The Identity of a Plantation Structure: The Preliminary Analysis of an Early Structure at Mont Repose Plantation, St. Luke's Parish, Jasper County, South Carolina

Heather R. Amaral

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THE IDENTITY OF A PLANTATION STRUCTURE:
THE PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF AN EARLY STRUCTURE AT
MONT REPOSE PLANTATION
ST LUKE’S PARISH, JASPER COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

by
HEATHER R. AMARAL
(Under the Direction of Sue M. Moore)

ABSTRACT

During the 2000 Archeology Field School, Georgia Southern University began an investigation of a nineteenth century plantation structure near Ridgeland, South Carolina. The plantation, Mont Repose, is an example of an inland rice plantation operated in this region during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The structure was initially believed to be a kitchen for this plantation but more recent fieldwork has suggested that this designation may need to be re-examined. Recent excavations have yielded specific artifacts suggesting that the structure may have sheltered a variety of daily functions in addition to specific kitchen activities. Preliminary Mean Ceramic Dating suggests a possible association with an earlier occupation of the site. A 1739 coin, sewing items, various personal possessions and a gold gilded broche were found along with other higher status artifacts. The demise of the structure and the impact that had on the stratigraphy will also be examined. This thesis will present the preliminary archival research, fieldwork, a preliminary analysis of a sample from the artifact assemblage and suggestions for future research.

INDEX WORDS: Inland rice plantation, Slaves, Slavery, Detached kitchen, Ceramics, Mean ceramic date, Mont Repose Plantation, Gillison, Coosawhatchie, South Carolina, Beaufort County, Jasper County
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HEATHER R AMARAL

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HEATHER R. AMARAL

Major Professor: Sue M. Moore
Committee: H. Steven Hale
Peggy Hargis

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my family as they are the blessings in my life that keep me striving to always be better. My husband has continued to encourage me along my educational journey and to him, I am forever grateful. My sons Evan and Alton have always known their mom to be a student. I hope that they will be lifelong students as well and continue to question everything.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Historical Archeology by definition is the collaboration of excavation and documentation, what presents itself from the soil to what is selectively written and available. It is a blessing when sites have an array of artifacts and well preserved documentation to add supplement. However, in many cases sites lack one or the other. For example, Andersonville is a well-known Civil War Prison Camp site that is well documented but excavations failed to produce a substantial amount of artifacts. Camp Lawton located in Millen, GA has both documentation and has yielded sufficient amounts of artifacts in the preliminary stages of excavations to draw worldly attention. There are frustrating examples of well documented sites that are just not that simple to locate. The way in which historic maps often referenced landmarks creates a challenge when the physical environment and/or geography may have changed immensely. The Galphin Trading Post at Old Town Plantation lends us the example of moderate documentation but exhaustive efforts to locate the Trading Post have yet to be successful. On the other extreme there are sites that yield volumes of artifacts but available documentation takes the patience and savvy of the best detective. Mont Repose Plantation falls into the category of the latter and has offered it’s researchers an educational opportunity. Mont Repose allowed researchers the immediate gratification of artifacts on the surface and soil but locating historical documentation has been a quest.

Regardless, it is our collective responsibility as anthropologists (archeologists) to put forth our best efforts to locate all aspects of a site. The interpretation of sites, well documented
or not becomes a heavy task. As technology offers us easier solutions to tackling the terrain and creating eye appealing maps and images (aerial and ground scanning via LiDAR), we also gain access to updated document databases daily. The progress in documentary research in the last 10 years is startling. As genealogical information becomes more accessible (i.e. online sites) we as professionals reap the benefits. An invaluable treasure trove of information is now at the fingertips of researchers. Even cemetery stones, plots and descriptions can be located online. There is still something to be said for the county record rooms that offer a hands-on experience with original documents. However, that approach can leave many voids and exploits time/budget restrictions. The challenge posed by this flood of new information requires researchers to explore the potential of new documentation for all historical sites.

Thankfully, the majority of theories proposed about Mont Repose over 10 years ago when excavations began have recently been supported by new documentary findings. These recent finds have also added new challenges and concentrated the focus of future research.
CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

The Plantation Model

The definition of plantation changes over time, evolving with the social conditions placed upon it. Initially a plantation was simply synonymous with planting, referring to a very basic level of farming or gardening. The underlying meaning of plantation changed as more and more colonists fancied the life ways of Europeans, especially the styles from England. It wasn’t until the early 1700’s that plantations became synonymous with servitude (Vlach, 1993, p. 2-3). A plantation became any agricultural land producing a crop or crops with twenty or more slaves (Vlach, 2002, p. 5).

Many plantations were modeled after small English estates. There emerged a very conscious layout of space. Early planter homes in the lowcountry were typically Georgian style. This was apparent by very symmetric, rectangular homes of two or more stories (Vlach, 1993, pg. 3). It wasn’t uncommon for there to be multiple fireplaces, elaborate porches and balconies. Preferably the home would be constructed entirely of brick however, this was reserved for the most elite. The rigid organizational style extended from the planter’s home flowing into the surrounding grounds becoming less apparent with distance from the nucleus. Extensive gardens, walkways and benches were common features. The support structures for the planter’s home were typically modeled after it but never over shadowing its grand stature (Vlach, 1993, p. 4-5).

According to Vlach (1993) it is here that the notion of a “plantation landscape” takes shape. Vlach’s notion of a “plantation landscape” encompasses the very intentional layout of
each plantation and the underlying reasons for this. Vlach discusses the notion of this landscape as a trend-based fashion that varied greatly by region. The construction and development was affected by regional trends and availability of building materials (brick, wood, tabby). The basic functionality played a key role in layout. For example, proximity of the detached kitchen to the dining room of the main house. It was not uncommon for even the wealthier plantation owners to use the same architectural styles and structural arrangements within their region (Vlach, 1993, p. 6-12).

The layout of the landscape was not only dependent on fashionable and functional trends but there were implicit social meanings to the landscape. Planters’ created an elaborate entrance to their grand homes as a means to impress and intimidate visitors (Vlach, 1993, p. 8-9). A Planter’s home could be placed dead center at the end of a long oak lined drive. Circular driveways with gardens and a carriage attendant might create an entry maze. A visitor of less stature would be promptly reminded of his/her place before stepping foot across the threshold. The social implications of the landscape continued beyond the back of the planter’s home to enforce and emphasize his ownership over his slaves. In general field slaves lived in less quality housing than house slaves (Vlach, 1993, p. 12-15). The main support structures generally staying consistent architectural “matches” for the planter’s home (Bonner, 1945, p. 373). These main support structures were often constructed of the same building materials or exterior decorations in order to match the main house.

Owning a plantation became an aspiration for colonists. This aspiration was only to be met by a small percentage of them. The majority of plantation owners did not have grand English estates nor did they own large quantities of slaves. Vlach (1993) states, that at the peak
of plantation ownership only a mere one percent of slaveholders met these expectations. Larger plantations, with one hundred plus slaves, were the constituents of this elite group. Located primarily in the coastal region, it included plantations from Virginia to northern Florida and within a hundred miles west of the Atlantic Coast. Some of the oldest plantations fall into this region. The coastal areas were inhabited and settled first and provided fertile grounds for the highest paying cash crops such as indigo, rice and long staple cotton (Vlach, 1993, p. 6-8). Some of the most impressive plantations were found along the Rice Coast of South Carolina and Georgia. These plantations were impressive in size, operation, and slaveholdings. Rice production on these plantations required in excess of two hundred slaves. A slave holding this extensive would have a huge impact on the “plantation landscape” (Vlach, 1993, p. 187).

Vlach’s notion of the “plantation landscape” suggests a certain pattern of plantation layout/design. These plantation layout patterns (in both layout and function) varied from region to region (Vlach, 1993, p. 11-12). However, knowledge of these patterns assist archeologists today in finding structures within a particular site. The likely location of structures can be based on assumptions about these patterns. For example, Drayton Hall, located along the Ashley River in Charleston, SC is orientated with the rear of the planter’s home facing the oak lined (land) drive (shown in figure 2). The more dramatic formal entrance of the home is facing the Ashley River (Drayton Hall, 2010) as shown in figure 1. However, the interpretation of these entrances at Drayton Hall is an ongoing debate. Beyond the planter’s home the pattern on the landscape continues. We can assume that the field slaves had quarters in close proximity to the fields in which they worked. These patterns that develop within the “plantation landscape” become useful diagnostic tools.
The formal grand entrance of Drayton Hall was created to impress guests arriving by boat on the Ashley River. Guests were greeted by a series of elaborate gardens and pathways leading them to the main house. This elaborate portrayal of wealth and success was an intentionally constructed scheme of smoke and mirrors to distract the guests from the hustle and bustle of the daily plantation activities and to tunnel their focus to the plantation owner’s implicit achievements. Drayton Hall offers a prime visual example of the “plantation landscape” with
many features and structures still impressing visitors today. The rear entrance included a long oak lined drive that diverted around a well and ended with a circular carriage driveway wrapping around a center placed garden perfectly placed at the rear of the home. The slave cabins and some fields lined this rear driveway and would have been visible to guests entering by carriage.

There are two smaller support structures anchoring the rear corners of the main house following with the theme of balance, symmetry and function. There was an entrance to a raised cellar located in the rear left hand corner of the house. From this corner of the home it is approximately 40 ft to the corner of one of the smaller support structures. From the right rear corner of the house it is again, approximately 40 ft to the corner of the matching support structure likely to have been a kitchen. Portions of the brick foundation and hearth are still visible aiding to the layout and function of this structure (shown in figures 3 and 4). There is a substantial sized central hearth constructed of brick. Both of the support structures are long narrow rectangular structures measuring approximately 26 ft x 15 ft. After consulting both Vlach (1993) and the Historical American Building Survey (HABS) the placement of the detached kitchen as an anchor to the main house appears to be a common style in the south. This predictability of kitchen location in proximity to the main house aids in locating sites that no longer leave clues above ground.
Figure 2. Photograph of Drayton Hall view from the rear carriage entrance of the home
Figure 3. Photograph of brick foundation and hearth of Kitchen Structure at Drayton Hall, view from rear of house

Figure 4. Photograph of brick foundation and hearth of Kitchen Structure at Drayton Hall, view includes rear of house
The Architecture

The specific architecture of a structure can be a diagnostic tool for determining its function. The architecture of a structure however, does not simply imply function or usage but it lends us insight into the social dynamics of the people sharing space within its walls. As O’Dell (1983) suggests, structures are culturally unique in that they can be used by everyone within a society. Structures become reflective of the social issues affecting society seen through the various architectural styles. Architectural styles and social issues become parallel (O’Dell, 1983, p. ix).

A plantation in itself can be viewed as a society. The structures are arranged within this plantation society for very specific reasons. The tendency to construct detached kitchens in the 1700’s was not simply to avoid fire hazards to the Planter’s home. During the 1700’s planters began to want a more clearly defined separation in the relationship between them and their slaves. This increased separation of work space emphasized the very skewed relationship between owner and owned (Vlach, 1993, p. 43-44). Detaching the kitchen also allowed for the removal of the commotion, mess and smells associated with the cooking tasks. Structures that housed slave related tasks became viewed as dirty. The separation of these dirty tasks from the planter’s space allowed for the very romantic view of plantation life to proceed (Bonner, 1945, p. 379).

Vlach (1993) states that there were two basic styles of detached kitchen structures. One basic kitchen style is typically a small wood framed structure consisting of one room with a single hearth and external masonry chimney located at either end. Vlach mentions that this type of detached kitchen with the chimney placed externally on one end is more typical of southern
style whereas in areas such as Virginia, the internal chimney may have functioned as a “smoke bay” creating “an open space between the gable wall and a slanting attic partition”. The other commonly found kitchen style is a larger structure consisting of two rooms and a centrally located hearth and chimney or a chimney located at both ends of the structure. This type of kitchen employed both rooms for cooking but also became the quarters for the cook. There are many variations to this type of multi-room kitchen. Often these multi-roomed kitchens harnessed other specific duties combining cooking and laundry or smoke house. Larger plantations modified this plan to accommodate the additional house slaves and demanding storage needs. Kitchens could become two story structures with cellars. Regardless of style, the kitchen was generally the second most impressive structure in the plantation design. (Vlach, 1993, p. 44-45).
Figure 5. Photograph of Chicora Wood Plantation, Kitchen Building, County Road 52, Georgetown vicinity, Georgetown, SC (HABS SC.22-GEOTO.V,7A-1, 1977)

The collection of structural photographs and associated data available through the Historical American Buildings Survey (HABS) offers a variety of visual comparisons. The HABS data lends insight into the variety of architectural styles found in specific regions as well as function, usage of space, materials and hardware. The photographs also offer an opportunity to view some interior and exterior aspects of the structures still in application. The Chicora Wood Plantation detached kitchen appears to be a single function structure with a moderate to simple design. Pilings or footings are visible in the photo and an above ground design can be
assumed. A matching support structure of the same orientation and design is visible in the rear of the photo as well (HABS, Chicora Wood Plantation Kitchen Data, 1977)

Figure 6. Photograph of Kensington Plantation, Summer Kitchen, U.S. Route 601, Eastover vicinity, Richland, SC. Exterior View (HABS SC,40-EAST.V,1A-1, 1982)
The Kensington Plantation Summer Kitchen is a two room multi-purpose structure with a centrally placed chimney with a hearth/fireplace combination. It is set upon pilings or footings with an above ground design. It was used as the kitchen for the main house until 1910. The other room may have housed a laundry or dwelling over time. The data collected notes that shutters were once hung but are no longer evident. Modifications were made to the structure as its purpose evolved. However, the simple wood door style with minimal hardware and pane
glass windows offers a prime example of a basic plantation kitchen structure in the south

(HABS, Kensington Plantation Summer Kitchen Data, 1982)

Figure 8. Photograph of Dr. Samuel Crane Kitchen Building, 4 Orange Street, Charleston, SC. (HABS SC, 10-CHAR, 333A-1, 1978)
The Dr. Samuel Crane Kitchen Building offers an example of a more elaborate design and multi-purpose function. This kitchen is located in Charleston, SC where the stylistic trend setters for the southern region would have been found. This two story kitchen structure served as a kitchen, laundry and possibly a dwelling. This structure may have been multifunctional due to the limited space available in an urban setting. The design of the exterior of the structure is tied into the main house and has two story porches, shutters and a constructed of solid brick. It is noteworthy to mention in the second photograph the elaborate hearth/oven combination as well as hardware and kitchen utensils in place.

Figure 9. Photograph of Dr. Samuel Crane Kitchen Building, 4 Orange Street, Charleston, Charleston, SC. (HABS SC,10-CHAR,333A-2, 1978)
The view of the single hearth in the third photograph shows multiple hardware functions/designs in place as well as the pane glass windows. Most noteworthy is the use of hanging items on the mantle portion of the hearth (HABS, Dr. Samuel Crane Kitchen Building, 1978).

