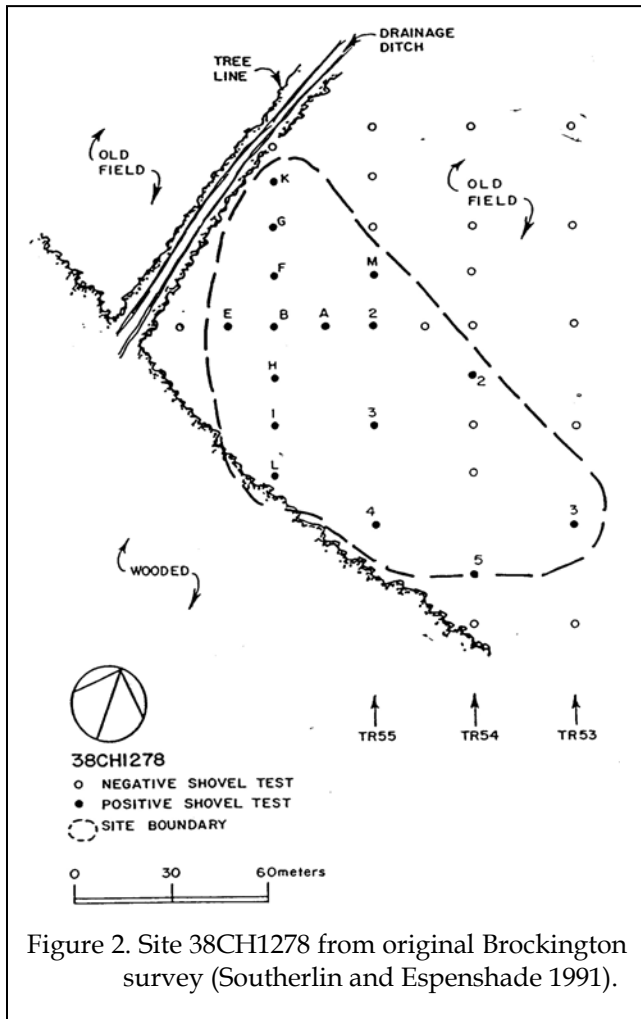


Figure 2. Site 38CH1278 from original Brockington survey (Southerlin and Espenshade 1991).

Espenshade 1991).

A Memorandum of Agreement covering this particular site, identified as potentially eligible, was developed and signed in June 1992. In December 2001 Chicora was requested to prepare a testing plan for 38CH1278 by Plantation Partners. The resulting was approved and the testing (in conjunction with another potentially eligible site, 38CH1282) was conducted in June 2004 (Trinkley et al. 2004).

The Chicora testing program used 131 shovel tests placed at 25-foot intervals coupled with the excavation of three 5-foot units (Figure 3). The site was found to be defined by 67 shovel tests, 54 (81%) of which were positive. Materials

were found scattered over an area measuring about 250 feet (east-west) by 275 feet (north-south). Within this scatter, however, there was a clearly defined site core, represented by a cluster of 13 positive shovel tests with five or more artifacts, between Transects 4 and 5.5, Shovel Tests 3 to 5.5. Generally, shovel tests that radiated away from this nucleus contained four or fewer artifacts.

The recovered ceramics produced a mean ceramic date of 1741 and included Chinese porcelain, stonewares, lead glazed slipwares, delft, lead glazed earthenwares, and creamware. A very low incidence of pearlware and Whiteware was noted and these nineteenth century ceramics do not appear to be significant contributors to the site.

When the resulting artifact pattern was examined, it did not reveal a “perfect” fit to any previously established pattern, although it is close to the Carolina Slave Artifact Pattern, characterizing eighteenth century slave settlements with abundant kitchen remains, but few architectural items because of the ephemeral construction techniques. Arms, Tobacco, Personal, and Activities-related items, however, were far higher than should be expected – and in those specific categories the assemblage more closely resembled an eighteenth century overseer site identified by Chicora in Goose Creek (Trinkley et al. 2003). In these categories the 38CH1278 survey assemblage is also similar to what has been found on a small eighteenth century yeoman planter farm in Christ Church Parish (Trinkley and Hacker 1996).

We note that the interpretation of the site as a possible overseer is also consistent with the very detailed historic research that suggests while Daniel was engaged in active planting, he did not live on the tract.

