

## Charles Towne Landing Archaeology Update

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### Upcoming Events

South Eastern Conference  
on Historic Sites  
Archaeology (SECHSA)  
August 25 and 26, 2012  
Founders Hall, Charles  
Towne Landing State  
Historic Site

For more info see [website](#)



▲ *The recently discovered brick chimney base*

Charles Towne Landing's spring field season has come to a close, but not before exposing some exciting new finds!

The season started off well with the discovery of the elusive eastern edge of the tabby floor, leaving us with only the northern extent of the floor to locate. We were fortunate to find the northern edge almost immediately. To our surprise, an intact brick chimney base was also uncovered. As is often the case with archaeology, the discovery of the chimney base left us with more questions than answers. The base was exposed with only a couple of days remaining in the field season. Therefore, work will continue on this find when the fall field season gets underway.

Additionally, a small section of the floor was removed in an effort to recover artifacts that might give us a TPQ date (see ArchNews Volume 3, No 3). To avoid extensive damage to the floor, 1 X 2 foot sample unit was placed in one of the more well preserved portions. Though a few artifacts were recovered, there were none that could provide a solid date. We were able to conclude that the tabby floor is about 3 inches thick. It appears that the floor is made up of a single pouring episode, suggesting that the structure may not have been occupied for a significant period of time after the tabby floor was constructed.

We are left with lots of fun questions to address in the fall!

▼ *Volunteer, Jake, removing the tabby floor*



## Colonial Dorchester Archaeology Update

Over the past four months, numerous park visitors (turned-volunteers) took part in the Volunteer Archaeology Lab Program at Colonial Dorchester State Historic Site. The program combined two phases of public archaeology which



taught volunteers the process of artifact collection management and the methods used in conducting an archaeological investigation at one of South Carolina's richest historic sites. The two phases were held in conjunction with each other during our weekend "outdoor archaeology lab." The lab's



tables and chairs were brought within close proximity to the excavation site, where volunteers performed the newly adopted skills under

the supervision of the park archaeologist. This program allowed many casual onlookers to witness not only the unearthing of Colonial-period artifacts but also the opportunity to participate in the lab processing, an exciting task most were willing to try even if it meant sorting through bricks and mortar!

Over the course of the spring and summer, our volunteers

processed well over a thousand artifacts. Each item was sorted, weighed, counted, identified, bagged, and finally coded resulting in a wide consortium of colonial-period artifacts dating to the mid-to-late 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Major categories include: various kitchen-related items, butchered animal bones, tobacco pipe stems and bowl fragments, historic bottle glass, bone, glass, and metal buttons, lead buck shot, several .69 caliber musket balls, window glass, and a wide variety of European and slave-made pottery sherds. All these items were categorized by volunteers, who agonizingly hand sorted through the approximately hundred pounds of combined brick and mortar rubble, searching for small fragments of the domestic refuse left behind by Dorchester's inhabitants.



The excavation of three 1 meter by 1 meter units at lot 52 or also known as the "Blake" lot provided more clues into our understanding of the village's spatial layout and allowed us to gather more evidence of the behavior of those that lived there. Volunteer's helped unearth a brick foundation of an out-building located on the far corner of the property. The exact position of the foundation aligned perfectly with the assumed lot boundary, allowing for the park archaeologist to demarcate the boundary between where the lot ends (inside lot 52) and where the Market Place begins (outside of lot 52). In addition to this unique discovery, a large amount of demolition debris was discovered in two of the units that appeared to fall away from the direction of the Market Place. This interesting feature may provided evidence of what caused the building's final demise. While uncovering these interesting finds, volunteers learned about basic field excavation methods, acquiring their first experience witnessing the artifacts (of which they learned about in the lab) unearthed within the context of the archaeological site.

At the present time, excavations have been postponed until next spring as we shift gears toward the grounds of the Church of St George Parish, Dorchester. Beginning in late September, archaeological investigations will attempt to answer questions about the church's architecture footprint and provide some evidence toward further comprehending the spatial layout of the cemetery. If you are interested in learning more about archaeology at Colonial Dorchester SHS, please contact us at the Ranger Station: 843-873-1740 or [ljames@scprtc.com](mailto:ljames@scprtc.com).

## Hampton Plantation Archaeology Update

This spring (2012), we again conducted our volunteer excavation at Hampton Plantation. We could only manage a single weekend instead of the preferred week-long event. The excavations focused on the slave house and the associated yard.