*Figure 10.* Photograph of Dr. Samuel Crane Kitchen Building, 4 Orange Street, Charleston, Charleston, SC. (HABS SC,10-CHAR,333A-3, 1978)
Detached kitchens were often placed just behind the planter’s home within a reasonable distance to bring food back and forth. Less frequently the kitchen would be constructed to the front of the planter’s home and just off to either side. This would be visually balanced by an additional structure such as the laundry or smokehouse placed just off of the corresponding side of the planter’s home. This repeated theme of balance and symmetry was an ever present theme. Sometimes covered walkways would be constructed and attached from the kitchen to the planter’s home. The side of the kitchen facing the planter’s home may have been more elaborately decorated while the side leading to the work yard would be left simple and undecorated (Vlach 1993, p. 46-47).
Figure 11. Photograph of Colonel John Ashe House, kitchen building, Charleston, SC. Kitchen (left), carriage house (right), main house in the rear view (shows balance)
Depending on the specific needs of each plantation the kitchen structure may have been constructed for more than one function. It is not unusual to find structures that housed similar tasks in an attempt to maximize space and production. For example, a kitchen might be combined with a laundry. Using a centrally located hearth, one side would service the cooking and the other would be used to boil the laundry water. Often these structures would be connected by a central breeze way that would offer covered outdoor workspace. The slaves that tended to the tasks related to the kitchen often tended to the bigger, messier jobs in the yard such
as laundry or soap making. This created a common and relevant workspace contained within the structures and extending into the work area surrounding them (Vlach, 1993, p. 46-47). The yard in and of itself could also be viewed as a structure. Particularly in the South where extreme heat was an issue, many tasks would be completed in the yard outside of the basic support structures.

The various out buildings such as kitchens were often used to create a visual barrier. This barrier was used to define the planter’s immediate space from the fields. The out buildings could be arranged to establish four corners containing the work yard with in them. The out buildings were sometimes arranged in rows that ran parallel or perpendicular to the planter’s home. On occasion, some planters went as far as constructing a wall around these out buildings to define space (Vlach, 1993, p. 78).

**Artifact Patterning**

The many roles that one specific structure played on the “plantation landscape” must be considered when determining its function. Where the structure is located in relation to some diagnostic features such as the road, oak lined drive or the planter’s home can help to determine its function. The floor plan of the structure must also be taken into consideration. How a particular floor-plan compares to the various standard for structures found on other plantations in that region helps to diagnose function. Artifact patterning is then used as a diagnostic tool. We expect to find a certain accumulation of artifacts specific to the tasks performed within the structure. There is a baseline assemblage of artifacts for particular structures and activities. What is to be said for those artifacts that are unexpected or appear to be out of place? These more discrete discoveries remind us that every plantation and structure is as unique as the individuals that spent their lives working inside of its boundaries.
Artifacts take up where historical documents may fall short. The types of records kept and the information considered important enough to record were usually decided by socially elite white men. Consequently, the historical record can become skewed and one sided. Written records often exclude African-Americans as well as the majority of the illiterate population. In addition to bias in written records, many historical documents have been lost to fire. Artifacts however, especially the “concrete” examples such as ceramics, are commonly preserved in a variety of soil types/conditions. These “concrete” artifacts offer a range of reliable data that can be read and thus supplement written documents. Artifacts can be used to diagnose patterns. These patterns enable us to make inferences regarding people’s status, diet, date of occupancy and to help identify the type or usage of a structure (Otto and Burns, 1983, p. 186-187).

Ceramics alone stand to offer an enormous amount of information. Stanley South’s (1977) development of mean ceramic dating has refined our ability to date the occupation of a site. By using British manufacture and distribution records South discovered patterns in the production of certain types of ceramics. He used the various periods that ceramic types were produced to create a mean age for each type. From this South developed a formula that produces a mean ceramic date regardless of sample size. Mean ceramic date should not be used solely to date a structure but it creates one line of evidence, particularly when a site is undocumented. It is common to find an out of place ceramic that may have been heirloomed and broken during a later occupation (Michie, 1990, p. 115-116). Thus it is important to use more than one means of dating to refine the process and combine the results with historical data when available.

The two most common table ceramics are broken down into three distinct wares. Creamwares, pearlwares and whitewares were produced in England during the 18th and 19th
Centuries. Creamware production ranges from about 1750-1820. Creamware has a distinct pale yellow tinged glaze that became lighter as the ceramic was perfected. Creamwares are typically more plain and refined in decoration. The majority of decoration was reserved for the edges such as seen in Queensware or feather edged types. Pearlware production ranges from about 1780-1840. Pearlware was an attempt to create a whiter ceramic by adding cobalt to the glaze. Pearlware has a distinct bluish tinge to the glaze and comes in a variety of decorations. Blue and white transfer printing is the most common decoration found on nineteenth Century pearlware. Whiteware was an attempt to create a truly white ceramic which typically has a harder body than pearlware. The introduction of whiteware and ironstones coincided with the downslide of pearlware and is generally associated with later 19th Century sites (Michie, 1990, p. 108-109).

There are some ceramics that do not fit perfectly into any of these categories but occur in small numbers and should not affect the data set. However, these less common types can often help to narrow a range in occupation.

Ceramics can be used as an indicator of status, especially when combined with faunal data. John Otto’s (1975) research at Cannon’s Point Plantation on the coast of Georgia demonstrated how indicative ceramics could be. He found that generally the lower economic status individuals (both white and black) used more hollowares. Hollowares are designated as bowls and cups that could accommodate a more liquid based diet. Records indicated that lower economic status diet was composed of poor quality meats such as the less desirable cuts of pork or sometimes beef. The faunal evidence from Cannon’s Point supported Otto’s notion as the majority of faunal material found in slave quarters was either poor quality cuts of beef or pork. Typically the daily slave rations were supplemented by adding locally caught, wild game when
available. For example, fish, turtle, raccoon, opossum, and bird were not uncommon findings. The lower economic status meals were typically one pot stews that could be left all day without fuss and could be composed of what was available. In contrast, the planter class had far more flatwares which are representative of their higher quality meals. Generally the planter and his family would be entitled to the better (more desirable) cuts of meat and in higher abundance (higher volume of meat per serving). The faunal material found in relation to the planter at Cannon’s Point also supported this conclusion. Food remains of the planter’s family indicated quality cuts of pork, beef and deer. The meals would have consisted of individual dishes that could be served separately on a flat dish (Michie, 1990, p. 121-125 and Otto, 1975). It is important to mention that the portions of meats considered poor quality or better quality then differ greatly from those cuts of meat consumed in those categories today (Deetz, 2009, pg 22-23). Both planter class and slave consumed local game and fish.

Historic cook books offer insight into the mistress’ kitchen and meal planning from the point of view of the upper class. Cookery books such as Esther Copley’s (1838) *The House Keeper’s Guide*, demonstrates that meals were strategically planned around the seasonal availability of meat (game and domestic) and vegetables. Copley offers diagrams of proper cuts of each type of meat and the proper way to dress/prepare each cut. This rigid and strategic approach to food preparation and planning can be expected to have an effect on the slave diet/rations. It is important to consider which types of game, fish or seafood were highly sought after by the planter class and which types were more common and expected as a supplement to slave diet/rations.
Accumulations of certain types of artifacts help in identifying the type/function of a structure. With most plantation structures it would be expected to find high concentrations of brick (at least chimney materials or footings), nails and typically window glass. In structures associated with plantation life it is expected to find high concentrations of ceramics, glass, faunal material/shell, and personal affects. Structures with a specific function such as kitchens would be expected to yield high concentrations of better quality (more desirable) faunal materials because of the direct connection to the planter’s home. A higher overall bone mass weight could be expected to account for the larger portions consumed by the upper class. It would also be expected to find more flatware. These higher status ceramics are often elaborately decorated and would occur in matching place settings. The volume and predictable trends/styles must also be considered.

Also with any plantation structure it is impossible to exclude evidence of African-American (slave) life. The enslaved spent time in virtually every structure on the “plantation landscape”. The lives of slaves were never their own and aspects of slave life should be expected in the archeological record of each plantation structure. Artifacts such as clay marbles or blue beads associated with slave material culture should be expected yet random discoveries within any support structure and even the main house. Whereas, it would not be expected to find high volumes of evidence relating to the plantation owner within a structure deemed specifically as a slave dwelling.

While it becomes impossible to exclude the presence of slaves among the “plantation landscape” it also becomes challenging to understand/identify status markers among the slave community when most status markers are based on preferences of the white planter class. John
Otto’s (1975) research using status markers to diagnose a dwelling as planter, overseer, or enslaved opened the door to understanding the complexities of the multi-cultural environment of plantation life (Deetz, 2009, pg 20-22). Plantation life was a collision of European trends upheld by the planter class and a variety of influences from African cultures, languages, religions and practices, all existing in a foreign environment evolving into southern culture. This fusion of what can be considered two different worlds (white and black) merged regardless of how much the planter class wished to separate themselves from those they had enslaved. It becomes important for archeologists to adjust their lens back and forth between both worlds to fully understand the meaning of each artifact, its accumulation and where it lies (Deetz, 2009, pg 20-22). As archeologists refine their lens of understanding the importance of artifacts among planter and slave material cultures, diagnosing the status of a structure becomes more reliable.

Mont Repose Plantation today is a beautiful place with no immediate traces of its past. It is difficult however to stand amidst its surroundings and not appreciate the activities and lives that once occurred on this place. A partial oak lined alleyway is still apparent and lends insight to the possible location of the planter’s home. Just north-west of the drive lays the structure which is the focal point of this research.

It is the goal of this research to demonstrate that historical records, archeology and comparative research can be used to make useful inferences regarding the identity (function) of the structure and the lives that utilized it. It is not the goal to prove or disprove what the structure is but to demonstrate what purpose the structure may have served. In an attempt at clarity the structure will be referred to as the ”block” units with the State of South Carolina Site
number 38JA407 assigned to Mont Repose Plantation. As with many aspects of the “plantation landscape” the structure is so much more than simply a kitchen.
CHAPTER 3
THE SETTING

Mont Repose Plantation proposes a unique challenge for research and education. Archival documents specifically mentioning Mont Repose Plantation and its various owners are virtually non-existent prior to 1879. However, the archival documents available for the surrounding lands and associated people have allowed for a decent recreation of ownership along the Coosawhatchie River and the King’s Highway, 1790-1865. By following the transactions of key players and family names an understanding of place begins to unfold. It is important to first understand the local environment surrounding Mont Repose before attempting to understand the smaller elements such as this structure that make it whole.

Figure 13. Segment of the Beaufort District Map by Robert Mills 1825, Property deemed “Gillison” is Mont Repose Plantation
Figure 14. Route of the King’s Highway (2006 Beverly Whitaker)

http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~gentutor/King.pdf
Coosawhatchie was first established in the 1740’s as a stopping place along the King’s Highway (Coosawhatchie Historical Marker). The King’s Highway stretched from Boston Massachusetts connecting trade as far south as Savannah and Augusta. One Portion of the King’s Highway connected Charleston and Savannah and intersected a “traders’ path” to Augusta, a vital storage area for trade (Whitaker, 2006). In Coosawhatchie, a store and small inn owned by Henry De Saussure served travelers (Coosawhatchie Historical Marker). Known for its trading post, the crossroads village of Coosawhatchie grew during the 1760’s. A trip from Boston to Charleston took an estimated 2 months to cover the 1300 mile stretch of road that was often difficult to maneuver during rainy seasons. Whitaker (2006) states that a typical stagecoach or “wagon” traveled only an average of 20-25 miles per day. The King’s Highway expedited trade and travel even at this slow pace it was considered a revolution. Many of Coosawhatchie buildings were burned in 1779 when the area was occupied by British troops during the Revolutionary War. Despite this setback, the village recovered to become the County Seat of the Beaufort District, 1789-1836. (Coosawhatchie Historical Marker). Coosawhatchie experienced a gradual economic decline after the town was deemed “unhealthy” by lawyers due to the swampy marshes, 1836-1840. The swampy conditions provided an ideal host for the gestation of bugs and disease (Coosawhatchie, Gillisonville Historical Markers). Malaria was most problematic. The marshy conditions close to the flooded rice fields were an ideal catalyst for these diseases. Many of the slaves were resistant to malaria leaving the whites most at risk. This lead to the trend of separate “summer homes” located far away from the rice areas during the rainy seasons (Opala, Origin of the Gullah, 1986). White folks sought the protection offered by
the standing pines of Gillisonville, just nine miles away on higher ground. As a result, the County Seat of the Beaufort District was relocated from Coosawhatchie to nearby Gillisonville. Gillisonville, a town named for Derry Gillison, then served as the County Seat for the Beaufort District, 1840-1868. A new courthouse, hotel and tavern were constructed to create a town square in the heart of Gillisonville to take advantage of the travelers that passed through the village, lawyers and area businessmen. Unfortunately between 1864-1865, the villages of Coosawhatchie and Gillisonville were largely abandoned and burnt due to Union shelling and skirmishes during the Civil War. As Union troops gained a foothold in the area, the locals evacuated to safer areas (Coosawhatchie and Gillisonville Historical Markers).

Mont Repose Plantation, situated near the village of Coosawhatchie was in close proximity to the Coosawhatchie, Tullifinny and the Pocotaligo Rivers. These waterways meant that Union forces had access to vital bridges making local residents vulnerable during the Civil War. The Charleston-Savannah Railroad ran through the area as well. The railroad began operating in 1861, constructed to quickly expedite products from the Low Country’s plantations and manufacturers directly to the rest of the country. The railroad’s function quickly changed to serve as a vital resource for the Confederate campaign during the Civil War. It provided a steady flow of military correspondence, troops, supplies and moved much need troops to strategic locations. During the 1861-1862 coastal campaign, the headquarters of General Robert E. Lee was located in Coosawhatchie near the railroad. General Lee commissioned the construction of many earthen fortifications along the railroad and his troops occupied many of the existing plantations in the area. A large portion of this railroad runs through Cotton Hall Plantation and a
smaller portion was located on the Mont Repose Plantation property. This proximity to strategic water ways and the main railroad connecting commerce and communication from Charleston to Savannah made Mont Repose Plantation and the town of Coosawhatchie a vital location for Civil War activity (Long, 2003, pg. 1-2).

The peak of Coosawhatchie as a judicial and economic hub set the stage for Mont Repose Plantation’s success as a lucrative rice plantation. As their success was slow and steady, so was their decline. It began with the relocation of the County Seat from Coosawhatchie to Gillisonville, drawing political and economic attention away from Coosawhatchie and ending with the ruins left behind by the Civil War. It was a combination of the area’s economic downslide and the Civil War’s impact on the South that left families displaced and robbed of their most valuable economic resource, slave labor. “The coming of the War Between the States brought with it tragedy, and the termination of a certain way of life. Indeed, it wrote finis to an era” (Perry, 2001, pg. 3).