The site, based on the Chicora investigations, was recommended eligible for inclusion on the National Register. The State Historic Preservation Office concurred in their

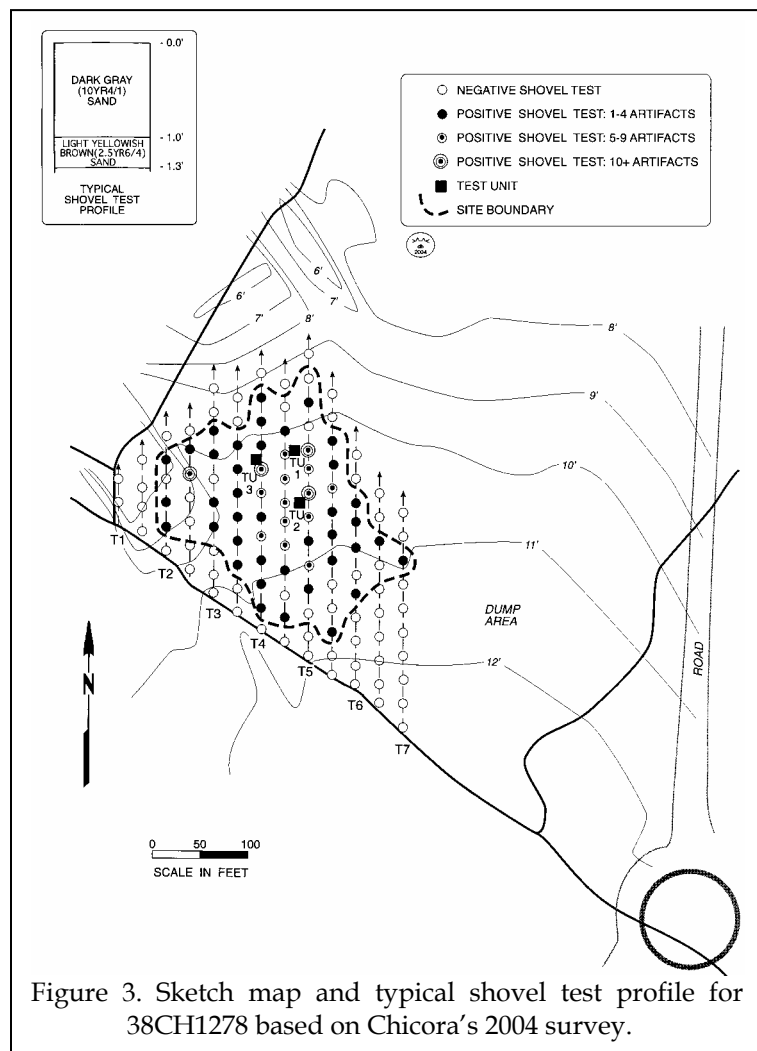


Figure 3. Sketch map and typical shovel test profile for 38CH1278 based on Chicora's 2004 survey.

century overseer, based on the available archaeological evidence and its congruence with the historical documentation. This presumption, however, will continue to be challenged and refined as data analysis is conducted. At the present time, however, we have no reason to suspect our base assumptions.

There is considerable historical documentation concerning nineteenth century plantation overseers. Their lives are detailed by a variety of historical overviews, such as Bassett's (1925) *The Southern Plantation Overseer As Revealed in His Letters* or Scarborough's (1966) *The Overseer: Plantation Management in the Old South*. Locally, Clark explored antebellum overseer's in his 1966 thesis, *Plantation Overseers in South Carolina, 1820-1860*. This historical focus on nineteenth century overseers is more than a coincidence. The vast majority of plantation accounts, daybooks, journals, diaries, and letters come from this period. We have extraordinary census records for free and slave alike in 1850 and 1860. There was an effort at agricultural reform in the antebellum that put overseers in the spotlight,

letter of July 27, 2004 (letter from Mr. Chad Long to Dr. Michael Trinkley). We were requested by Plantation Partners to prepare a data recovery plan for 38CH1278 since the site's location at the entrance to a new development phase precluded green spacing. A data recovery plan was prepared and approved by Plantation Partners in mid-July. Approval was obtained from the State Historic Preservation Office shortly afterwards (letter from Mr. Chad Long to Dr. Michael Trinkley dated August 2, 2004).

**Research Questions**

As previously explained, our research at 38CH1278 is based on our belief that the site represents the settlement of an eighteenth

further contributing to our understanding of their activities. In addition, virtually all of the various agricultural journals date from the antebellum - *The American Agriculturist* began in 1843, *The Carolina Planter* dates from 1844, *DeBow's Review* dates to only 1846 (at the time called *Commercial Review of the South and West* at the time), *The Farmer and Planter* dates no earlier than 1850, *The South Carolina Agriculturist* was first published in 1856, *The Southern Agriculturist and Register of Rural Affairs* is among the earliest - beginning in 1828, *The Southern Cabinet of Agriculture, Horticulture, Rural and Domestic Economy* began in 1841, and *The Southern Cultivator* began in 1843.

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In other words, historians focused on the antebellum because it was during this period that significant documents – either for specific plantations or as artifacts or letters in agricultural journals – were available. As we move back from 1820 into the eighteenth century the records become far less common – and far less revealing.

