

TEST EXCAVATIONS AT THE WACHESAW LANDING SITE,
GEORGETOWN COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

by

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Wachesaw specimens may therefore also fit Lewis' category of Dan River. In so far as there is some mixing of these styles at Town Creek, a discussion of small triangular points and their cultural affiliation may be inappropriate. We suspect that these specimens from Wachesaw represent a very generalized Siouan point of the eighteenth century and that a few millimeters' difference in size is probably not significant.

The third specimen (Figure 15e) may be classified as a Randolph Stemmed (Coe 1964:49-50). The point is made from a porphyritic rhyolite and measures 35 mm in length, the stem width is 9 mm, and the blade base width is 17.5 mm. The point, typical of Randolph specimens, is poorly flaked and is made from a flake with the striking platform visible at the base of the stem. Coe (1964:50) suggests this type was most often made during the latter half of the eighteenth century.

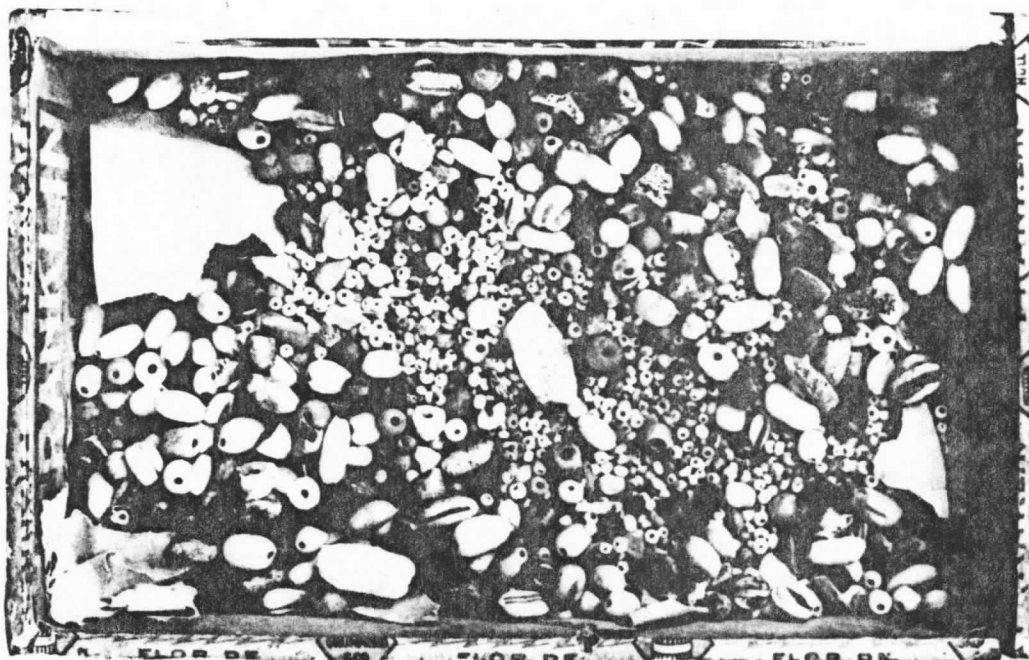
An unidentified stemmed point, made from rhyolite, was found in 90R130, level 1 (Figure 15f). The point has a length of 49 mm, a blade base width of 27 mm, and a stem width of 12.5 mm tapering to 11.5 mm, and a thickness of 10 mm. The final fragmented point, made from a crypto-crystalline quartzite, is also presently unidentified. The fragment appears to be a contracting stem base, tapering from 15 to 9 mm along its 17 mm length. A small portion of the blade is intact, suggesting a blade base width of at least 19 mm. Similar points are not uncommon along the Lower Coastal Plain of South Carolina, although they have not been found in a firmly dated context.