**Historical Synopsis of Mont Repose Plantation**

Mont Repose Plantation currently resides in the village of Coosawhatchie, Jasper County South Carolina. This tract of land is situated between SC 462 to the South and the Coosawhatchie River to the north/north east. The current tract is comprised of 500 +/- acres (Jasper County Land Deed, Book 202, page 96). The plantation today is a mixture of agricultural fields, woods, various ponds and a small homestead. Mont Repose is privately owned by Martha Black and is primarily used and outfitted for hunting and agriculture. Black also owns its sister plantation, Cotton Hall that is comprised of 3000 +/- acres just across the Coosawhatchie River from Mont Repose.
Black purchased Mont Repose Plantation (500 +/- acres) in 1999 from Julian L. Sox (Jasper County Land Deed, Book 202, page 96). Mr. Sox purchased 399.829 acres of Mont Repose Plantation in 1987 from a Mr. William Sheppard, Jr. (Jasper County Land Deed, Book 92, pg. 424). A 65.30 acre tract was purchased by Mr. Sox in 1991 from a Ms Barbara P. and Tony E. Sturgill (Jasper County Land deed, Book 102, pg. 128). Louisa M. Sox purchased a tract referred to as Lot #1 on 3/14/1990 from a Tony and Barbara Sturgill (Jasper County Land Deed, Book 95, pg. 1859). Mr. Sox purchased a tract referred to as Lot #2 on 3/14/1990 from a Barbara and Tony Sturgill (Jasper County Land Deed, Book 95, pg 1855). The specific acreage for the properties referred to as “Lot #1” and “Lot #2” is unknown. Another 63.3 acre tract of Mont Repose Plantation was purchased by Mr. Sox in 1993 from a J.W. Wall, Sr. (Jasper County Land Deed, Book 127, pg. 270). These purchases suggest that Mr. Sox was gradually reconstructing the original lands that once comprised Mont Repose Plantation. Sox’s purchases totaled 469.659 acres of land plus the dimensions of Lot #1 and Lot #2 collectively.

Progressing backwards, Mont Repose Plantation continues to be bought and sold with only slight changes in the amount of acreage. The plantation has been owned privately by individuals and by stockholders of corporations. Mont Repose Plantation and Cotton Hall are often associated with each other on land deeds referencing geographical boundaries and are bought/sold together at times. Cotton Hall and Mont Repose Plantation were sold together by Sumter Loan and Trust Company on 10/1/1912 to Carolina Fiber Company (Jasper County Land deed, Book 1, pg. 77).

A chain of title provides information about ownership, exchanges, families and relationships associated with Mont Repose Plantation and the surrounding area of
Coosawhatchie in the period of 1770-1879. Documentary evidence for the Coosawhatchie area poses an interesting challenge. Court documents, deeds, plats, family records, etc are difficult to find, because many important documents were burned in 1865 and family collections are sparse and hard to find.

Boundary changes also add to the confusion and widen the research quest. Coosawhatchie has been a part of the Beaufort District (St. Peter’s Parish), St. Luke’s Parish, Beaufort County, Hampton County and is now part of Jasper County. The District of Beaufort was formed in 1769 and named after Mr. Henry Somerset, Duke of Beaufort. The District was comprised from parts of the Parishes of Prince Williams, St. Luke’s, St. Helena and St. Peter’s. The town of Beaufort established in 1710, is the second oldest town in South Carolina. A significant section of the county was removed in 1878 to create Hampton County. Jasper County was later formed in 1912 from portions of Beaufort and Hampton counties (My South Carolina Genealogy, 2009, pg 1-2.). Coosawhatchie was the location of the Beaufort County Seat from 1788-1840. The local Court of Equity was moved to Coosawhatchie in 1810. A new courthouse was built in Cooswhatchie around 1817 and was likely to have been designed by the British architect William Jay. William Jay produced designs of district courthouses and jails for South Carolina from about 1817-1822. He was the official Architect for the South Carolina Board of Public Works appointed in 1820 (University of South Carolina School of Law, Coosawhatchie Courthouse).
Figure 15. Coosawhatchie Courthouse - Front Elevation

(http://law.sc.edu/colcock-hutson/images/places/beaufort_courthouse-front_lg.jpg)
An extensive search of historical documents by Dr. Sue Moore and her students began in 1999 after Mont Repose Plantation was purchased by Black. They have utilized various state and county level resources in South Carolina and Georgia. The following counties have been an area of focus in South Carolina: Granville, Hampton, Barnwell, Beaufort, Edgefield, Charleston and Jasper. Screven and Chatham Counties were areas of focus in Georgia. The online collections for newspapers out of the Augusta, Georgia area and the extensive newspaper
collection from the South Caroliniana Library at USC were vital resources in our search to gather information. Dr. Moore and her students have patiently searched for new clues that document the origin of the plantation and it’s owners. In the meantime, a search of various surnames that can be connected to either the Mont Repose Plantation or other surrounding properties has been conducted. Some of the family surnames used to help connect relationships to place in this research are: Gillison, Smith, Hugenin, Lartique, Butler, Gregorie, Walker, Doar, Drayton, Morgandollar, Wallace and Lambright. As a result an extensive family tree has been constructed using the Family Tree Maker software program and the program’s on-line research tools. Many of these surnames were connected in family ties and land/business dealings. Marrying back and forth with the intentional placement of names for their children helped to strengthen these relationships and show an affiliation to family.

Mont Repose Plantation offers a view into the life and society of the Colonial through the Civil War eras. The plantation was probably cultivated for almost 90 years and provides an excellent laboratory for understanding how plantation life may have changed with each occupation. Although the site has no visible (above ground) structures and is missing historical documentation, we have used maps, surveys, shovel testing and exhaustive documentary research to uncover what we believe is a snapshot into plantation life and society. Currently, there is a modular home, storage shed, and several deer stands situated in the area where we believe the main house once stood. There is a partial live oak alleyway still intact. But agricultural usage, pond digging and some logging of the property have disturbed the site and caused some of the artifacts to appear out of context.
Figure 17. Aerial view of Mont Repose Property and portions of Cotton Hall
Mont Repose Plantation
Coosawhatchie, SC

Figure 18. Shows elevations of Mont Repose Property and portions of Cotton Hall
Mont Repose and its sister plantation Cotton Hall were successful inland/tidal rice plantations. The plantations were situated in an ideal location for rice cultivation in tidal waters. Evidence of the impact of rice cultivation on the landscape can still be seen today. The elaborate canal systems and irrigation are still vividly evident in the aerial LiDAR Scan shown in figure 18. The elevations for majority of the property are lower and ideal for rice cultivation. There is a minimal amount of the property that would be ideal for a homestead. Mont Repose was probably extant from approximately 1770-1864 (based on artifacts) and appeared to have a peak in slave holdings around 1830-1840. Census data for the likely owner(s) of Mont Repose and Cotton Hall, Thomas Charles Gillison and his brother Samuel R. Gillison, Sr. shows a gradual increase in slaves and holdings from 1820-1840. It is important to consider census data from both Mont Repose Plantation (St Luke’s Parish) and Cotton Hall (Prince William’s Parish) as the slave population likely worked back in forth between the properties.

The data provided by the Census of 1820 in Prince Williams Parish for Thomas Gillison shows: **Whites/2 and Slaves/145** (1820 US Census, *Prince Williams Parish*, p.25). A tax return filed for Thomas Gillison of Prince Williams Parish on 4/11/1825 shows taxes paid on **2,273 acres** with **157 slaves** (SCAH, *Individual Tax returns for 1824*). It can be inferred that the 1820 Census data and the 1824 tax return relate to Cotton Hall Plantation. It is likely that Thomas Gillison owned both Mont Repose and Cotton Hall by 1820. These properties will be later referenced in Thomas’ last will and testament. A tax return filed for Thomas Gillison of St. Luke’s parish on 4/11/1825 shows taxes paid on **1,000 acres** with **48 slaves** (SCAH, *Individual Tax Returns for Beaufort County 1824*). We can infer that this tax return is relating to property that includes the Mont Repose Plantation. This combined data also shows that more slaves are
held on the Prince Williams’ larger property than the St Lukes’ smaller property where some of the Gillison family most likely resided. In 1825, Thomas Gillison resided primarily in Philadelphia and died in June of 1825 (Huguenin Bible). This was not an uncommon practice for absentee owners to live up off site while an overseer or family member managed the plantation. The disbursement of Thomas’ property will be discussed later.

The Census data from 1830 for Samuel R. Gillison of Prince Williams Parish shows: **Whites/0, Free Colored Persons/2 and Slaves/134** (1830 US Census: *Prince Williams Parish*). Again this data supports the notion that Cotton Hall was primarily used for agriculture. The 2 “free colored persons” listed were possibly acting as the overseer or drivers as this would have been customary of this time period and place. The Census data from 1830 for Samuel R. Gillison of St Lukes Parish shows: **Whites/11 and Slaves/55**. From that can be inferred that Mont Repose Plantation was a homestead of the Gillisons’. By 1830, Samuel and his wife had six living children. The other three whites listed on this Census cannot be accounted for at this time.

The Census data from 1840 for Samuel R. Gillison of St Lukes Parish shows: **Whites/6 and Slaves/217**. The data also designated persons **employed in agriculture/150** and persons **employed in manufacture/4**. There were 67 slaves designated as “under the age of 10”. The 67 slaves designated as “under the age of 10” accounts for the difference between **employed in agriculture** (150) and the **total number of slaves** (217) recorded (1840 US Census: *St Lukes Parish*). The Census data from 1840 for Thomas Gillison (Samuel’s son who inherits Cotton Hall Plantation) of St Lukes Parish shows: **Whites/4 and Slaves/99**. This data designated persons **employed in agriculture/50** and **manufacture/3** (1840 US Census: *St Lukes Parish*).
The increase in slave holdings can be explained by way of property shifting within the family and/or a natural influx in birth rates among slaves. Property such as slaves would be dispersed due to recent marriages as a typical form of dowry. Slaves, possessions and land such as plantations would also be dispersed due to deaths. Thomas Charles Gillison died in 1825, his holdings would have the largest impact on these increasing or shifting numbers. It is likely that a certain set of field slaves were being used back and forth between Mont Repose and Cotton Hall. Census data for the Gillisons fluctuates between St Luke’s Parish where Mont Repose resided and Prince William’s Parish where Cotton Hall resided.
Figure 19. Topo Map of Mont Repose and portions of Cotton Hall
CHAPTER 4
THE GILLISON FAMILY

The Gillison Family and their consorts from 1770-1865 have been the particular focus of the research surrounding Mont Repose Plantation to date. The Gillison Family has been instrumental in establishing and anchoring our bearings for the plantation and the area of Coosawhatchie along the King’s Highway.

Derry Pitman Gillison, (June 10, 1743-Feb 3, 1819) the patriarch of the Gillison family and his wife Elizabeth Bethson or Bettison (Dec 12, 1750-1819) were originally from Barwick, Massachusetts a township in the Province of Maine. Maine did not become a state until 1820. Derry and Elizabeth married on Jan. 8, 1770 in Barwick. The couple arrived in the Coosawhatchie area sometime shortly around 1770 (Gibbs Museum of Art: A History of Derry Gillison, 1935). It is likely that Derry traveled to the area to establish connections, relationships and scout out property for his tannery business. There are brief references mentioning that Derry was an established shoe maker and that he came to Coosawhatchie to start a tannery and shoe manufacturing business (Gillisonville Historical Marker, 2006-2010 and Perry, 2001 and Gibbs Museum of Art: A History of Derry Gillison, 1935). There was a need for basic manufactured goods to supply the populations of the thriving plantations in the area. Derry’s business of providing shoes and other leather goods to the plantations was a first in the area and brought him great profit. (Perry, 2001, pg.1). One can imagine the endless variety of leather goods that were needed to conduct all of the tasks on a working plantation such as: shoes, belts and bags, saddles, horse tack, wagon straps, harnesses and reigns.
Derry served as an “express rider” between Charleston and Savannah during the Revolutionary War in October of 1779 (Moss, 1983, pg 360). His name appears on several other historical documents from the area demonstrating what an instrumental figure he must have been. The US federal Census of 1790 shows Derry owning 39 slaves in Beaufort County. His holdings increase to 114 slaves listed on the US Federal Census of 1800 for Beaufort County.

Derry Gillison’s name appears on a property plat for a mortgage and appraisal of a sub-section of land consisting of 6,521 acres. The property was sold into smaller parcels to W. Achibald Smith, D. Gillison and Morgandollar on May 15, 1786. The land was being sold by John Smith Esq originally purchased from a John Wragg and was a portion of an original land barony granted to John Danson Esq. The land was described as being on the West side of the Coosawhatchie Creek. These 217 acres allotted to Derry Gillison by way of this sale are the likely location of his tannery (Individual Tax Returns, 1824). A family history of Derry Gillison provided by Ms Annie Colcock to the Gibbs Museum of Art in Charleston, SC references the tannery vats still being visible well into the 1930’s (Gibbs Museum of Art: A History of Derry Gillison, 1935).

Derry is one of the featured gentlemen in the Moving Finger of Jasper County, written by Grace Fox Perry (1947). According to Perry, Derry and his sons were prominent members of the Coosawhatchie community and surrounding towns. The Gillisons helped establish churches and were benefactors to local orphans. Gillisonville, a small town just moments away from Coosawhatchie was named after Derry Gillison. It is from Perry’s writings that many of the details surrounding the area arise including information inscribed on many of the historical markers. We must note that Perry collected much of her accounts from personal interviews,
family bibles, private papers, local newspapers and volumes that were made available to her. There are limited citations for the book which was first published in 1947 and it was only recently copyrighted in 2001. Although we should take the information with a grain of salt but have found it useful to establish research leads and help set forth the tone for the area during its progression from colony to decline (Perry, 2001, pg. 2-3).

Derry Gillison died in 1816 and his wife, Elizabeth (Eliza) died shortly after in 1819. The couple had 12 recorded children that have been located through genealogical research and listings in the Abraham Huguennin Bible. There are limited details available for some of the children since a few of them did not live past infancy/childhood. The children and their affiliations that are the most pertinent to the Mont Repose Plantation history will be discussed later. The collection of papers provided by Ms Annie Colcock to the Gibbs Museum of Art references a family cemetery located on Derry’s property in Coosawhatchie in which he and other family members are buried. The letter written by Ms Louise Huguenin included in this collection provides a description of the burials and notes alterations to the cemetery as a result of the Civil War activities in the area. She describes the cemetery as a “family plot surrounded by a brick wall”. She states that the cemetery was intentionally filled in with dirt to create an earthen “breast-works fort” during the War. There is a collection of Civil War photography by Matthew Brady held by the US National Archives that shows many of these types of breast-works in place. Brady’s collection shows the way existing features were incorporated into the war efforts (United States National Archives: Mathew Brady Photographs of Civil War-Era Personalities and Scenes, 1861-1865). Huguenin goes on to say that aside from the town of Gillisonville being the family’s namesake the surname of “Gillison becomes extinct in South Carolina today.” Her
list of notable descendents to Derry Gillison are: the Hutsons, Colcocks, Smiths, Davidsons, Barnwells. Taylors, Lartigues, Walkers, Doars, Lucas, Prentiss, Gregories, Heywards, Carters, Martins, and Roger Pinkney (Gibbs Art Museum, 2009). The Gillison burial mound including Derry and Elizabeth’s graves can still be seen today located on Morgandollar Road across from the Coosawhatchie Baptist Church. The weathered and aged head stones are difficult to read but offer some of the only visible evidence of the Gillisons in Coosawhatchie (Coosawhatchie Historical Marker).