Of these published sources, only Scarborough provides even the briefest mention of overseer antecedents, focusing on Virginia where, he notes, the overseer class came from the indentured servants whose terms of service had expired (Scarborough 1966:3). He also suggests that Colonial overseers, rather than being paid a set wage, received a third of the net proceeds from the plantation they managed (Scarborough 1966:4). It was this practice, according to Scarborough, that led to the ruin of plantation lands and the early death of overworked slaves. Otherwise he comments that, “the managerial system in the pre-Revolutionary period differed in no important respect from that employed in the nineteenth century” (Scarborough 1966:4).

Given the paucity of eighteenth century information this statement, on its face, is difficult to believe. In addition, when we consider that the economy and nature of agricultural production changed, it is difficult to reconcile that managerial practices remained static.

Another troubling feature of the secondary accounts of nineteenth century overseers is that they too easily fall into the position that overseers comprised a separate “mud-sill” class, mid-way between planters and slaves. Reading Bassett, and even Scarborough, one comes away with a rather one-dimensional view of overseers. It is some of this simplicity that authors such as Steffen (1996) challenge.

While our research is still on-going we, too, must agree that eighteenth century sources are scarce and often provide little revealing information. This condition is supported by the research of Tristan Stubbs (personal communication 2004) who is independently researching eighteenth century overseers in Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia. Nevertheless, we can draw on several sources to at the very least suggest there were some differences not reported by Scarborough.

For example, recently Morgan has explored a unique eighteenth century diary of a cow pen overseer in Jamaica (Morgan 1995). While there are certainly substantive differences between a Jamaican pen and a Carolina rice plantation, we wonder if the underlying economic and managerial aspects were not very similar. Morgan notes that there was constant interaction between the overseers and the slaves involving sex, trade, and provisions. The result was, according to Morgan (1995:69) a “familiarity and mutuality.” He notes that this familiarity (with exploitation):

owed much to the isolation and lonely existence of its overseer who, despite his formal powers, depended on the slaves for fellowship, even for friendship. In some ways the pen was a more insular place for the manager than the slaves (Morgan 1995: 71).

Table 1.  
Previously published Artifact Patterns compared to 38CH1278

	38CH1278	Carolina Slave Artifact Pattern	38BK1900 Area B 18 <sup>th</sup> c. overseer	38CH1471 Late 18 <sup>th</sup> c. small planter
Kitchen	74.9	70.9-84.2	65.2	77.4
Architecture	9.9	11.8-24.8	21.2	17.9
Furniture	0.1	0-0.1	0	0.1
Arms	1.1	0.1-0.3	0.3	0.1
Tobacco	9.1	2.4-5.4	10.2	1.4
Clothing	0.3	0.3-0.8	0.1	1.4
Personal	0.3	0-0.1	0.1	0.3
Activities	4.3	0.2-0.9	2.9	1.4

Morgan would agree that eighteenth century slave and overseer – at least in this one Jamaican case – had a unique relationship based on isolation, as well as mutual needs and expectations.

This historical interpretation is provided some American support through Walsh's (1997) Virginia research. She found that one of Virginia's most thoroughly researched planters, Robert (King) Carter, "supplied the white overseer with little more in the way of domestic goods than he did the slaves: nothing more than basic bedding, cooking pots, and usually a gun" (Walsh 1997: 90). She goes on to suggest that the historic documents reveal eighteenth century housing not dissimilar from that provided to the slaves and that these early overseers were the only whites on the plantation, were often single, and that they had few items to be pilfered by the slaves.

The congruence of data from Jamaica and Virginia suggests clear archaeological implications – slave and overseer in the archaeological record could well blur one into the other, with only minor differences in key areas of personal goods, weapons, and perhaps clothing.

When we turn away from historical data and look to comparative archaeological research, we find virtually nothing for South Carolina or Georgia. The overseer's research that is the basis of our "perception" is entirely nineteenth century. Examples include the work by Otto on the Georgia coast (Otto 1984; nicely summarized by Otto and Burns 1983) and Michie on the South Carolina coast (Michie 1990). Both follow the historical approach that places nineteenth century overseers squarely midway between the wealth of the planter and the abject poverty of the slave.

The only South Carolina study that examines an eighteenth century overseer dwelling is Chicora's work at the Mazyck plantation in Goose Creek (Trinkley et al. 2003).

There we found an assemblage that, as previously mentioned, was very similar to that of a slave when only kitchen and architectural items are considered, although distinct when other minor percentage items are also examined. This one archaeological assemblage provides considerable support to the historical views of Morgan and Walsh, who note that the white overseer lived in a manner far more similar to a slave than a planter.

This forms the core of our research at 38CH1278. How did the eighteenth century overseer live and what can archaeology tell us about that lifestyle? We are approaching those questions from both the perspective of additional historical research, as well as the examination of the material remains from this site.

The data recovery excavations are directed toward two goals:

- ❖ the collection of a larger sample of artifacts, suitable for better pattern studies, dating, and other research, and
- ❖ the identification, if possible, of architectural remains that might help identify the occupants of the site.