In the Fall of 2011, we determined that the structure measures 20 by 30 feet with chimney bases at each end on the long axis. The chimneys on either end of the structure suggest that two families likely resided in this house.

Prior to the excavations in the spring of 2012, a College of Charleston student, Jessica Coleman, along with Professor Scott Harris, conducted a ground penetrating radar (GPR) survey at the site. Their primary focus was to look for indications of a wall located in the center of the house that would have separated the living spaces of the two families. Unfortunately, no anomalies that would indicate a central wall were recorded with the GPR. However, a linear anomaly was detected next to the slave house. This feature was located approximately five feet north of the house and ran parallel to the north wall of the house. A second anomaly to the east of the first one was located in a position that offered some hope of indicating an eastern wall of what would have been a second structure.

The actual excavations this spring were directed by Stacey Young and David Jones. Chris Young and Will Britz collected some very helpful total station

data while excavations were ongoing. Their work plotted the locations of all our excavated units to date. Additionally, they tied the units to the main house and numerous landscape features across the park. We greatly appreciate their efforts.

The excavations determined that the linear feature detected by Jessica Coleman was indeed a brick wall or foundation that had collapsed at some point in the past. Time precluded following that wall for any distance. The anomaly detected at what would have been an eastern wall was not uncovered during our brief visit.

Artifacts recovered were consistent with artifacts that have been uncovered during previous excavations at the site. Those artifacts continue to suggest a date of around 1800 to 1815. Our short weekend this spring left us with the strong possibility that a second structure is present at the site.



We are making an effort to intensify our work at this site this fall, and we will conduct our week-long volunteer dig in November.

Even though the spring dig took place after school had ended, several of the students (and their parents) stayed an extra weekend just so they could participate. For this we are grateful. Without the yeoman efforts from our volunteers, the work at Hampton would not go forward. *—SCPRT Staff*

## Meet an Archaeologist

### Andrew Agha

The Toledo Museum of Art in Ohio once had a huge Egyptian exhibit that fascinated a young Andrew Agha, who began dreaming of becoming an Egyptologist. Some years later he enrolled in anthropology courses at the College of Charleston. In 1997 he completed an archaeological field school, an experience that sparked an interest in historic archaeology.

He finished his undergraduate degree in 1998 and completed his masters in anthropology from the University of South Carolina in 2004. Since that time he has worked throughout the southeast both as a contract archaeologist for Brockington and Associates and as a research archaeologist with the South Carolina Institute for Archaeology and Anthropology (SCIAA) and South Carolina State Parks.

Working for various institutions can take one into many different directions. "I have become interested in the relationships humans have with their environment, and the processes involved in the transformation of nature into a built environment. Because Africans were the primary shapers of the land, I am most interested in their roles in these processes." These interests are evident in his most recent work at the Lord Ashley Plantation settlement in Dorchester County.

Andrew has had his hand in work at that site, as the lead investigator, for three years now. There are lots of site specific questions that Andrew is trying to tackle at the Lord Ashley Site (see the Site Spotlight on page 4). Additionally, that site has the potential to pinpoint relationships to the initial settlement at Charles Towne Landing, downtown Charleston, and even Colonial Dorchester State Historic Site.



Asked to hone in on one aspect of archaeology that appeals most to him, Andrew said "... people today can actively uncover history that is not found in a book. On the other side of that coin, archaeology makes us look at the historical record in different ways, which can bring us to a new and possibly richer understanding of the past."

He advises students interested in pursuing historical archaeology to "learn the dates of European ceramics! It will help you decide on the fly, in the field, where you might need to dig next, because sometimes you can't wait for the lab work to get done!"

While Andrew is happy to see a recent surge in public interest in archaeology, he is concerned that that interest may be manifesting itself too much on the excitement and romance of finding flashy artifacts. Instead, he believes the focus should be on the ability of archaeology to extract the story of the lives of those that once used that artifact. Whether conducting research or engaging in public archaeology, Andrew will continue his efforts to connect people to their past.