Derry and Elizabeth had a few more notable children that branched out to form important affiliations with other prominent families in the south. Derry and Elizabeth’s son (1) Thomas Charles Gillison (1772-1825) was a successful land owner and his holdings included Mont Repose Plantation. Thomas Charles’ last will and testament will be discussed later. Derry and Elizabeth’s Daughter (2) Anna Marie Gillison (1784-1854) married Abraham Huguenin, a prominent plantation owner and rice mill builder (Perry, 2001). The couple’s wedding on Sept. 4, 1801 was announced in the marriage notices section of The South Carolina Gazette (Salley, Jr. 1902, p.120). Anna and her husband Abraham owned at one point, 25,000 acres in the area between Ridgeland and Coosawhatchie. These properties included two plantations known as “Fairfield and Retreat” which were later combined to form “Spring Hill Plantation” (Perry, Clubs and Plantations, 2001, pg 2). Derry and Elizabeth’s son (3) Charles Gillison (1788-1816) married Mary Broadbelt Ferguson. Most notably is Derry and Elizabeth’s youngest son (4) Samuel R. Gillison, Sr. (abt 1790-1847). Samuel became a prominent plantation owner including Mont Repose Plantation. Samuel’s last will and testament will be discussed later as well. Not all of the resources used to build the Gillison family tree acknowledge Samuel, Sr. as
one of Derry and Elizabeth’s sons, particularly the Abraham Huguenin Bible (Colcock, n.d.). However, by following the affiliations referenced in land deeds and Wills we feel that this is an appropriate designation for Samuel, Sr.

Samuel R. Gillison Sr. married Elizabeth (Eliza) Ann Smith on June 6, 1812 in Screven County Georgia. Elizabeth was the daughter of Aaron Smith, Esq (Jervey, 1936, pg. 262). The couple had six recorded children. Samuel Sr. Died in 1847 and there is not an exact recorded death date for Eliza (1866-1870). Samuel, Sr. left a large portion of his holdings to Eliza designated by the 1846 version of his last will and testament. In Samuel, Sr.’s will, he references various properties and plantations demonstrating his immense wealth and success. He specifically references Mont Repose Plantation, Spring Hill Plantation and Forest Plantation along with several other tracts/properties. Samuel noted that he had an earlier version of his Will recorded in May of 1843 that designated property to his son, Thomas. Samuel also provided instructions regarding his family cemetery at Mont Repose Plantation in his 1846 Will. He stated the following “I hereby authorize my executors to erect a suitable wall around my family burial ground at Mont Repos and such tombstones and monuments as they may deem proper” (SCHS: Sara R. Walker Family Papers, S.R. Gillison Will, 1846, pg. 4). This family cemetery was located and recorded during GSU field school survey and excavations, 2008-2010. The designation of Mont Repose as the location for Samuel’s family burial site exemplifies the importance of this property to the Gillison Family, particularly Samuel’s line.
Table 1

*Estate of Samuel R. Gillison: Assets from 1850 Census*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Livestock</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Crops/House Made Manufactures</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Horses:</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Wheat:</td>
<td>0 bushels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asses/Mules:</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Indian Corn:</td>
<td>1,100 bushels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milch Cows:</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Oats:</td>
<td>320 bushels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Oxen:</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Rice:</td>
<td>162,000 lbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle (Other):</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>Ginned Cotton:</td>
<td>0 bushels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep:</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>Peas/Beans:</td>
<td>55 bushels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swine:</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>Sweet Potatoes:</td>
<td>900 bushels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Head:</strong></td>
<td><strong>550</strong></td>
<td>Butter:</td>
<td>600 lbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Molasses:</td>
<td>0 gallons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Beeswax/Honey:</td>
<td>0 lbs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Samuel and Eliza’s names can be found on multiple United States Census recordings and Slave Schedules with impressive holdings for the Beaufort District. Most notable is the information provided by the Census data from 1850 for St Lukes Parish. This is the first Census data available since Samuel’s death in 1847. The data shows Eliza (50 yrs old) as head of household and her son Samuel, Jr. (25 yrs old) living with her, recorded as resident # 231. There is no occupation recorded for either of them (1850 US Census: *St Lukes Parish*, pg 26). Eliza is listed as possessing 42 slaves (1850 US Census: *St Lukes Parish*, pg 39). The Estate of Samuel R. Gillison shows a holding of 900 acres (improved) and 3233 acres (unimproved) with a total cash value of $18,000 (farm). There is a simple inventory recorded for the “value of farming implements and machinery” totaling $514. The amount and type of livestock was recorded for Samuel’s Estate shown in table 1 (1850 US Census: *St Lukes Parish*, pgs 50-51). The Census data of 1860 for St Lukes Parish shows Eliza (69 yrs old) again as the head of household with the occupation of “planter” designated. Eliza’s value of real estate is recorded as $5000, value of
personal is $28,000 and total slaves owned were 35. Her son Samuel, Jr. (34 yrs old) and a mulatto man named Sheldon Cohen (25 yrs old) are recorded as living with Eliza. No occupation is recorded for either of them. Samuel, Jr. shows a value for real estate as $6,000 and a value for personal as $3,000 (1860 US Census: *St Lukes Parish*, pg. 22 and 41).

Many of Samuel and Eliza’s children branch out to form important connections with other prominent families in the area. Samuel and Eliza’s son *(1)* Col. Thomas S. Gillison married Mary Julia Brooks and had one recorded child. Samuel and Eliza’s son *(2)* Dr. William D. Gillison married Mary S. Bird and had 2 recorded children. William’s signature was found in the Yale College Class of 1837 Autograph Album. He signed the following: “William D. Gillison Mont Repos South Carolina” (Antiquebook.com 2009, pg 2). The Obituary Record of Yale University Graduates of 1889 notes William’s education, medical practices, affiliation to the Coosawhatchie area and his military service. Samuel and Eliza’s daughter *(3)* Georgianna Adela Gillison married Daniel Isidore Lartigue. The couple’s marriage notice was found in a collection of Columbia newspapers stating that the wedding ceremony took place at Mont Repose Plantation, March 13, 1845 (The South-Carolinian, 1845, pg. 35). “Adela” is Daniel’s third wife and they had six recorded children together. Samuel, Sr. and Eliza had a son, *(4)* Samuel R. Gillison, Jr. for whom we have found very little information. We have no record of a wife or children for Samuel Jr. and no recorded death date. Samuel Jr. does appear on the previously noted Census data living with his mother Eliza. Samuel and Eliza also had a daughter *(5)* Martha H. Gillison. Martha married Thomas Hutson Gregorie in Gillisonville on July 26, 1845. Martha and Thomas had 9 recorded children. Samuel and Eliza’s most notable child in
terms of the later ownership of Mont Repose Plantation was (6) **Sarah Rebecca Gillison** born about 1829.

Sarah Rebecca married her first husband, **James Joseph Butler** of Edgefield County on December 14, 1849. Sarah and James’ first daughter **Eliza Gillison Butler** was born shortly after and did not live past infancy/childhood. She was buried at the Gillison family cemetery on Mont Repose Plantation. Pieces of her marble foot stone with her initials “EGB” have been recovered during surface collection and survey of the property. It is likely that James and Sarah were living at Mont Repose during their short lived marriage. Sarah and James’ second daughter, **Louisa (Lula) Ford Butler** was born on June 30, 1852. According to the Census data of 1850 for St. Luke’s Parish, James Joseph Butler (24 yrs old) was listed as head of household with only his wife Sarah (21 yrs old) residing in the house. There were no occupations listed for either of them. James was listed on the Census form (resident # 232) just following Eliza Gillision (resident #231) inferring that they were likely to have been property neighbors. James Joseph died in April 1854. Sarah Rebecca married her second husband, **Captain John W. Walker** in February 1862. Their only child, **Sarah (Sallie) Walker** was born on February 18, 1863. There is a collection of letters written by Sarah to her husband John that are located at the South Carolina Historical Society in Charleston along with Samuel Gillison, Sr.’s last will and testament. In these letters to John, Sarah references often that she was ill and had been for some time (SCHS: Sara R. Walker Family Papers). Sarah Rebecca Gillison Walker died on March 21, 1863 at her mother’s home in Grahamville, SC. An index of Marriage and death notices from the Confederate Baptist Newspaper recorded Sarah’s death notice and stated that she was the youngest daughter of the late Samuel R. Gillison, of St. Luke’s Parish” (Confederate Baptist,

**Samuel R. Gillison, Sr. and Mont Repose Plantation**

There are not many documents that specifically mention the Mont Repose Plantation prior to 1876. There is a deed showing the sale of “all interest in Montrepos” to Charles S. Dando in 1876 (Beaufort County Deed Book). The interest holder(s) are Ms Lula (Louisa Ford) Butler and her half-sister Ms Sallie (Sarah) Walker selling their 1 moiety (half) each of the plantation. Lula Butler and Sallie Walker were the Great Grand-Daughters of Derry Gillison and Grand-Daughters of Samuel R. Gillison, Sr. It was unclear how Mont Repose Plantation came into the possession of Lula Butler and Sallie Walker until we located the transcript of Samuel R. Gillison, Sr.’s Last Will and Testament. The transcription of Samuel’s will (1843) states the following:

“In the name of God Amen.
I Samuel R. Gillison of the Parish of St. Lukes in the District of Beaufort and the State of South Carolina being of sound mind memory and understanding do make and publish this my last will and testament hereby revoking and making void all former wills by me at any time heretofore made.
Imprimis ~ I give devise and bequeath unto my wife Ann Eliza twenty five (25) negroes in families to be selected by her out of all the negroes I leave except such as are hereinafter specifically bequeathed or provided for in a particular manner. Also my Mount Repose Plantation with the adjacent tracts called Lambright and Wallace the former devised to me by my brother Thomas Gillison and the latter purchased by me from Mr. Wallace and formerly belonging to Mr. Morgandollar. Also my Pineland house in Gillisonville and a lot of 5 acres to be attached thereto ~ my household and kitchen furniture ~ my carriage and carriage horses (?) ~ one Wagon and a team of four (4) mules ~ fifteen cows (15) and fifteen calves (15) and all the hogs on my several plantations and twenty five (25) head of sheep to have and to hold the said property real and personal for and during the term of her natural life and no longer. And
from and immediately after the death of my said wife I give and devise the Mont Repos Plantation with the adjacent tracts called Lambright and Wallace also my Pineland house in Gillisonville with the lot of five (5) acres attached thereunto also my household and kitchen furniture to my daughter Sarah Rebecca on such terms and tenure s is hereinafter prescribed for. The other property given to my wife I devise and bequeath after her death to my other children, Thomas excepted, to be held by them on the same terms and tenure as the other property given to them in subsequent clauses of this will. The children of any deceased child representing their parents and taking per stapes Not per capita ~ All which said legacy hereby given to my said wife I hereby declare to be in lieu and bar of dower.

But in case my wife should prefer to take an annuity of five hundred dollars ($500) and a negro woman names Juno in lieu and stead of the twenty five (25) negroes above bequeathed to her then in that case I do hereby bequeath to her an annuity of five hundred dollars ($500) and charge the same on the portion hereinafter given to my children to be paid by them in equal proportions that is one hundred dollars ($100) by each of them and also the said negro woman Juno for and during the life of my said wife and at her death I give the said negro and her increase to my daughter Sarah Rebecca.

Item ~ I give and devise and bequeath to my son William the following negro slaves to wit: Cyrus John Dolly and her two (2) children now living and her future present and future increase and other personal property not otherwise specifically bequeathed or given to my wife. Also my Spring Hill Plantation to have and to hold the said negroes and plantation for and during the term of his natural life and at his death I give devise and bequeath the said property real and personal to the wife and children of my said son William to be equally divided among them as follows the property to be kept together as a common fund for the support of the wife and children until a child comes of age or marries then he or she to receive his or her proportion and to hold the same absolutely in fee simple. The widow of my son to hold her share during her widowhood and from and after death or marriage the same shall go to William’s children ~ but if William should die and leave no children or having children they should all die under age and unmarried then I devise and bequeath to his widow ten (10) negroes during her widowhood and on her marriage or death the said negroes shall return to my surviving children (Thomas excepted) the child of any deceased child representing his or her (end of page the next doesn’t follow to me)

Land so received in exchange in trust to the uses of this my will expressed in reference to the said Neck (???) plantation so that the said land shall go and descend as I have given and devised the Neck (???) plantation

It is my will and desire that my daughter Sarah Rebecca should have the right to plant with her hands at either Spring Hill or Forest until she comes into the possession of her land at the death of her mother which land together with an equal share of the rest of my negroes and other personal property not specifically bequeathed or given to my wife. I devise and bequeath to my said daughter Sarah Rebecca to have to hold the same as is provided in the clauses respecting the property given to my daughter Martha.

It is my will and desire that all my children who received or have received or may receive any property from me shall account for the same at the division of my estate either by bringing the said property into (???) or retaining it at its then existing value
To my daughter Sarah Rebecca I give and bequeath as a part of her share of my negroes George Beck and their present and future issue (except one child which I have given to Dr. Gregorie and his wife Martha) to hold the said negroes on the same terms and tenure as heretofore expressed in relation to the other property given to her.

It is my will and desire that my negroes Betty, Charles, Daphne, Billy, James, Harriet and their children (except William who I give to Samuel on the same terms as his other property) may select their masters or mistress from amongst any of my children and such child or children must account for them as a portion of their respective interest under my will and hold the said negroes as the other property given to them.

This is my will and I hereby authorize my executors to erect a suitable wall around my family burial ground at Mont Repos and such tombstones and monuments as they may deem proper.

Should any of my children or grandchildren or their husbands or wives in any manner or way whatsoever dispute my absolute or fee simple title to any of the property devised and bequeathed by this my will or institute any proceedings whatever to impeach or make void any of the provisions thereof or in any manner disturb the same then all the interest of the said child or grandchild under my will shall be forfeited and the same shall go to my other children in equal proportions to be held by them on the same terms and tenure as the other property given to them.

Having conveyed to my son Thomas by deed and surrendered to him the possession of all property which I purchased at Sherriff’s sale belonging to him and which I had devised to him in codicil to a will formerly made by me on the sixth day of May 1843 (May 6, 1843) and having thus made provisions for him I do not give him anything by this will for this reason.

Lastly I nominate constitute and appoint my son Thomas Gillison and my friend W.F. Colcock executors to this my will and testament. I(n) witness whereof I have hereunto let my hand and seal this twenty eight day of September Anno domini 1846 (Sept 28th, 1846). Signed sealed and published and declared by the said S.R. Gillison as and for his last will and testament in the presence of us who in his presence and at his request and in the presence of each other have subscribed our names as witnesses thereto.