The artifact sample will be key to the identification of the site occupants – it will provide the data to compare to other eighteenth century sites of known function, ranging from slave settlements to yeoman farmers to the Charleston town houses of the very wealthy.

The architectural remains will likewise be an important element in this study. We have excellent architectural studies for both the masters and the enslaved – and these will serve as the basis for comparison.

### **Proposed Data Recovery**

The testing at 38CH1278 did not reveal any clearly defined intrasite patterning – only a



Figure 4. View of site looking north from road at the southern boundary.

small core area that we interpret to represent the dwelling and primary activity area of the overseer.

In an effort to better define that area and perhaps even identify architectural elements, we thought it would be useful to begin by conducting a very close interval auger survey. Our initial study was conducted at 25-foot intervals, so the auger study was to be done at 10-foot intervals. We proposed the use of a mechanical 18-inch auger, with all fill being screened through ¼-inch mesh. Brick and shell would be quantified in the field and discarded.

This auger testing was proposed for an area measuring about 60 feet square, resulting in 49 tests. The resulting density data will be used to place five 10-foot units that will be hand excavated. At the conclusion of this work, we then proposed to use a track hoe to strip areas where there was evidence of structural remains.

Features identified in the work would be plotted. The extent of their excavation would depend on the nature of the feature and the materials recovered. Some might be excavated

in their entirety, others may only be sampled. Five gallon flotation samples would be taken of features having dark, organic fill indicative of carbonized floral materials. Other features would have a similar volume of soil retained for water screening through 1/16-inch mesh.

#### Curation

An updated site form reflecting this work has already been filed with the South

Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology (SCIAA). The field notes and artifacts from Chicora's data recovery at 38CH1278 will be curated at SCIAA. The artifacts have been cleaned and are currently in the process of being cataloged following that institution's provenience system. All original records and duplicate records will be provided to the curatorial facility on pH neutral, alkaline buffered paper. Photographic materials include B/W negatives and color transparencies - both of which are being processed to archival standards.

## EXCAVATIONS

### Methods

A single vertical control point was used for the excavations at 38CH1278 at the entrance to the woods road. Established by Chicora, this point is a painted cross on the base of the concrete curb and the point has an assumed elevation of 18 feet above mean sea level (AMSL). All of the excavations' vertical elevations were tied into this datum and are

shovel test grid, with Transect 5, Shovel Test 3 being 100R150.

The minimal excavation unit was a 5 by 5 foot unit, although most of the excavations consist of 10-foot units. Chicora has adopted engineering measurements (feet and tenths of feet) for consistency in its work, especially on European sites where structural measurements are most often in feet.



Figure 5. Use of Bobcat and 12-inch auger to conduct close interval tests.

The auger tests were 1-foot in diameter (the equivalent of 0.8 ft<sup>2</sup>) with all tests penetrating the subsoil (to verify that the artifact bearing strata terminated at the base of the plowzone or A horizon). All soil was screened through ¼-inch mesh and all remains were retained except for rubble and shell, which were characterized in the field as light, moderate, or dense and discarded.

indicated by AE (assumed elevation).

Excavations at the site created a new grid that measures 80 feet east-west by 160 feet north-south, with a total of 134 auger points. This is significantly expanded from that originally proposed to ensure that we identified all aspects of the site core. This was a modified Chicago-style grid based on an arbitrary OR0 point located off the site tract. Units were designated by their southeast corner and 200R100 indicates a point 200 feet north of the arbitrary OR0 point and 100 feet right (or east) of that point. This new grid is tied into the old

Formal excavations at the sites were conducted by hand, using mechanical sifters fitted with ¼-inch inserts for standardized recovery of artifacts. Excavation was conducted by natural soil zone. All of the site area exhibited a plowzone, generally 0.8 to 1.1 foot in depth, overlying a subsoil with clearly defined plow scars and plow ridges. Based on previous testing and shovel testing, we identified that all cultural remains were found in this plowzone. Consequently excavations were terminated at the subsoil. Munsell soil color notations were made during the course of excavations, typically on moist soils freshly exposed.

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Figure 6. Hand excavation at 38CH1278.

All materials except brick, mortar, and shell were retained by provenience. Rubble and shell were weighed and discarded on-site. A one-ounce soil sample was retained from each zone. We have previously retained much larger samples, allowing the luxury of a variety of soil studies. With the current curation issues at SCIAA, this is no longer practical and we have abandoned the retention of large samples.

Units were troweled and photographed using black and white negative and color transparency film at the base of the excavations. Each unit was drawn at a scale of 1 inch to 2 feet. Features were designated by consecutive numbers (beginning with Feature 1). Postholes were consecutively numbered by specific unit. Features, depending

on the evaluation of the field director, were either completely excavated, or bisected (i.e., partially excavated). Feature fill was screened through ¼-inch mesh and features, upon completion of their excavation, were also photographed using black and white negative film and color transparencies. One ounce soil samples were obtained from all features. A 5-gallon sample was also retained from each feature – those with dark organic fill will be floated using mechanically assisted water

float equipment, those with a lighter sandy fill will be subjected to low pressure water screening through 1/16-inch mesh.