Ninety-four flakes, including two specimens of non-local chert (probably of English origin), were recovered from Wachesaw. Most represent an intermediate stage of reduction, although several flakes of bifacial retouch were recovered from the fine waterscreening of Feature 1. Three flakes exhibit the blocky appearance characteristic of bi-polar flaking. Only 14.9% of the flakes are quartz or crypto-crystalline quartzite. The bulk, 77.7%, are rhyolites, tuffs, and basalts. Five specimens (5.3%) of an apparently local, highly fossiliferous, chert are also present.

The final category of stone consists of 133 specimens which are unaltered chunks and cobbles. Fifty-one specimens (38.3%) are quartz cobbles, 17 (12.8%) are cortex fragments, one specimen is a non-local black chert cobble which probably represents ship ballast, and two specimens are fossilized marine shells, probably taken from outcrops of the Pamlico formation. The bulk of the collection consists of rhyolite, tuff, basalt, and other igneous, metaigneous, and metamorphic rocks, as is the case with the flakes.

Trade Items

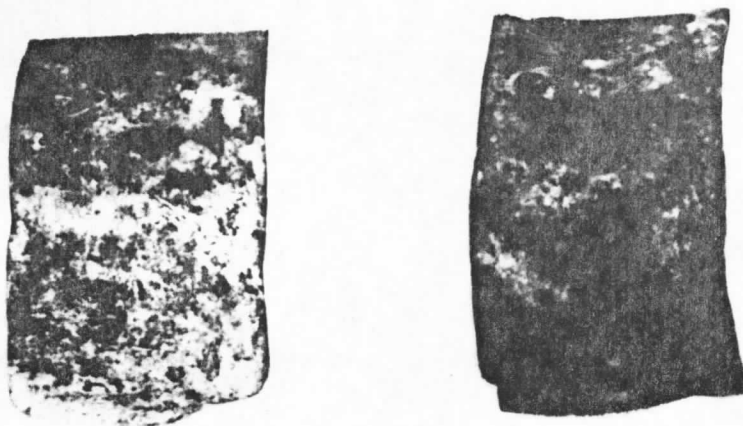
The only European trade items, other than the historic ceramics discussed in the following section, discovered in these excavations are 10 glass trade beads. During the 1930 burial excavations a large quantity of beads, a spoon, and several C-bracelets were uncovered (Figure 16). This section will only briefly discuss these latter items.



A



B



C

Figure 16. Trade Items from the Kimbel Collection, all recovered from the 1930 cabin burials. A, cigar box of trade beads, shell beads, and skull fragments; B, spoon; C, C-bracelet.

There are several readily available discussions of bead manufacture, including Kidd and Kidd (1970), Spector (1976), Brain (1979), and Smith and Good (1982), so little background will be provided here. Each of these authors also proposes slightly different typologies for North American beads (although Smith and Good are primarily concerned with sixteenth century beads of Spanish trade in South America). For convenience this discussion will use the typology of Brain (1979:97-133). Four types of beads, all drawn-glass with rounded ends, were recovered from the excavations.

Type IIA1 (Kidd: IIA14) is the common "seed bead." Six specimens were recovered, all from Feature 1. These beads are donut shaped and have lengths of 1 to 3 mm and widths of 2.5 to 3 mm. They are white in color, although several have a slight yellow patina. Several are eroded. Brain (1979:101) suggests these beads were manufactured in Amsterdam and have a date range from 1600 to 1836.

Type IIA5 (Kidd: IIA7) is represented by one specimen from level 1 of 90R130. The bead is barrel shaped, well tumbled, and measures 15 mm in length and 7 mm in width. The color is dark navy or black. This specimen is slightly larger than the mean of Brain's Tunica sample, although the bead appears identical. The chronological range of the type is given by Brain (1979:102) as 1600 to 1890.

Type IIA7 (Kidd: IIA47) are donut shaped blue-green seed beads from Feature 1. The two specimens have lengths of 1 mm and widths of 2.5 mm. Both beads are eroded. The chronological placement of this type is from 1600 to 1836 (Brain 1979:103).