Jno (?)L. Davant
W.F. Colcock
Jos V. Morrison

S.R. Gillison

In witness whereof I have to this codicil let my hand and seal this twenty third day of June in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty seven (June 23, 1847) signed sealed declared and published by the said Samuel R. Gillison as and for a codicil to be annexed to his last will and testament to be taken as part thereof in presence of

P.J. Besselen (??)
B.F. Bucken
B.A. Mason

S.R. Gillison

South Carolina
Beaufort District
By Robert G. Norton Esquire Ordinary
Personally appeared before me P.J. Bessellen one of the subscribing witnesses to the forgoing instrument of writing who made oath on the Holy Evangelists of Almighty God that he saw Samuel R. Gillison the testator sign, seal publish pronounce and declare the same to be a codicil to be annexed to his last will and testament and to be taken as part thereof that he was then of sound and ??? Mind memory and understanding to the best of deportments knowledge and belief and deportment together with B.F. Bucken and B.A. Mason signed their names thereto as witnesses at his request in his presence and in the presence of each other at the same time qualified Thomas S. Gillison executor therein named P.J. Besselen (?)

Given under my hand this twentieth day of September in the year of the Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty seven and in the seventy second year of American Independence (Sept 20, 1847)
Robert G. Norton Ordinary B.D. (Beaufort District)
South Carolina
Beaufort District
I William N. Shuman ordinary of said district do hereby certify that this ??????? The codicil annexed to the last will and testament of the late Samuel R. Gillison deceased Copy of the original as filed in my office Given under my hand the 22nd day of July A.D. 1862 W.N. Shuman Ordinary B.D.
(Samuel R. Gillison, 1843).”

Samuel R. Gillison, Sr. (born about 1790-Nov. 3, 1847) was the brother of Thomas Charles Gillison and son of Derry P. Gillison. Samuel’s will stated that Mont Repose Plantation was to be left to his wife Elizabeth (Elizabeth Ann Smith). Within this first major paragraph he also refers to two additional tracts called “Lambright” and “Wallace” being left to Elizabeth as well. He references Mont Repose, Lambright and Wallace in the same sentence noting that the “former” was “devised” to him by his brother Thomas Gillison and the “latter” was bought by himself from Mr. Wallace. We can infer that the “former” property being referenced is Mont Repose Plantation coming into Samuel’s ownership by way of his brother Thomas (Thomas Charles Gillison). Thomas was a resident and landowner in the Coosawhatchie area but died in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania leaving behind a last will and testament (The American Baptist
magazine, New Series, October 10, 1825). Thomas Gillison’s will was found at the Philadelphia Register of Wills Office (Estate of Thomas Charles Gillison File #: W-113-1825). The transcription of Thomas’ will stated the following:

“State of South Carolina, By his Excellency Richard S. Manning Governor an Commander in Chief in and over the states aforesaid. To all to whom these presents shall come. Know ye that W. M. Hutson Esquire whose signature appears to the annexed instrument of writing is ordinary for Beaufort District in the states aforesaid. Therefore, all due faith, credit and authority is and ought to be, had and given to his proceedings and certificates as such. In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, and caused to be affixed the Seal of the State, in the city of Charleston and the twenty third day of August in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty five (1825) and in the fiftieth year of our Independence of the United States of America.

W Laval
By the Governor~ Secretary of State~
In the presence of Almighty God, I Thomas Gillison of South Carolina of Beaufort Dist: knowing the uncertainty of this Transitory life, Do think proper to make & constitute, this my last Will & Testament in manner of or follows to wit in. First I give and bequeath unto my beloved Wife Hetty Gillison in leu of Dower, all my real & personal Estate in the State of Pennsylvania, likewise one hundred and fifty (150) shares in the Bank of the United States, likewise twelve thousand dollars ($12,000) in six percent United States Stock likewise a carriage and a pair of carriage horses, likewise any part of my household furniture she may desire. I give and bequeath unto my niece Sarah Hugunin & both heirs of her body, my negro woman called Jinney/a seamstress together with her present & future increase with the exceptions of the mulatto girl called Eliza but in case the said Sarah Hugunin should die without issue these said slaves shall revert to her oldest brother then alive. Thirdly I give & bequeath unto my niece Emaline Hugunin my mulatto girl (the daughter of Jinney) called Eliza to her & her issue but in case she should die leaving no issue, she is to revert to her sister Sarah Hugunin. Fourthly I give and bequeath unto my Nephew Thomas Gillison all my plantation called Cotton Hall near Coosawhatchie together with the different tracts of land I possess attached thereto with the exception of one lately purchased at the sale of the Master in Equity formerly belonging to the Estate of Lambright. Likewise the negro mulatto woman called Clarissa with her present & future increase or issue likewise one half of my Personal Estate possessed in my own right with such exceptions as I shall hereafter make to him & his issue but incase he should die & leave no issue, the same is to revert to his eldest brother. Likewise my gold watch & silver ring ~ Fifthly I give & bequeath unto my nephew Cornelius M. Hugunin my plantation call the Retreat ~ together with the different tracts I possess attached thereto likewise the other half of my Personal Estate in my own right with such exceptions and shall hereafter make, but in case the said Cornelius M. Hugunin should die without issue the whole property is to revert to his Eldest Brother. Sixthly, I give & bequeath unto my brother Samuel Gillison the tract of land joining to him, purchased at
the sale of the Master of Equity & formerly belonging to the Estate of Lambright to him & to his children. Seventhly I give & bequeath unto the children of Charles Gillison deceased & to their issue the lot of land and buildings in Coosawhatchie near the bridge, where their father formerly resided, together with a proportion of rent I have already received ~ reference had to a Book kept for that purpose the amount will appear. Likewise one thousand dollars ($1000) cash to be laid out by my executors, herein after named shall deem best in case either of the children should die leaving no issue their proportion is to revert to the survivors. Eightly I give & bequeath unto my niece Niexe Adella Gillison the mulatto girl, called Leviah to her & her issue, but in case she should die leaving no issue the said girl is to revert to her sister Eliza Ann Gillison. Ninethly I give & bequeath unto my niece Eliza Gillison my mulatto girl named Amelia, to her & her issue, but in case she should die leaving no issue the said girl is to revert to her sister Adella Gillison. Tenthly I give & bequeath unto Martha Maghee of Penn. Five hundred dollars ($500) to her and her issue. Eleventhly I give & bequeath unto the Eldest Daughter of John May Gignilliat (?) to her & her issue one thousand dollars ($1000). Twelthly ~ It is my Will & Particular Desire that my faithful servant Aaron be set at Liberty or have freedom & my Executors herein after named, pay him annually one hundred dollars out of the Estate left to Thomas Gillis on & Cornelius M. Hugunin that he has use of the house he now resides in as long as he lives. 13 thy I give and bequeath unto the Baptist Society, belonging to the Euhaw Church & their Successors ~ The use of the meeting house & lot of land, whereon it now stands in the Village of Coosawhatchie for the express purpose of faith and order should be constituted at this place, I do finally rest all Rights and title in them of the said lot and buildings and on my mind has been made excited in the interest of the Redeemers Kingdom. I do further leave to this Society the divisions arising from one hundred & forty (140) shares in the Planters & Merchants Bank in Charleston the same to be applied to promote the preaching of the Gospel in this place & in case a church should be constituted had as above specified the said shares & after dividends shall be fully vested in them and I humbly pray that the God of Jacob may abundantly bless the labors of his Servants in this place. 14thly I give and bequeath unto the Beaufort District Society for the education, boarding and clothing of indigent children the interest arising from the balance of the charitable fund in my hands ~ informentioned had to a book kept for that purpose will fully appear ~ but in case the said Society should become ______ or have // following my be part of another will // the said Will and Richard Henry Weston the Executor named in the said Codicie having been already sworn well and faithfully to administer the same, and to make a true and perfect inventory of all and singular the said goods, chattels and credits, and exhibit the same into the Registry of an said Court on an before the last day of April next ensuing, and also to render a just and true account thereof ~ Given at the time and place above written and the eight ? Year of Our Translation

T.G. Seal of the ________ Geo. Goshing /
Court of the Archbishop Nath. Goshing / Deputy
Of Canterbury R. B. Creswell / Registers

(recorded Sept. 5, 1825).
(Estate of Thomas Charles Gillison File #: W-113-1825).”
It is important to note that within Thomas Charles Gillison’s will, under the section labeled “fourthly” he specifically mentions Cotton Hall Plantation, leaving that property and the attached tracts of land to his nephew, Thomas Gillison, (Col. Thomas S. Gillison) Samuel R. Gillison, Sr.’s eldest son. When distinguishing the property(s) being left to his nephew he stated with the “exception of one lately purchased at the sale of the Master in Equity formerly belonging to the Estate of Lambright”. He later addressed the dispursement of this property under the section of his Will labeled as “sixthly”. It is here that he designated this property to be left to his brother Samuel R. Gillison, Sr. The will further stated that this property was currently “joined” to an existing land already owned by Samuel, Sr. We can infer again that the property being referred to as “formerly belonging to the Estate of Lambright” is likely to be Mont Repose Plantation. The reference to Cotton Hall Plantation anchors our bearings and even though Mont Repose Plantation is not always specifically mentioned, we can appreciate the consistency in wording used to distinguish the property in both Wills. That being said, we can infer that Thomas Charles Gillison left Mont Repose Plantation to his brother Samuel R. Gillison, Sr. Samuel then left Mont Repose Plantation to his wife, Elizabeth and designated that upon her death the property should then be left to his daughter, Sarah Rebecca Gillison-Walker. Upon her death we can assume that she left Mont Repose Plantation to her daughters Louisa “Lula” Ford Butler (of her first marriage to James Joseph Butler) and Sarah “Sallie” Walker (of her second marriage to John W. Walker). It is unclear at this time how the Gillison family originally acquired Mont Repose Plantation. We believe that it is likely to have originated from Glen Drayton to Mr. Lambright to Thomas Charles Gillison. Our current research it looking at these
land dealings more closely hoping to further understand the property and the earlier families associated with it.

It is evident that the Gillison family was important to the Village of Coosawhatchie and the surrounding area. Many of the Gillisons profited from the riches that the area naturally provided and built intentional affiliations with other prominent families through marriage and land exchanges. The Gillison gentlemen were pillars of the community and embedded long lasting roots there. It is also evident that the Mont Repose Plantation was important to the Gillison Family, particularly Samuel. Samuel died a wealthy man. His property including “several plantations” was appraised in 1851 and valued at “one hundred and eight thousand three hundred and ten dollars and sixty cents” (Appeals in Equity, 1851). He intended to pass his wealth on to his family and by establishing his family cemetery on the Mont Repose property he intended to keep their roots there as well. Unfortunately his son Colonel Thomas S. Gillison, his assigned executor died in 1849. It is unclear if Samuel’s will was ever fully executed. The Gillison Family becomes very scattered after the 1850 Census and the activities associated with the Civil War left many important records lost. We assume that the Gillison Family scrambled to re-claim property and possessions after the war
CHAPTER 5
A SLAVE BASED ECONOMY

Slaves were the mechanisms that powered the driving economy of the Colonial and Early American South. Slaves are often portrayed as the uneducated labor force that coated the pockets of the white elite. However, most slaves possessed specialized labor skills that made them impossible to live without. Particularly when the white elite themselves possessed an education but lacked the basic labor skills and knowledge needed to cultivate or manufacture goods. The wealthy did know how to exploit an opportunity hence an economy based on the buying/selling of slaves began to boom. Planters purchased slaves which they felt possessed particular skills and experiences with rice cultivation. Often these skills were associated with slaves from certain coastal areas of Africa but it is difficult to say exactly where these slaves originated from. The networks of slave traders funded and mediated by European firms organized an elaborate system of slave collection, transport and sale. A “slave factory” was established at Bance Island on the Sierra Leone River by a London owned firm about 1750. This site allowed for the “rounding up” of large numbers of humans thought to posse specialized skills. They were held until ships arrived and then they were shipped with other luxury trade items such as ivory and wood (Opala, *Bance Island*, 1986).

The slave trade’s imported slaves came from multiple areas of Africa and these slaves were exported all over the world, from Brazil to the coasts of South Carolina and Georgia. Slaves that were marketed as possessing indigenous knowledge of rice cultivation and rice processing would often yield a higher price at Charleston markets. Regardless, the slave labor force and their imported technologies or skills made rice cultivation possible for the plantation
owners (Opala, *South Carolina Rice Plantation*, 1986). As a result, rice cultivation was the basis for South Carolina’s economy in the 1700’s and well into the 1800’s making South Carolina one of the most profitable colonies in North America with Charleston strategically located as the main center of exchange. Rice agriculture has been called "the best opportunity for industrial profit which 18th century America afforded”. The planting, cultivating, irrigation, labor patterns, processing techniques with the usage of traditional African baskets and pottery would all have been borrowed technologies (Opala, *South Carolina Rice Plantations*, 1986). The cultivation of the rice particularly the elaborate canal systems required for irrigation and drainage are likely to leave a long lasting impact on the landscape and water ways. Canal systems can still be seen today as impressions left behind by fading man-made sluices, banks, canals, and ditches. Figures 15A and 15B exemplify this lasting evidence at Mont Repose.

The African American Cemetery still used on the property today with marked graves dating back to the 1800’s lends insight into the cultural practices carried along with slaves across the Atlantic to Mont Repose. Opala’s (1986) research of the Gullah surrounds the retention of African cultures as a foundation, fused with white traditions in a geographically isolated existence demonstrates how some of these retentions may have occurred. Often field slaves lived an existence of isolation from whites. Slaves that worked the rice fields were out of sight, out of mind and would have limited interactions with the plantation owner. After the Civil War, many of these newly “freed” people stayed in the area continuing to work in agriculture. Progress was slow to reach these forgotten areas. It is this isolation that led to the development of the Gullah traditions which specific African traditions can be extracted (Opala, *The Gullah: Rice, Slavery and the Sierra Leone-American Connection*, 1986). Within the African American cemetery,
offerings left at the grave sites and the symbols that embellish the headstones are evidence of African retention at Mont Repose.

It can be expected that some of the slaves at Mont Repose and Cotton Hall would have experienced some level of this isolation as well. It can be inferred that the slaves owned by the Gillisons were shifted back and forth between Mont Repose and Cotton Hall to cultivate rice. It is not likely that there was ever a main homestead located on the Cotton Hall property as the family’s affiliation to this property appears to be strictly agricultural. Mont Repose would have been designated as the main homestead particularly during Samuel R. Gillison’s ownership. The 1830 census data for Prince William’s Parish under Samuel R. Gillison shows zero whites living on Cotton Hall. Instead, there are 134 slaves listed and 2 “fee colored persons” (1830 US Census, *Prince Williams Parish*, pg. 329). The Gillisons’ slaves may have experienced longer periods of isolation while assigned to the Cotton Hall property. Any of the slaves associated with the rice fields on either property would have had more frequent interactions with a “driver” or “overseer” rather than the Gillisons. Coastal and Inland rice plantations, including Mont Repose would have likely used a task system of labor. This type of system meant that slaves had set daily tasks that had to be accomplished. Often once these tasks were completed the slaves were allotted “free time”. This “free time” allowed the slaves to supplement their diets, reinforce bonds through social activities and create a rich material culture (Opala, *The Gullah: Rice, Slavery and the Sierra Leone-American Connection*, 1986).