As a result of this work, three excavation areas were opened, each based on auger tests suggesting unusually high artifact



Figure 7. Troweling units at the base of level 1.

density. A total of 775 ft<sup>2</sup> were opened at the site, with 550 ft<sup>2</sup> in the main area, and 100 ft<sup>2</sup> and

125 ft<sup>2</sup> in two smaller areas. A total of 718.2 ft<sup>3</sup> were excavated in primary work.

We also proposed, at the conclusion of the hand excavations, to mechanically strip areas that might produce structural remains. Only one such area, in the vicinity of 150R100, was identified. In addition, we also stripped areas around two isolated auger tests with dense remains. As a result four cuts, totaling 820 ft<sup>2</sup>, were opened. These cuts were made using a track hoe with a cutting bar welded to the bucket teeth. The equipment size allowed easy movement of the soil and roots and the cutting bar allowed a relatively smooth floor to be created, minimizing the need for shoveling scraping afterwards.

### **Results of Close Interval Testing**

Figure 8 illustrates the results of the auger testing. There is one relatively large area of dense remains in the central east side of the study area, covering an area measuring about 30 feet north-south by 20 feet east-west. Artifacts in this area ranged from five to seven items per auger test and brick remains were heavy to moderate. In fact, the densest brick remains were found in this northeastern quadrant, declining dramatically to the southwest.

A second, much smaller area, is found on the west central side, covering an area about 20 feet northwest-southeast by 10 feet. In this area brick was moderate to low in density and artifacts range from five to six specimens per test.

A similarly confined area is found in the southeast quadrant of the study tract. In this area, however, artifact density ranged from six to 12 specimens, although brick was generally sparse.

In addition, there were two isolated auger tests that produced relatively dense

remains. In both cases brick was very sparse or absent.

We interpreted the primary area on the east side of the study tract as perhaps a dwelling area and it was there that unit excavations were concentrated. Additional tests were conducted in the other two dense areas and the isolated auger tests were subjected to mechanical stripping.

The auger tests failed to identify any notable concentrations of faunal remains. In fact, no test produced more than two fragments and only nine of the 135 tests (7%) produced any faunal remains. It appears that the faunal remains were sparse and the plowing, combined with acidic soils, has significantly reduced their potential to make a significant contribution to this study.

### **Results of the Excavations**

#### **East Central Area**

As previously discussed, this area revealed the spatially largest concentration of remains and received the focus of the excavations, with the placement of five 10-foot units and one 5 by 10 foot unit, for a total of 550 ft<sup>2</sup> (165-175R140-150, 185-195R150).

These units revealed level 1 soils of dark brown (7.5YR3/2) sand ranging in depth from about 0.8 to 1 foot. This level is plowzone, with plow scars and ridges clearly evident that the base of the excavations (see Figure 10). The subsoil was found to consist of a brownish yellow (10YR5/6) sand, although there was considerable mottling in some areas.

Shell was sparse throughout the excavations (see Table 2). Brick, however, was denser, although in no case would the remains have yielded more than four or five bricks.

The excavations in this area produced no architectural remains and only one feature