## Site Spotlight

### An Update on the Archaeology of St. Giles Plantation

By: *Andrew Agha*

In 2009, while working for Brockington and Associates I conducted a small survey as part an effort to expand the Ashley River Historic District. This work was conducted for the Historic Charleston Foundation. Part of this survey included revisiting the site of a St. Giles Kussoe, the name given to the 17th century plantation owned by Lord Anthony Ashley Copper, first Earl of Shaftesbury. The Brockington survey uncovered a light scatter of 17th century artifacts and, luckily, an intact brick



*Brick chimney foundation at St. Giles*

chimney foundation. This feature and others indicated that the site had research potential. In 2011, students spent two weeks at the site as part of the College of Charleston and Charleston Museum's archaeological field school. I had the privilege of directing that portion of their field season. That effort resulted in the completion of 20 excavation units. European ceramics, olive green bottle glass, wrought nails, lead shot, trade beads, and a large amount of handmade earthenwares were found. Several features clearly indicated that remains of buildings are present. Several other features point to possible structural remains.

From the historical records, we know that the plantation, built in 1674, was engaged in Indian trade until the Westo War of 1680. It continued



*Field school students excavating*

primarily as a large cattle ranch until the death of Lord Ashley January 1683. Dr. Henry Woodward, one of the most interesting characters of the 17th century, was present at the site as Lord Ashley's primary Indian trade agent. His focus was on trade with the Westo Indians but also dealt with other groups on the Savannah River and places yet to be verified. One of the important research questions we are addressing at the site is identifying these various groups and how those trade networks functioned.

The field school excavations also uncovered evidence of a fortification reported to be at the plantation in 1679. To further investigate this in January of 2012, my wife Nicole Isenbarger and I assisted our friend and colleague Dr. Jon Marcoux of Auburn University-Montgomery in a magnetometer survey of the site. We were successful in finding a suspect set of features that may possibly be the fortification line.

Future work will help us pinpoint the limits of the fortified settlement and trading post. Our research team hopes to continue to conduct meaningful and extremely important archaeology at the plantation of Lord Ashley. These excavations will shed new light on origins of the highly successful planting colony of Carolina.

## Digs Around the World

NEWS!

- A recent discovery in Oregon's Paisely Cave is challenging the once common "Clovis first" theory of the peopling of the Americas. Radiocarbon dates from coprolites, or preserved human feces, have proven that a group of Western Stemmed projectile points found in the same stratigraphic layer as the coprolites are at least 13,000 years old. This date is significant because it means that the Western Stemmed tool makers were contemporaneous with the people of the Clovis tool culture, once believed to be the first group of humans in the Americas. Archaeologist, Dennis L. Jenkins now suggests that "we seem to have two different traditions co-existing in the United States that did not blend for a period of hundreds of years." Read more about this important discovery in [Science Daily](#).

- China's famous army of terracotta warriors seems to be growing. Chinese archaeologists have recently excavated 110 new and brightly painted warriors, bringing the total to over 8,000 life sized figures. The collection of warriors, located in the city of Xi'an, was first discovered in 1974 and is part of the tomb of China's first emperor, Qin Shi Huang. The current excavations have been in progress for the last three years and in addition to the warriors, have revealed 12 new terracotta horses, chariot pieces, weapons and tools. Additional information and photos [here](#).



▲ The terracotta army of Emperor Qin Shi Huang



▲ Timbuktu's Djingareyber Mosque, before partial destruction by Ansar Dine.

- Conflict in Western Africa is threatening the UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the city of Timbuktu. This legendary city, located on the edge of the Sahara desert in Mali, is known for being an important Medieval trading center and the intellectual and spiritual capital of Islamic Africa's "Golden Age". The city is home to a number of 14th to 16th century mosques and tombs of ancient Muslim saints, sites that are highly revered by Sufi Muslims. However, the Al-Qaeda linked Islamic group Ansar Dine who recently seized Timbuktu, views these sites as idolatrous and has set out to destroy them. The group has destroyed at least eight of Timbuktu's 16 mausoleums, including two at the famous Djingareyber Mosque and smashed the sacred door of the Sidi Yahya mosque. Though Mali's government and UNESCO have called for these attacks to stop, Ansar Dine is threatening to destroy all World Heritage Sites in the region. Follow this story [here](#) and [here](#).

▼ Stonehenge

- Archaeologists believe they have finally discovered the reason for Stonehenge's construction, reports [Science Daily](#). After ten years of excavation it seems that the monument was built to symbolize the unification of Britain peoples. The stones, some from southern England and others from west Wales, are thought to represent the ancestors of Britain's different regional communities, who at the time of Stonehenge's construction had begun unite and embrace an island-wide culture.