It can be expected that the domestic slaves associated with the main house and its support structures would have had a different plantation experience than field slaves. These slaves lived constantly under the watch full eye of the whites and were required to be available at their every
need. Even if they were held under a task system these house slaves were often on call 24/7 and had less “free time” and less “unsupervised time” to reinforce African traditions. Typical domestic slaves would have duties such as: maid service, butler, cook, seamstress, laundry, gardener, coachman, etc. Some plantation owners required their domestic slaves to maintain a number of daily tasks making it difficult to accomplish them all. Other plantation owners had a domestic slave for each individual task and provided their slaves with finer clothes, higher quality food and higher status living space (Vlach, 1993, p. 18-19). This closer relationship could allow for a higher frequency of recycling of goods no longer used by the whites to their domestic slaves. As a result, we would expect to find higher status markers within the dwellings of these domestic slaves (Otto, 1984).

In comparison, a much smaller number of slaves were assigned to domestic service than in agriculture. It was common practice even with large plantations, like Mont Repose holding over one hundred slaves to assign only 6-10 slaves to domestic duties (Vlach, 1993, p. 18). It would be that smaller population of slaves with the specialized domestic skills associated with the main house and its immediate support structures that are the focus of this research in conjunction with the Gillison Family.
CHAPTER 6  
ARCHEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT MONT REPOSE (38JA407)

Methods

Geographical features, ground surveying and shovel testing were used to locate the structure that is the focus of this research. Artifacts, historical documents associated with the property and other comparative properties have been used to help predict the layout of the structure, reconstruct the identity of both the function of the structure and the people that shared space within its walls. It is our hope that by using historical/archival documents available at the time and the diagnostic artifacts found within the structure that an appropriate function can be identified. Ultimately, it is the story of the people that we hope to better understand.

Mont Repose as an archeological site began as an educational project headed up by Dr. Sue Moore of Georgia Southern University. Dr. Moore had an existing relationship with Martha Black conducting excavations on her property, Old Town, in Jefferson County, Georgia. Archival research and preliminary fieldwork at Mont Repose begin in May 1999 just after Black purchased the 500 acre property.

A baseline map was created to establish where Black’s property boundaries were located and to note geographical features. Ground survey was used in conjunction with geographic features and surface collection of artifacts to designate potential research areas and a plan for laying in transects. Surface collection on various areas of the site yielded: historic ceramics, various colors of glass, brick, shell, nails, flint debitage, points and prehistoric pottery. The surface collection method was not always lucrative or reliable as the ground cover is often heavy
and portions of the property were not maintained by mowing/clearing. Posthole testing was conducted along transects in areas with the greatest likelihood of site location and/or that yielded a high concentration of surface collection.

The property was then divided into 3 areas of occupation. These areas are referred to as MR1, MR2 and MR3. MR1 contains the areas associated with the Plantation Era occupation that would contain the main house, support structures, slave structures, yard areas, driveway, gardens, etc. MR1 was used as the site number reference for all data within the established area. Due to the potential data within MR1 this area was deemed priority and field school efforts were concentrated there. The occupations/areas associated with MR2 and MR3 have had little exploration to date.

Within MR1, transect “A” was established just north of an existing grape arbor associated with the existing modular home and yard. Shovel testing was conducted at 50 M intervals and continued to yield building materials and historic ceramics. All tests (posthole and shovel) were taken down to sterile soil when obstructions did not prevent completion. Hand held screens with ¼ inch screen were used to shift fill from test areas. In early 2000 the field crew began laying in lines running N to S and E to W and continued with posthole testing in the areas around the modular home. Initially, artifacts were washed, marked and cataloged by the field crew on site. Later the processing efforts were moved to the Archeology Lab located at Georgia Southern University. Units in the area just north of the grape arbor were opened in spring 2000. These two meter by two meter units were used to further explore areas that continued to yield high concentrations of artifacts. Tests were conducted at closer intervals in areas that yielded artifacts.
Unit N808 E800 was opened in April 2000 and began the block of units that are the focal point of this research. Measurements were taken using a 4 post transit set up over unit N830 E 800 with the datum established at 1.09 M. Each unit was excavated paying close attention to color changes occurring in the soil. Measurements were taken for each unit at 10 CM intervals unless a color change occurred sooner. Shovels were used to remove the contents of each unit until more delicate methods of troweling and brushing were needed. All of the contents from the units was extracted or “screened” from the fill and collected in field specimen bags. Initially all units were set at screening with ¼ inch screen/hardware cloth and all items removed from the units were bagged and labeled for processing. All brick, mortar and shell was weighed and recorded for each unit in the field and then discarded on site. A standardized set of forms were used to record data for each individual unit. Daily activities, conditions, job assignments and all pertinent information were recorded in field notebooks. Photographs were taken daily and particular attention was given to the opening and closing photos of each field seasons. The block has been mapped each field season to establish a record including all units (new and existing), features, stratigraphy and unique finds. The maps allow for a continuous plane showing the flow of activity from one unit to the next.

The majority of spring and summer field school efforts have been focused on the block units since the original unit was opened in 2000. Adjustments to the excavation standards have been made when small faunal and small artifact materials were found. The screen size was decreased to 1/16 mesh to ensure that smaller artifacts were not being overlooked. All new units opened in the 2006 field season began with the 1/16 screen and the existing units made a gradual progression to the new screen size as well. As conditions in the individual units became an
issue, a transition to water screening became necessary. Water screening began with the units where water retention was an issue. The water retention within these units in conjunction with the high concentration of clay made artifacts difficult to distinguish during the screening process. Once water screening began with these challenging units the effectiveness was quickly realized and this became the standard means for screening all units. Water screening accelerated the screening process and allowed for better visibility of artifacts among debris.

Also in 2006 a South Carolina state site number was applied for using the preliminary evidence from the block units and was issued on 8/30/06. The South Carolina State site number assigned to the kitchen block units on Mont Repose Plantation is 38JA407. All findings are now referenced as MR1/38JA407.

By the closing of the 2011 field season, there were 17 units comprising the kitchen block. It is thought that the fourth wall of the structure has begun to surface in the newer units on the east end of the block. The units continue to yield an array of artifacts such as historical ceramics, storage vessels, various glasses, faunal material, nails, shell, brick, personal items and prehistoric pottery/lithics. With each field season we unfold more of the structure and gain a better understanding of its potential.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N810 E796</th>
<th>N810 E798</th>
<th>N810 E800</th>
<th>N810 E802</th>
<th>N810 E804</th>
<th>N810 E806</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Exterior</td>
<td>Exploratory Unit only</td>
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<td>HEARTH</td>
<td>HEARTH</td>
<td>HEARTH</td>
<td>HEARTH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>N808 E800</td>
<td>N808 E802</td>
<td>N808 E804</td>
<td>N808 E806</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exterior</td>
<td>Not Open</td>
<td>Exterior</td>
<td>Exterior</td>
<td>Exterior</td>
<td>Exterior</td>
<td>Exterior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 20.** The Block Units at Mont Repose
Figure 21. MR1Digitized version of Map #28 of Block Units showing features, May 2006.
Figure 22. Digitized version of Map #43 showing features and artifacts, June 2009.
Analysis

The majority of artifact processing was conducted in the archeology lab at Georgia Southern University during the off seasons from field schools. The artifact processing was primarily conducted by students with some previous field school experience. Standard lab processing techniques for the artifacts were established. All artifacts were washed unless damage resulting from washing was a concern. Artifacts were then marked using Acryliod B-67 and standard calligraphy ink. All of the marked artifacts were labeled with MR1/FS# (assigned FS #) or 38JA407/FS #. Artifacts were cataloged using a catalog sheet created specifically for the Mont Repose site using South’s (1977) methodology for artifact grouping (i.e. Kitchen Group, Clothing Group, Personal Group, etc). A variety of resources were consulted for the identification of certain artifacts. Online sources such as collector sites and old Sears and Roebuck catalogs were ideal resources in conjunction with printed collector’s guides. All artifacts were then stored in appropriate clear (acid free) baggies or vials sealed within the original field specimen bag. Field specimen bags were labeled with Unit designation, Level, Zone, Date and the assigned FS number. All field specimen bags were stored in (acid free) curation boxes typically grouped together by specific units or FS #’s depending on volume.

A database using the same methodology as the catalog sheet was created to manipulate the data for this preliminary research. Due to time constraints and the overwhelming amount of artifacts found within the block units, a sample of artifacts that were fully processed to date from selected units were chosen for this preliminary analysis. Units N806 E802, N808 E800, N810 E802, N810 E798, N810 E796 were sampled. Key artifacts from other units in the block will be
discussed but not included in the data totals or data comparisons. The data sample for this analysis contains 26,122 artifacts.

Figure 23. Quantity of artifacts within South’s (1977) categories
**Figure 24.** Distribution of ceramic types within units sampled

**Figure 25.** Shows basic categories of Earthenwares
Figure 23 shows the quantity of artifacts within each main category. The kitchen category yielded the majority of artifacts in this sample. All other categories combined yield less than the kitchen category alone. The Architecture category was the second largest category whereas the Personal category yielded the least. Figure 24 shows the distribution of ceramic types (Porcelain, Stoneware, Earthenware) within the units sampled. The earthenware types of ceramics yielded the largest quantity of artifacts within the units sampled. These earthenwares range from the poorer made lead glazed slipwares to the finer hand-painted (polychrome) pearlwares and blue/white transfer printed pearlwares.

Figure 25 shows the variation of creamwares and pearlwares within the earthenware category. The pearlware types yielded the highest quantity at 5,064 sherds. The creamwares yielded a total of 1,338 sherds. The pearlware types were separated into the categories of plain, transfer printed (all colors varieties), edgewares (all color varieties and patterns) and decorated (all other decorated sherds that did not fall into the previous categories). The creamwares were separated into the categories of plain and decorated (all types of decorated sherds including transfer printed). It is important to note that many of the sherds designated as plain within the creamwares and pearlwares may actually be the plain portions of decorated vessels, particularly the edgewares (Chicora, 1995, pg. 38-39).

Excavations at the Rose Hill Plantation located in Prince William’s Parish, just across the Coosawhatchie River from Mont Repose Plantation yielded a similar earthenware assemblage. When comparing the findings of the block units to the Rose Hill Plantation, again the Kitchen category yielded the bulk of the Rose Hill assemblage. At Rose Hill the Architecture group was the second largest category whereas both the Furniture group and Personal group offered the
least at zero. Adams, Trinkley and Hacker (1995) discuss the usage of annular, edged and plain wares verses transfer printed wares with regards to status and structure designation by comparing the data from Rose Hill to John Otto’s (1984) research at Cannon’s Point (Adams, Trinkley & Hacker, 1995, pg. 38-39). The precedent set by Otto’s work suggests that among the slave class it can be expected to find an abundance of edgewares, annularwares, and plainwares with regards to the planter. The abundance of transfer printed wares is expected within planter structures. These transfer printed vessels should be expected in sets with matching patterns rather than the mix and match patterns found within slave structures. The overseer class can be expected to yield a similar artifact pattern to the slave. Again with an emphasis on recycling, broken or mix and matched vessels (Adams, Trinkely & Hacker, 1995, pg 38 and Otto, 1984, pg. 64-67).

Identifying specific patterns or sets among a ceramic assemblage like at Mont Repose Plantation poses a challenge for analysis at the preliminary state. Cross mending and matching of similar sherds to establish the variation among patterns or sets is time consuming and typically occurs after excavations have been exhausted. Excavations at Mont Repose have not been completed in the block units. Some cross mending of larger vessel portions has occurred, though as part of other investigations. As figure 25 shows, the most prevalent type of earthenware found within the block units was transfer printed pearlware. The abundance of plain sherds within the pearlware category does not imply an abundance of plain pearlware sets. Many of these plain sherds can be accounted for within the edgewares category and are simply plain portion of these edge decorated wares. Following the status argument discussed previously for Rose Hill, it can be inferred that this abundance of transfer printed pearlwares are suggestive of a planter class.
A few of the earthenwares have been cross mended to some degree of completion. These mended vessels are also supportive evidence for planter class usage. Figures 26 and 27 show an example of a Toby Jug. This particular vessel is a Wood-Type jug datable to the late 18th Century and crafted by Enoch Wood. Figures 28 and 29 show an almost completely mended green edgware decorated soup tureen. Figure 30 shows a creamware christening mug with “A Present for John” inscribed on the front. All of these higher status, decorated ceramics are often associated with the planter class.

Figure 26. Photograph of Toby Jug fragments being sorted and mended.
Figure 27. Photograph of a portion of the Toby Jug vessel mended
Figure 28. Photograph of mending in process of Green Edgeware Tureen View #1.
Figure 29. Photograph of Green Edgeware Tureen nearly complete view #2.
Figure 30. Photograph of Creamware christening mug “A present for John” partially mended.
South’s (1977) formula of mean ceramic date and the datable categories laid out by South were used to organize the volume of data present in this preliminary analysis. Not all of the ceramic sherds within this sample fit neatly into South’s datable categories. Porcelain was excluded from the mean ceramic date calculation as it is often a small portion of plantation assemblages and would have little effect on the data. Table 2 shows the manipulation of data used to produce a mean ceramic date for the block units. The mean ceramic date for the block units is 1798. This date is slightly earlier than expected but makes sense considering time lag and usage of ceramics beyond the peak of manufacture (South, 1977, pg. 210-212 and 217). The mean ceramic date by no means implies that the structure was vacated by 1798. This date simply

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ceramic Type</th>
<th>Type Median</th>
<th>Sherd Count</th>
<th>Product</th>
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<td>41</td>
<td>73,185</td>
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<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>1733</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>142,106</td>
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<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>1668</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5,004</td>
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<td>90</td>
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<td>37</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<td>34</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>1791</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>143</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>1805</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 and 12</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>300,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Totals:** 4153 7,471,229

\[ \frac{7471229}{4153} = 1798.9 \]  Mean Ceramic Date
establishes a manufacture mean date for the ceramic assemblage from the block units that fit into South’s datable categories. Mean ceramic date can be supported by a historical mean date providing the occupation dates for the site are documented (South, 1977, pg 219-220). Unfortunately at Mont Repose there is an absence of historical documents during the time period of occupation suggested by the mean ceramic date for this assemblage. Also the mean ceramic date for the block units may differ slightly once a complete analysis of this bulky assemblage is completed.