EXCAVATIONS

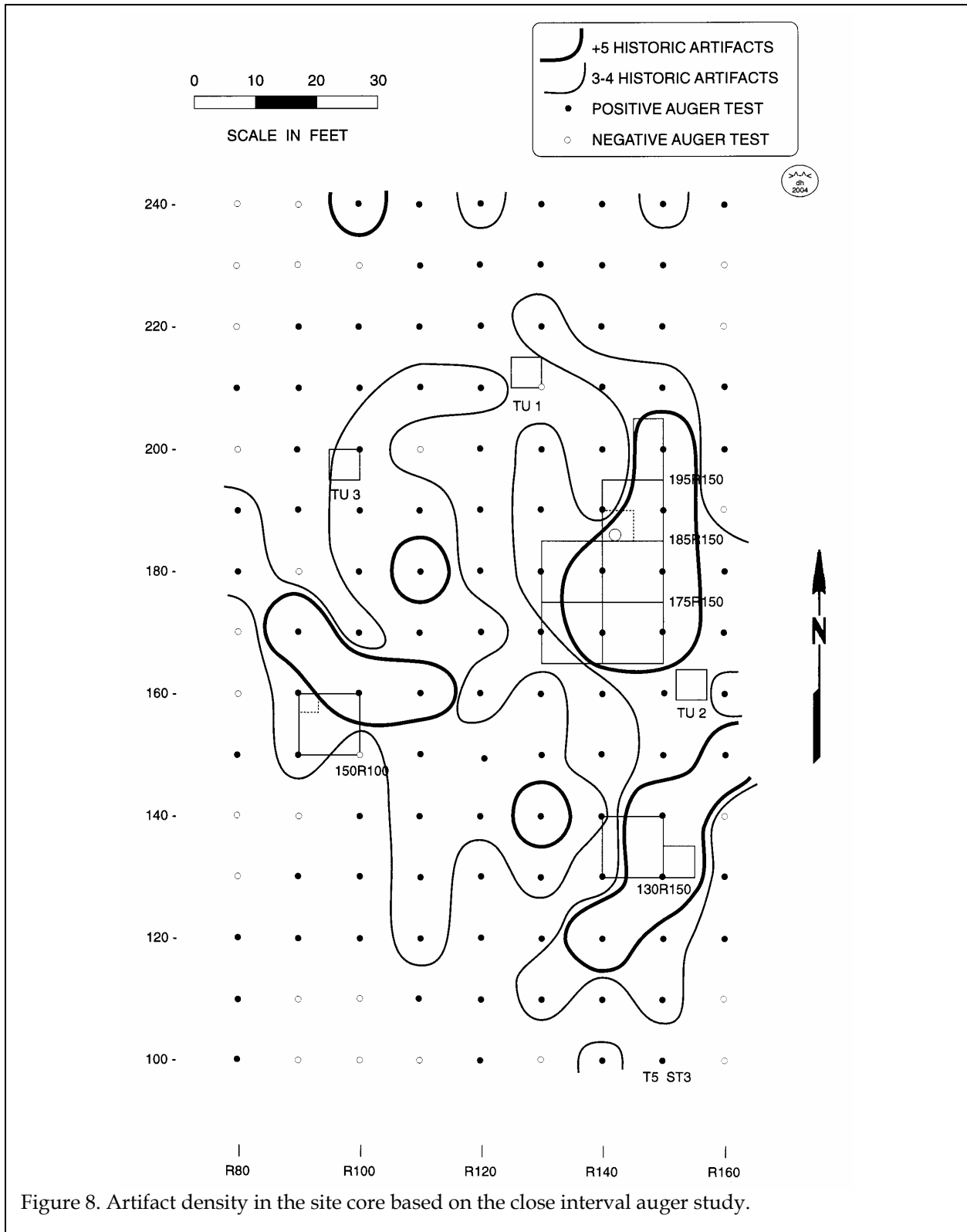


Figure 8. Artifact density in the site core based on the close interval auger study.

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY OF DATA RECOVERY EXCAVATIONS AT 38CH1278