Figure 31. White clay pipe data for this sample
Figure 32. Photograph showing examples of Pipestems with bore-hole diameter of 5/64 from block units
Table 3

*Mean Pipe Stem for Block Units*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diameter</th>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Fragment Count</th>
<th>Product</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bore Size 6/64</td>
<td>1680-1710</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bore Size 5/64</td>
<td>1710-1750</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>1285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bore Size 6/64</td>
<td>1750-1800</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Mean Date = 1742*
Figure 33. Photograph showing examples of Pipebowls found within the block units View #1
The usage of pipestem dating established by Binford (1961) can be used to support mean
dating for an occupation. A predictable chronology of borehole sizes with regards to pipestem
manufacture was created by Binford in conjunction with his formula. Figure 31 shows the array
of white clay pipe associated artifacts within the block units sample. The majority of fragments
fell within the pipe bowl category, 269. A small number of nearly whole pipe bowls were
included in this category. The remaining portion of the pipe data falls within the pipe stem
category which is separated by borehole size. The borehole diameters ranged from 6/64-4/64.
The largest volume of borehole diameters was 5/64. Figure 32 shows an example of the 5/64 pipstems found within the block units. Using Binford’s (1961) formula, a mean pipestem date was established for this sample as 1742. Table 3 shows the date totals used for this sample of pipe stems to establish the mean date. Often the pipestem date is supported by a mean bowl date. This bowl date is established by using a chronology of bowl type manufacture dates or seriation established by Oswald (1951). Unfortunately near complete bowl specimens within an assemblage are less common (Mallios, 2005, pg. 89-91). Figures 33 and 34 show the style of pipe bowls found within the block units.

Clay pipes have a long span of usage beyond actual manufacture. When stems became blocked it was customary to snap off the blocked portion and continue to use the pipe. It is possible to find pipe stems within a site that do not associate with the bowl fragments found within the same site. Since the amount of additional data available from a bowl comparison was limited, a mean bowl date was not established for the block units assemblage. It is not likely that anyone was living at Mont Repose within the block units structure in the 1740’s. Coosawhatchie was just beginning to be inhabited in the 1740’s as previously discussed. The lifespan of pipe usage better accounts for the range in mean dates (pipe stem and ceramic).

Curiously all of South’s (1977) artifact categories were represented to some degree within the units sampled. It can be expected that these none kitchen related categories will grow as excavations and analysis continues. A distribution map showing all artifacts within all of the block units would be ideal. First a more complete analysis needs to be conducted to explore possible activity areas within the structure than can be exemplified by artifact patterns within all of the block units. These activity areas may be associated with established work stations or
tasks. It is important to note that the non-kitchen categories are equally as important to understanding this structure. Photographs of additional artifacts can be found in the appendix.

Faunal analysis was conducted by Misty Y. Dunn of Georgia Southern University in 2010. An online version of Dunn’s thesis can be found at: http://dspaceprod.georgiasouthern.edu:8080/jspui/bitstream/10518/3477/1/Dunn_Misty_Y_201008_MASS.pdf. Dunn conducted an analysis on a sample of the faunal remains from 8 of the 16 units in the block. The faunal remains included in her analysis were processed as of 2010 from units N810 E798, N810 E800, N810 E802, N808 E798, N808 E800, N808 E802, N808 E804 and N806 E802. These sampled units produced a sorted (identifiable) total of 10,355 bone fragments with a gram weight total of 14,809.94. The non-sorted fragments produced a total of 4,397 and a total gram weight of 5,398.3. Dunn’s research focused on the data regarding the sorted bone only. Among the population of sorted bone she found that faunal material with butchering or cut marks was rather low, yielding a total of 106 bone fragments with a gram weight total of 1,420.3. The amount of sorted bone reflecting burnt or heat alteration was low as well, yielding a total of 370 bone fragments with a total gram weight of 292. Figure 35 shows the distribution of faunal material within the block units. The darker areas yielded the highest concentration of bone fragments. (Dunn, 2010, Pg. 36-38).
The majority of sorted faunal bones in Dunn’s research were mammal, 13,369.08 grams out of 14,809.94 grams. The mammal category was most comprised by the larger boned mammals such as *Bos taurus* (domestic cow), *Sus scrofa* (domestic pig) and *Odocoileus virginianus* (white tailed deer). The smaller mammals represented in the faunal analysis were
Procyon lotor (raccoon), Didelphus virginianus (opossum), Scurius niger (squirrel) and Silvilagus floridanus (eastern cottontail rabbit). Dunn also found examples of Testudines (tortoises and terrapins), various fish, Aves (domestic chicken and turkey), and Reptilia (alligator and snake). Two teeth belonging to Equus caballus (domestic horse) were represented however none of the large mammal bones have been diagnosed as horse to date. (Dunn, 2010, pg. 39-40).

Dunn found that Bos taurus (domestic cow) was most broadly represented within all 8 units sampled among levels 2 (zones A-D) and 3 (zones A-D). Dunn references the broad scale usage of cow within a plantation diet as well as the usage of hide, manure and even bone (Dunn, 2010, pg. 41-42). It can be inferred from data available from Samuel Sr.’s Will and his property listed in the 1850 census that cows were important to the Gillison’s holdings and were likely raised on the Mont Repose property (Gillison, S.R., 1862 and United States Census, 1850). Dunn also found evidence that Eliza Gillison (Samuel, Sr.’s widow) sold beef to the Confederate troops in 1861 and 1862 (Subsistance Receipts, 1861-1862). It is possible that the cows owned by the Gillison’s were maintained on other properties but in part butchered or consumed at Mont Repose Plantation (Dunn, 2010, pg. 41-42).

Dunn concluded that the data sampled from the block units for her research yielded a faunal diet conclusive of a planter family. She found while comparing the faunal materials from Mont Repose to other similar sites that a diet with a variety of wild species was common among planters. Due to the amount of faunal material in conjunction with an array of other kitchen related artifacts, Dunn concluded that the structure is most likely a kitchen. Aside from kitchen duties it is common for a structure to encompass a variety of other activities and smaller functions. Even though the designation of the structure would be planter class, the activities and
food preparation would have been conducted by slaves possibly owned by the Gillison’s. Dunn also suggests that the site was used as a trash pit after the structure was no longer used or standing. She infers that the high concentration of faunal bone would not have been deposited in a structure still in use for cleanliness and odor issues (Dunn, 2010, pg. 94-100). It is possible that this high volume of faunal material particularly within units N808 E800 and N808 E802 could be accounted for when the demise of the structure is considered. These concentrations of faunal material may fall within activity areas where certain butchering or meal preparation was being conducted. If the demise of the structure (which will be discusses in detail later) created an unexpected abandonment then this faunal material would have logically been left in place. Portions of this faunal assemblage may be the result of decomposed food rations rather than discarded food bone.
CHAPTER 7
STRUCTURE, FUNCTION AND DEMISE

Structure and Function

The structure within the block has been deemed “the kitchen” since the very beginning of excavations. The preliminary analysis of the excavations conducted in unit N808 E800 yielded evidence of kitchen type activities. As excavations progressed and more units were opened, certain artifacts found have challenged the notion of this structure being just simply a kitchen or challenged the pre-conceived notions of what a kitchen assemblage should be. The question has now become, what were all of the functions of the block unit structure and who took up space within its walls?
The architecture of the structure has always been of interest in helping to diagnose function. Currently there appears to be a narrow, rectangular structure with a single hearth (external masonry) located on the western end of the block units shown in figure 36. This single hearth/chimney appears to yield enough brick fall to allow for a one story structure. Overly exaggerated chimneys were customary of this time period taking the smoke and heat high above the structure (Gary Thorne, personal communication, July 8, 2011). The brick from the chimney does not appear to have been disturbed or looted for recycling. The amount of brick recovered from the block units provides a solid estimate. The area in front of the hearth is heavily...
impacted and there is an accumulation of charred brick and shell. The only identified walls have been associated with the exterior of the structure; no interior walls have been indentified to date. It is likely that the structure was a simple one room design as a single hearth/chimney would support. Post holes and a possible drip line are evident as features that have been mapped in. Within unit N810 E802, Features #21 and #21B are an accumulation of soot and ash piled up in proximity to a wall border of the structure leading to the notion that the contents of the hearth may have been repeatedly discarded there (possibly out a window or door). It is likely that the structure was above ground supported by beams atop pilings or footers following a typical construction design of this period. More recent excavations suggest the possibility of a cellar and further exploration is needed in these areas (N808 E804, N806 E804) of the block units. Figure 36 shows the projected layout of the structure and exemplifies the post hole pattern particularly through the N812 units.

Since brick is the primary architectural material (aside from nails) still evident in the block units, a brick mason specializing in historic preservation was consulted for feedback regarding the brick fall. Gary Thorne, a historic brick mason from Elabell, Georgia offered his services. Thorne stated that an estimate of chimney dimensions is possible to obtain by “back calculating” from a brick count of whole bricks. However, the brick found in the block units was weighted not counted individually as the condition of the brick varied from whole to fragments. Thorne stressed the variation in chimney dimensions but suggested that a “normal Chimney would be approximately 5-6 feet across by 1/2 feet deep (over all dimensions)”, keeping in mind that “cooking chimneys could be much wider” and the term “normal is hard to define”. Thorne provided that “approximately 7 standard brick (~2.7” x 7.7”) equal 1 square foot of surface area,
when laid as stretchers (normal brick work)”. It is common for chimneys to be wider at the base and this would affect brick count as well as any decorative hearth or mantle work (Gary Thorne, personal communication, July 8, 2011).

Thorne stated that it is common for a chimney height to range from 2 feet above the roof line to no more than 8 feet above the roof line. He suggested that the variation in chimney heights above roof line can be accounted for a few principle reasons. The basic principle of a chimney’s function is to cause hot air to rise which creates a draft. The draft in turn vents the smoke and feeds fresh air directly to the fire. Chimneys that were less than 2 feet above the roof line would not have effectively drafted and chimneys that exceeded 8 feet above the roof line would have been more ornamental. Prior to the 20th Century higher chimney types were better for accelerating “the smoke/air enough to clear the air around the home” particularly since “fires were in every home”. The functional design of the higher chimney design also worked better in areas that were heavily populated with homes or in close proximity to woods. These types of congested areas often caused “irregular air densities” that in turn “affected chimney performance” (Thorne 2011). The most important advantage to the higher chimney design was that it produced “more local heat (inside the firebox) but less heat inside the home” allowing more air to rush through the home and feed the draft. This localized heat within the firebox would be ideal for cooking while at the same time not causing the structure itself to become uncomfortable and used less fuel. This would be most advantageous for buildings located in extremely hot climates such as the Deep South (Gary Thorne, personal communication, July 8, 2011).
Figure 37. Photograph of Block Units showing brick fall and seven ft saw in situ
Figure 38. Photograph of Block Units showing features after brick fall was excavated

(View #1)
Figure 39. Photograph of Block Units showing features after brick fall was excavated (View #2)
Figure 40. Photograph of an example of a Standing hearth/chimney at Old Town Plantation in Jefferson County, GA (View #1)
Figure 41. Photograph of an example of a Standing hearth/chimney at Old Town Plantation in Jefferson County, GA (View #2 above)
Figure 42. Fort Hill, Kitchen, Clemson University Campus, Pickens South Carolina. Taken by Jack E. Boucher 1960. Shows the interior view of fireplace and brick oven. Shows common display and storage of kitchen-wares (HABS SC, 39-CLEM, 1B-2, 1960)

The artifacts and features in situ present a series of events that can be followed to reconstruct some of the design. The majority of the brick fall shown in Figure 37 is located towards the center of the southern portion of the structure. This area of brick accumulation also falls into the deepest impact zone of all the block units excavated to date. Within the brick fall certain artifacts were found that left clues regarding orientation. A two-man, 7 foot hand saw was excavated within this brick fall. The saw presented in a vertical orientation which required
intense excavation to remove completely. After viewing comparative hearth arrangements it is possible that the saw was hung above the mantle of the hearth. The majority of larger ceramic sherds and window glass commonly associated with furniture windows was recovered from this brick fall area as well. A light olive green demijohn that was cross mended to an almost complete specimen was recovered from the brick fall. It appears as though the hearth/chimney (located at the western end of the structure) brick fell inward towards the center of the structure bringing down the saw and possibly a hutch and/or other smaller pieces of furniture associated with the storage of ceramics, kitchen-wares and sewing materials. Thorne concurred that most chimneys typically fall in direction of the hearth opening. He states that a chimney falls “much like a tree” and it is rare for the hearth portion to fall with it (Gary Thorne, personal communication, July 8, 2011). If the hearth portion often remains this should create a distinct feature of impacted brick and mortar materials.
Figure 43. Photograph of Seven Foot Saw excavated at Mont Repose Plantation in Kitchen Block Units

Figure 44. Photograph of Seven ft Saw found in the brick fall
Figure 45. Photograph of Demijohn Case Bottle being excavated at Mont Repose Plantation in Block Units
Demise

Originally it was presumed that the structure would have been burned as a result of Sherman’s troops. However, the evidence has taken this research in a different direction. The quantity of artifacts and features that show evidence of burning or heat contact are low. Out of the 26,122 artifacts sampled, only 796 fell into the category of burnt. Within unit N812 E802, Feature #23 contains a burnt root that was likely the result of a modern disturbance. Naturally
any of the artifacts laying along this root experienced heat alteration associated with a post occupation disturbance. A reasonable amount of burnt or heat altered artifacts are expected associated with cooking and kitchen usage and likely account for some of the burnt artifacts in this assemblage. The mean ceramic date for the structure suggests a much earlier occupation and demise not associated with Civil War destruction and will be discussed in detail later.

Figure 47. Photograph showing an Early 20th Century out building constructed of beam over pilings support. Burnt 7/22/11 in Register, GA. View #1
Figure 48. Photograph showing an Early 20th Century out building constructed of beam over pilings support. Burnt 7/22/11 in Register, GA. View #2
Highly flammable woods such as fat-lighter were often used as building materials particularly the support beams. An intentional or unintentional fire would ignite an entire structure leaving nothing but charred ash behind. All of the contents within a structure would have evidence of burning or exposure to heat. Also figures 47–49 show that with fire there is a limited amount of crushing or shifting that occurs. The tin shown in these figures sits flat on the ground exactly below where it once roofed an overhang.
It is likely that the block units’ structure met its demise by way of storm, particularly a tropical hurricane or tropical storm. There were several recorded tropical hurricanes or cyclones that plagued the low country area in the 18th and 19th Centuries. Due to the unpredictable nature of these storms, residents would have been left with little time for evacuation and/or salvaging of precious possessions. The anticipated season for these storms (summer-fall) coincided with the crucial crop season for most of the south, particularly rice and cotton. Residents were often on edge and wary of widespread devastation and possible loss of valuable crops (Adams, Trinkley & Hacker, 1995, pg. 8). The peak of hurricane season or “gale” season (high winds) in the lowcountry was August-October (Frasier, 2006, pg. 5). The storm surge expected with storms of this caliber would create flooding well beyond the immediate coastal areas. Loss of bridges, roads and limited access back to homes and properties would be crippling (Adams, Trinkley & Hacker, 1995, pg. 8). In addition to flooding caused by the storm surge which often comes after the storm has past, areas where a storm passes over land could expect flash floods from an additional 6-12 inches of rain and potential for tornadoes (Frasier, 2006, pg. 5). Much like the devastating storms of today, the effects could be long lasting and the rebuilding slow to come.