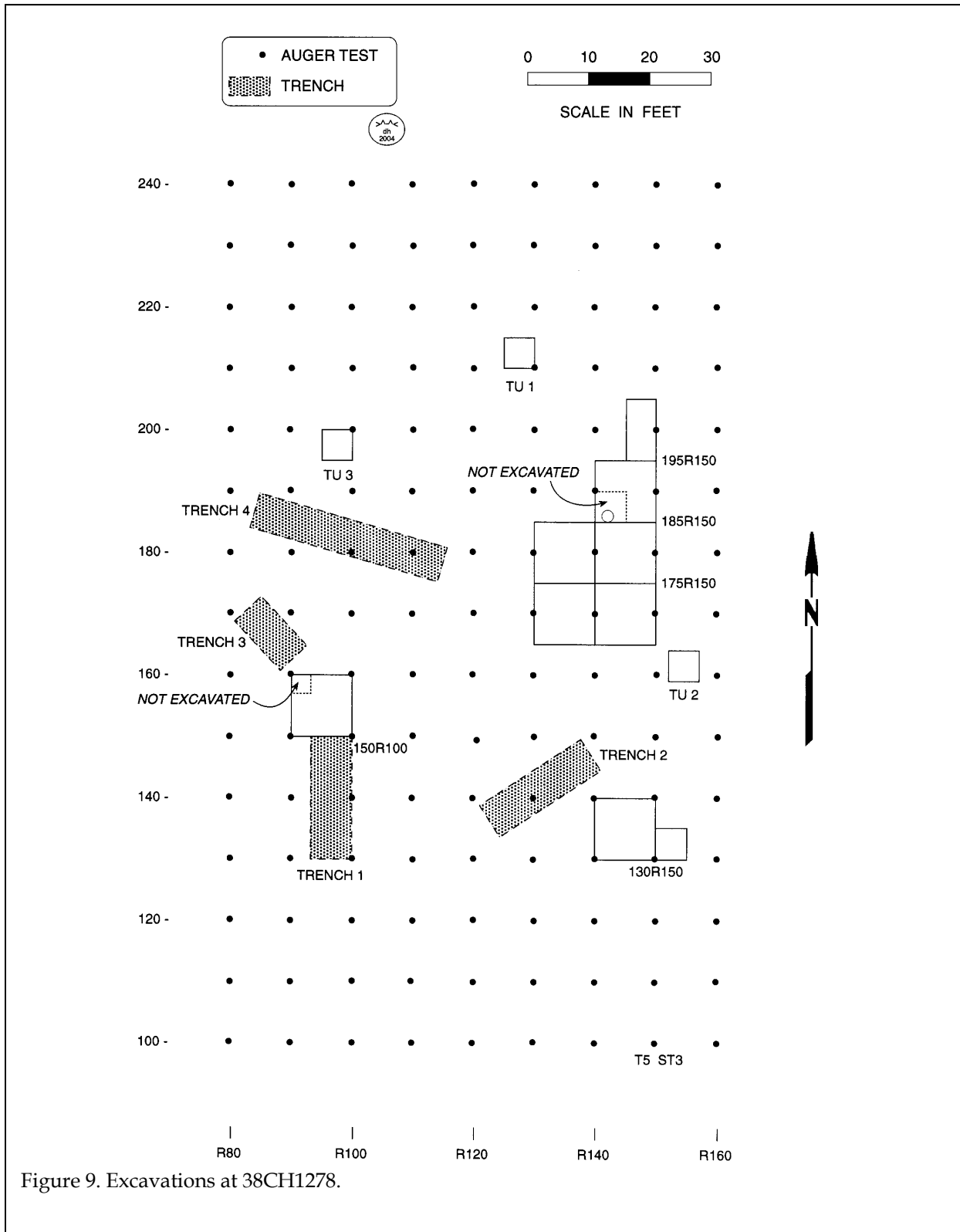


Figure 9. Excavations at 38CH1278.

## EXCAVATIONS



Figure 10. Base of excavations in 165R140 showing plowscars and also larger nineteenth century agricultural features.

suspected of dating to the site's occupation was found. Feature 1 is a shallow basin at 171.3R137.6 identified at the base of level 1 (plowzone). It measured 2.7 feet north-south and 1.9 feet east-west, and was 0.3 foot in depth. The fill was a very dark brown (7.5YR5/2) sand with no shell or brick. This shallow basin produced a low density of artifacts, including a pipe stem, nail, and ceramics. No function is ascribed to the feature and it may represent an animal wallow or shallow erosional pit.

Two other numbered features are located in this block. Feature 2 (Figure 11) is situated in the southeast corner of the block (172R144) and consists of a broad trench-like feature running north-northwest by south-southeast, at an angle different from the plowscars. In addition, plowscars ran through this feature. A portion was excavated and found to be a shallow (0.25 foot) flat bottomed

depression. Feature 3 is situated in the northwest corner of the block (183R130.5) and was otherwise identical. Both features exhibited a very dark gray (7.5YR3/1) sand fill. Artifact density was very sparse.

There were similar features in the block, all with same orientation and spaced about 3 to 4-feet apart. We believe that these features post-date the occupation of the structure and represent nineteenth century cultivation practices. They have the approximate spacing and depth that would be appropriate for hoe mounding of soils for the cultivation of cotton and similar crops. Thus, while cultural in nature, they are not associated with the eighteenth century site occupants and represent an early agricultural



Figure 11. Feature 2, S½ excavated, looking north.

disturbance of the site.

**West Central Area**

A single 10-foot unit, 150R100, was excavated to examine the remains identified from this area by the auger tests. This unit produced a level 1 of dark brown (7.5YR3/2) sand representing plowzone over a brownish yellow (10YR6/6) sand subsoil.

Table 2.  
Brick and Shell from Unit  
Excavations (weight in pounds)

Unit	Brick	Shell
150R100	29	2
165R140	38	2
175R140	40	3
165R150	42	2
175R150	46	2
185R150	30	2
195R150	40	3
130R150	55	2
130R155	18	1

At the base of level 1 we found similar plowscars and older agricultural ditching similar to the larger block. Also identified was a squared-off dark stain designated Feature 4.

Upon excavation this appears to be a wall trench section about 5-feet in length and 1.5-feet in width. The trench terminates before either the north or south excavation limits with no evidence of truncation. The fill is a very dark grayish brown (10YR3/2) sand, not too dissimilar to the posited nineteenth century agricultural ditches. The feature is 0.35 foot in depth and, at the base, we identified five round stains that are thought to be posts. Because of the very high water table, the bottom of these stains could not be identified with certainty. Each, however, appears to be about 0.6 foot in depth (below the base of the trench).

If the interpretation of the stain is correct, its function is uncertain. We could identify no other structural features and the stain was not picked up in mechanical stripping (see below).

**Southeast Quadrant**

Excavations in this area consisted of a 10-foot unit (130R150) and a 5-foot unit (130R155) placed to examine an area of dense remains identified in the auger testing. Level 1 consisted of a dark brown (7.5YR3/2) sand plowzone about a foot in depth over a yellowish brown (10YR5/6) sand subsoil.

At the base of the excavation these units also revealed modern plowscars and what we interpret as nineteenth century cultivation trenches. No cultural features, however, were identified.