A chronology of low country hurricanes (1686-2004) was established by Walter J. Frasier, Jr. (2006) for his book, *Lowcountry Hurricanes: Three Centuries of Storms at Sea and Ashore*. Frasier’s chronology compiles specific data for each storm (if available) which included: Year, Month/Day, Category, Offshore/Landfall area, Wind Speed (Est MPH), Storm Surge (Est Feet), Deaths (Est), Damages (Est 2003 dollars), Name, Comments. Frasier referenced 9 storms with a landfall specifically near Charleston, 1686-1865 (Frasier, 2006, pg. 256-259). Frasier also stated that even though the Charleston area was repeatedly plagued by
storms, the first recorded by colonists in 1686, the opportunity to exploit the growing economy out weighted the risk for some (Frasier, 2006, pg. 3). Within Frasier’s chronology there are specific storms mentioned would have likely affected the residents of Coosawhatchie during the occupation focus for the block units structure at Mont Repose Plantation.

Table 4
*Suspect Hurricanes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Target Area</th>
<th>Wind Speed</th>
<th>Storm Surge</th>
<th>Deaths/ Damages</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 1804</td>
<td>GA/St Simmons SC/Beaufort</td>
<td>111 MPH</td>
<td>Est. 9-12 ft</td>
<td>500+ Dead</td>
<td>“Huge loss in lives and property”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 1813</td>
<td>Landfall between Charleston and Georgetown</td>
<td>12 ft at Charleston</td>
<td>23+ Dead</td>
<td>$14,951,220 In Charleston</td>
<td>“Extreme Hurricane” “One of Charleston’s major disasters”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 1822</td>
<td>Landfall Upper SC Coast</td>
<td>111 MPH</td>
<td>Est. 9-12 ft</td>
<td>500+ Dead</td>
<td>“Immense property and crop loss”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$22,156,626 In Charleston</td>
<td>$7,536,885 Near Georgetown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The storm of 1804 affected both the Georgia and South Carolina coastlines, Sept. 7th-8th. This storm was also listed as a “major hurricane” with an estimated wind speed of 111 MPH and caused an estimated 500 plus deaths (Frasier, 2006, pg. 258-259). Unfortunately, there is no specific storm surge recorded for this storm. According to the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Potential Damage Scale referenced by Frasier, a storm with the wind speed of 111 MPH is
considered a “Category 3” hurricane. A “category 3” hurricane is expected to produce a 9-12 foot storm surge above existing water levels, plus extensive flooding in proximity to beaches and rivers (Frasier, 2006, pg. 4). The estimated amount of damages for the Savannah area were $7,475,610 and for the Charleston area $14,951,220. The affects of the storm were summarized as “huge losses in lives and property”. The 1804 storm season in general was referred to as “one of the most severe hurricane seasons in decades for both the Caribbean and the lowcountry. Many of the accounts associated with the storm season of 1804 reflect the loss of human life (black and white). Many plantation owners reported the loss of slaves and for some this meant “economic disaster” (Frasier, 2006, pg. 39-44, 258-259). Since the peak of hurricane season coincides with the peak of the rice season, the majority of field slaves on a plantation would be in proximity to the rice fields. These rice fields are in the naturally lowest lying areas and of course the first areas to flood during a storm. Without a reliable and steadfast evacuation plan, loss of life would be catastrophic.

There were two recorded storms occurring in 1813. The first storm made landfall between Charleston and Georgetown but affected both the Georgia and South Carolina coastlines, August 25th-27th. Unfortunately there is no recorded wind speed for this storm. However, there was a recorded storm surge of an estimated 12 feet in Charleston. Following the predictive model established by using the Saffir-Simpson Scale it can be inferred that this storm was also a “category 3”. The first storm was responsible for an estimated 23 plus deaths and caused an estimated $22,156,626 in damages for the Charleston area. The affects of the first storm were summarized by a sailing vessel “beat to pieces” off the coast of Charleston. The second storm affected the southern coast of Georgia (St. Mary’s area), Sept. 16th-17th. This
storm was described as a “major hurricane” with an estimated wind speed of 111 MPH. It is not likely that the effects of this second storm were felt in the Coosawhatchie and Charleston areas (Frasier, 2006, pg. 258-259).

The storm of 1822 affected the Georgia coast but made landfall on the “upper” coast of South Carolina, Sept. 14th-15th. Unfortunately there is no recorded wind speed or storm surge that can be used to extract additional data using the Saffir-Simpson Scale. This storm was responsible for an estimated 300 plus deaths and $7,536,885 of property damages in Georgetown. The effects of this storm were summarized as “immense property and crop loses”. Again the unsettling weather prior to the hurricane should have been a clear warning to planters. That consistent battle between fear of storm and the bigger fear of missing this prime crop season left many plantation owners gambling with lives. Any hesitation to evacuate risked death, the roaring tides “boiled” over residents dragging both lives and debris to an unfortunate fate. Accounts from the storm of 1822 exemplify the intense flooding, describing the rate in which rivers flooded from the coast moving inland, purging their banks. There are multiple accounts from this storm that referenced main-roads being blocked by debris and carriage access being blocked for many weeks (Frasier, 2006, pg. 74-85, 258-259).

Living the lowcountry life may well have been defined by hurricane or storm. It is difficult to imagine that the constant hammering of storms along this coast would not have an effect on the existing plantations of the past and the potential archeological sites of today. Tools such as the Harris Matrix (software for analyzing/viewing stratigraphy) would be ideal for looking at the changes in stratigraphy as a result of flooding or wash outs. These natural born disturbances to archeological sites that occur after occupations have long vanished need closer
examination in areas like the lowcountry. Resources used within the field of nautical archeology may be consulted to compare the corrosion found among artifacts submerged in water to artifacts from plantation sites that may have been exposed to long periods of moisture. Figures 50 and 51 of an iron lock found in unit N806 E806 within feature #40, demonstrates the typical corrosion that occurs on metals due to long exposure to moisture or being submerged in water. View #2 shows the imprint of wood grains on the iron.

*Figure 50. Photograph of an Iron lock found within the block units View #1*
The volume of artifacts sampled for this research strongly suggests that the structure was abandoned rather than discarded. The 26,122 artifacts from the 5 units sampled are estimated to be a quarter of the assemblage total once all units are fully excavated, processed and curated. Abandonment due to catastrophic event appears to be most reasonable designation at this time. The storms of 1804, 1813 and 1822 fall within the occupation of the block units structure when time lag is considered. When considering the known ownership of Mont Repose Plantation, the storm season of 1813 becomes more suspect for the demise. It is likely that the demise of the
structure coincided with a change in ownership which allowed for the site where the block units is located on the property to be unused. Thomas Gillison died in 1825 leaving Mont Repose to his brother Samuel. It is unlikely that he would have purchased this devastated property and improved the property to the standards of a working plantation between, 1822-1825. The storm season of 1813 allows for more flexibility between catastrophic event and new ownership. It is likely that the ownership prior to the Gillisons was not as vested in property as a successful plantation and homestead. Considering the constant hammering of storms, disease and bugs, this owner may have opted to cut their losses or met an ill fate.
CHAPTER 8
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The archeological investigations of the block units at Mont Repose Plantation have posed two structural possibilities. One is that the block units structure at Mont Repose is a small main house. The block units’ artifact assemblage and size are concurrent with the Rose Hill main house (24 by 28 feet) from Prince Williams Parish. It is suggested by Adams, Trinkley and Hacker (1995) that this style of smaller, more understated main house may have been common in the Prince Williams Parish area. Part of this practice may be due to the limited amount of property available that would have been suitable for constructing a home as the majority of the land is low lying, wet and ideal for rice cultivation. It was also concluded that theme of smaller main houses is supported by the absence of large scale main houses in the Prince Williams Parish area. The floor plan of the Rose Hill main house differs from the block units, as it is a two room structure with a fireplace located within the larger room and possibly a loft for added space above.

The majority of ceramics within the Rose Hill assemblage were decorated wares (hand painted, edgewares and transfer prints) suggesting a “middling status”. The date of occupation for the Rose Hill main house begins at 1780, experiences a peak 1800-1830 and then a decline. The ownership of Rose Hill Plantation features two main families, the Ulmers and Cuthberts. It is suggested that the decline in occupation date may coincide with changing of ownership from one family to the next. The Rose Hill main house met its demise by way of burning via union troops. There is a large quantity of burnt artifacts and ginger beer bottles concurrent with
military usage. There is an absence of other military related artifacts within the site suggesting a short occupation by troops (Adams, Trinkley & Hacker, 1995, pg. 39-41).

The possibility that the block units at Mont Repose compiled a main house is feasible. Again the dimensions and shape are similar to the Rose Hill main house. Although the exact dimensions of the block units will not be fully appreciated until the fourth structural wall is located. It is likely however that the block units structure had a simple one room design with an exterior masonry fireplace/hearth. It is not a far stretch to assume that the practical style and function of early plantation homes in St Luke’s Parish were comparable to that of Prince Williams Parish. It makes perfect sense that these early homes were practical “starter” homes as life in the lowcountry was a gamble for new residents. Mont Repose as well has a majority of low laying areas leaving limited options for home construction on higher ground. The aerial lidar scans from 2006 shown in figure 15, again exemplify this reality. The land along the Coosawhatchie River was ideal for rice cultivation but was not ideal for dry living.

The artifact assemblage from the block units is surprisingly similar to the Rose Hill main house. The majority of artifacts from both structures fall under the kitchen category with the architectural category second in volume. The Rose Hill main house has an absence of artifacts from the furniture and personal groups whereas the block units have low volumes in both (Adams, Trinkley & Hacker, 1995, pg. 39). The occupation dates parallel each other as well. The mean ceramic date for the block units is 1798. Even while taking into account time lag, it is unlikely that the block unit structure was associated with the Gillison family. The peak of the Gillison’s occupation of rice cultivation at Mont Repose Plantation is 1820-1840 and then a decline after 1850. In essence the block unit structure was in use and met its demise before the
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Gillisons made Mont Repose a lucrative Rice Plantation. This by no means suggests that earlier owners did not make the same attempts.

The affiliation of the Gillison family to the Mont Repose Plantation cannot be confirmed until around the 1820’s. At some point prior to 1825 Thomas Gillison acquired the plantation but Mont Repose does not appear to have been considered a family home until Samuel R. Gillison took ownership in 1825. It is likely that the block units structure was associated with an earlier ownership, possibly the Lambrights or Glen Drayton. These changes in ownership may explain the gaps in occupation showing that the plantation was likely not a full success until the Gillisons owned it.

A possible catalyst for the change in occupation/ownership of Mont Repose Plantation could have been the catastrophic event that lead to the demise of the block units structure. If the demise of the block units structure occurred as a result of hurricane or catastrophic storm, then the property may have been abandoned or uninhabitable. A gap in ownership may have resulted as well allowing for the block units structure to decompose without looting. It can be inferred that the Gillisons built their main house and support structures elsewhere on the property. It is not likely that the block units structure was ever reconstructed or remodeled to pose an additional function after the fact.

The second structural possibility for the block units at Mont Repose is a detached kitchen. The single room design with a hefty external masonry chimney/hearth fits the common style of a southern detached kitchen. The block units structure at Mont Repose discussed earlier in detail certainly fits this mold. The Riverside detached kitchen located in Kentucky has a similar structural design. The Riverside kitchen was of timber framed construction set atop
wood posts. Brick or stone was used later to replace the wood posts. The estimated dimensions of Riverside are 17 x 16 ft. The Riverside detached kitchen was likely white washed to match the other support structures and likely had an overhang which gave the structure more of a “square” appearance (Stottman and Watts-Roy, 2000, pg 94-95).

When comparing the artifact assemblages from the block units at Mont Repose to the Riverside detached kitchen, again there are similarities. The Riverside assemblage contained 29,221 artifacts of which 3,371 fell into the ceramic category. In addition to ceramics, the Riverside detached kitchen also yielded other artifacts associated with food preparation such as utensils, faunal remains and hearth hardware. Other artifacts concurrent with additional activities such as sewing/mending were found. The Riverside detached kitchen yielded straight pins, buttons, thimbles and a clothing iron (Stottman and Watts-Roy, 2000, pg. 23-24 and 95). The array of non-kitchen related artifacts found at the Riverside detached kitchen are similar to the findings within the block units at Mont Repose. The variety of artifacts found at the Riverside detached kitchen and the block units at Mont Repose, exemplifies the notion that the kitchen or any other workplace within the plantation layout for that matter should contain evidence of both a specific function and the additional tasks of daily life.

At this stage of excavations and analysis for the block units at Mont Repose, either of the two structural possibilities are feasible designations. The main function of the structure appears to have been related to food preparation which the artifact assemblage concurs. Since the first unit opened 10 years ago there has been a strong sense that the block unit structure was a kitchen. Only further excavations and analysis will reveal if this notion is accurate. However the evidence does support the designation of a detached kitchen that was abandoned due to an
unexpected catastrophic event. The unexpected element of this event is important as it accounts for the volume of artifacts in this assemblage. Excavations are under way on other portions of the site in hopes that locating more structures will help make better sense of the layout. An artifact database is in the works to help organize the volume of data associated with the block units and Mont Repose as a collective site with multiple occupations. The goal is to have accessible data that makes sense to students and transitions smoothly with the longevity of this project.

More investigation into hurricane research and the impact that it had not only on the demolition of structures but the impact storms/flooding may have had on the archeological record. In particular the disturbances that may occur to a site that has been exposed to flooding or long periods of standing water. It is important to consider not only post occupation terrestrial disturbances but the potential disturbances that may result from post occupation flooding on coastal and tidal sites. It is possible that contemporary natural disasters may lend some insight to this research, particularly disasters that produce violent winds and flooding.

The quest to fully understand the land ownership of the Mont Repose plantation and complete the chain of title is ongoing. There is always hope that a detailed map of the plantation’s layout will pop up in a private collection. Research efforts are currently looking at the earlier possibilities of ownership. Again the obstacle of missing or burnt records associated with the earlier wars such as the Revolutionary War may pose problematic. Regardless, the educational opportunities are endless and the local importance of this site is invaluable.
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APPENDIX A

PHOTOGRAPHS OF KITCHEN GROUP RELATED ARTIFACTS

Figure 52. Sample of Artifact Assemblage from 2006

Figure 53. Mended Colonoware Bowl
Figure 54. Delftware Base and Sherds

Figure 55. Green Shell Edge Pearlware crushed in place
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Figure 57. Pearlware Mocha Mug Partially Mended
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Figure 59. Cobalt Glass Sherd with Gold Overlay
Figure 60. Bottle Base Showing Pontil Mark and Sherds

Figure 61. Dark Green Wine Bottle Base and Neck/Lip Portion
Figure 62. Clear Glass Decanter Base, Sherd and Lid

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Figure 65. Iron Utensils with Bone handles
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Figure 68. Window Muntins
Figure 69. Iron Slide Lock and iron Shutter Pin

Figure 70. Iron Slide Lock
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Figure 72. Brass Door Lock View #2
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PHOTOGRAPHS OF FURNITURE GROUP RELATED ARTIFACTS

Figure 73. Brass Furniture Caster

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PHOTOGRAPHS OF ARMS GROUP RELATED ARTIFACTS

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Photographs of Clothing Group Related Artifacts

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Figure 84. Gold Leaf with Imprint of Fabric
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PHOTOGRAPHS OF PERSONAL GROUP RELATED ARTIFACTS

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PHOTOGRAPHS OF ABORIGINAL GROUP RELATED ARTIFACTS

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