**Results of Mechanical Cuts**

As mentioned earlier, no clearly architectural features were identified that especially suggested the need for mechanical cuts. Nevertheless, several were excavated using a track hoe with a cutting bar welded across the bucket teeth. We focused on unit 150R100, where possible architectural remains had been found, as well as the two auger tests that yielded high, but otherwise isolated, remains.

Cut 1 was placed south of 150R100 in an effort to determine if the posited wall trench (Feature 4) extended south or southeast. The trench measured 8 by 20 feet (160 ft<sup>2</sup>). Several tree stains (as well as ubiquitous plow scars and larger agricultural features) were identified, but there was no evidence of additional structural remains.

Cut 2 was placed to bisect the auger test at 140R130 that was identified as an isolated area of dense remains. The trench measured 8 by 20 feet (160 ft<sup>2</sup>). We identified no structural

## EXCAVATIONS

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remains or features that might account for the density of material.

Cut 3 was placed northwest of 150R100 and was intended to determine if architectural features related to the posited wall trench (Feature 4) in the unit might extend to the northwest. No evidence of other remains was identified in the trench.

Cut 4 was placed through the dense remains in the auger hole at 180R110. As the trench was opened, we identified a large feature (designed Feature 5) at the southern end of the trench. The feature consisted of very dark brown (7.5YR5/2) sand fill with dense shell and occasional brick. It measured about 5 feet north-northeast by south-southwest and 5 feet east-west, taking on a slightly ovoid to square shape. The auger test had caught the southeast edge of the pit, probably resulting in the very high artifact count for that test. Upon excavation the feature was found to be only 0.3 foot in depth and to contain an assemblage of nails, "black" glass, Colono, calcined bone, and one small fragment of slipware. The function of the pit is indeterminate, although it appears too large to represent a "wallow" area and too shallow to represent a clay extraction pit. The brick identified in the pit lacked mortar, so it seems unlikely that it is a robbed architectural feature.

Although the mechanical cuts did not produce any exceptional results, they do buttress our interpretation of a site exhibiting ephemeral architecture, sparse artifacts, and tight clustering of remains.

## CONCLUSIONS

### Initial Findings

Historical research is still on-going, so we are hesitant to offer any conclusions at this time. We are, however, inclined to believe that some significant differences will be suggested between eighteenth and nineteenth century overseers, making the application of overseer stereotypes developed for the antebellum inappropriate for the pre-Revolutionary period. In particular we believe while overseers were gradually developing the unsavory reputation often attributed to them in the nineteenth century, many were still upwardly mobile during the first half of the eighteenth century. We also believe that the lifeways of the eighteenth century overseer were far more stark than previously imagined. This may result in overseer dwellings being difficult to distinguish from that of the plantation's enslaved population.

Site 38CH1278 did not produce clearly defined architectural remains - in fact, the site may be characterized by the absence of such remains. Postholes are scarce and fail to exhibit any patterning. A small section of wall trench is inadequate to document a dwelling since it may represent a wind break or even animal fencing. While the small quantity of nails may be nothing more than an artifact of the sandy, acidic soils, it may also be explained by craft traditions and the use of mortise and tendon construction. Brick and window glass are scarce, suggesting a structure not too dissimilar to slave houses of the same time period. In fact, the failure to encounter more substantial archaeological evidence is strongly suggestive of an ephemeral style of structure.

While the site failed to provide architectural remains, it does provide an artifactual assemblage that we believe will help

define and characterize the eighteenth century overseer's lifeways. The assemblage may be compared to both eighteenth century small owner and overseer assemblages at other sites. And it may be compared to the inventories and data coming from Virginia records (even if no similarly detailed documents are identified for South Carolina).

It has been popular to speak of enslaved African Americans as faceless and voiceless without the intervention of archaeological studies. No less should be said for the white plantation overseers of this time period. Just as it is inappropriate - and inaccurate - to characterize eighteenth century slave life using nineteenth century stereotypes, attempting to force nineteenth century overseer accounts and lifeways into the eighteenth century is unprofitable. We believe that the investigations at 38CH1278 will begin to offer new ways of looking at these data.

### Compliance with the Data Recovery Plan

All field investigations, consisting of auger testing, hand excavations, and mechanical stripping stipulated by the data recovery plan have been completed. Historical research is on-going, as is cataloging of the collections. Consequently, we recommend that the property be released for issuance of an OCRM land disturbance permit.

In spite of the data recovery excavations, it remains possible that archaeological remains may be encountered during construction activities. **Contractors should be advised to report any discoveries of concentrations of artifacts (such as bottles, ceramics, or projectile points) or brick rubble to the project engineer, who should in turn report the material to the State Historic**

## CONCLUSIONS

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### **Preservation Office, or Chicora Foundation**

(the process of dealing with late discoveries is discussed in 36CFR800.13(b)(3)). No further land altering activities should take place in the vicinity of these discoveries until they have been examined by an archaeologist and, if necessary, have been processed according to 36CFR800.13(b)(3).

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