Type IVA2 (Kidd: IVA6) is represented by one specimen from Feature 1. The specimen is donut shaped, rounded, and of compound construction. The specimen measures 2 mm in length, 3 mm in width, is green and red, and is slightly eroded. Brain (1979:106) terms this the "Cornaline d'Aleppo" bead and suggests it was manufactured in Amsterdam. Its chronological placement is generally from 1600 to 1836 and may date more specifically from 1600 to 1725.

The following bead types are identified, but not quantified, from the Kimbel 1930 burial collection. The descriptions are based on Brain (1979):

Type IIA1 (Kidd: IIA15) is the large, opaque, white "seed bead" in a barrel shape.

Type IIA4 (Kidd: IIA46, 47) is a small to large, opaque, blue bead which may be oval or tubular in shape.

Type IIA5 (Kidd: IIA7) is medium to large in size and dark burgundy in color. The common form is barrel shaped.

Type IIB1 (Kidd: IIB12) is a medium, opaque, dark burgundy bead with

longitudinal white stripes.

Type IIB2 (Kidd: IIB25) represents a medium to large, opaque, white bead with four longitudinal dark blue stripes.

Type IIB4 (Kidd: IIB31) is a large, opaque, white bead with four longitudinal stripes alternating red and blue.

Type IIB5 (Kidd: IIBb13) is a large, opaque, white bead with three inlays of compound stripes: a blue stripe between two red stripes.

Type IIB7 (Kidd: IIBb24) is a large, opaque, turquoise blue bead with three sets of compound stripes, each composed of a red stripe between two white stripes.

Type WIE1 is a large, spheroidal, wire-wound bead of translucent, clear glass.

All of these bead types have a wide temporal and geographical range and were apparently traded by the English, French, and perhaps Spanish. The type B beads, which are composite (having two or more layers of glass with inlays) have a generally earlier mean date than the type A or monochrome beads of simple construction (Brain 1979:114-115). All date from within the general period of Wachesaw Landing and all probably came from English traders out of Virginia or Charleston. Very few detailed data are available from contact sites in the Carolinas and Georgia, as shown by the fact that the only Carolina site included in Brain's (1979) geographical distribution is Peachtree, Cherokee County, North Carolina. MacCord (1977) provides some data from the Trigg site in Virginia, but only the common white seed bead (Type IIA1) is found at both Wachesaw and Trigg. Witthoft (n.d.) has provided some data on beads from Tugaloo and while some seem similar to Wachesaw, without better descriptions or the actual specimens the information is of only minor use. From the site of Saura Town (SkVla) on the Dan River in Stokes County, North Carolina a large variety of beads has been recovered, primarily from burial deposits. This is a late seventeenth century Hill Tribe Siouan site which primarily engaged in trade with the English in Virginia (Wilson 1982). Bead types (Tunica numbers) found during a brief inspection of the collections at the University of North Carolina Research Laboratories of Anthropology include IIA1, IIA4, IIA5, and IIA7. Also identified, but not fitting the Tunica typology, are two rounded end drawn beads of complex manufacture. The first is opaque turquoise blue with four evenly spaced white stripes, while the second is translucent dark blue with four evenly spaced white stripes. Neither of these two types has been found at Wachesaw.

Besides the beads, a spoon and a C-bracelet from the Kimbel collection were examined. The spoon, similar to Sheffield plate, has an oval bowl, trifid end, and lacks a rat tail. The base metal appears to be brass, with a silver plate. Noel Hume (1978:183) suggests that spoons of this type were most popular in the "second half of the seventeenth

century, but lost out to the pewter spoon in the early 1700's." A maker's mark is impressed in the bowl. A very similar spoon has been recovered from a burial at Saura Town, North Carolina (Joffre Coe, personal communication). The C-bracelet is thin, beaten brass or copper without any sort of decoration. Similar bracelets are found in the Tunica material and Brain (1979:193-194) classifies them as Type 7. The most common forms in the Tunica collection, however, consist of thin wire with a circular or rectangular cross section. Similar forms may also have been present at Wachesaw as there is considerable brass staining on the skeletal material. Brain (1979:193) suggests that copper or brass was provided to the Indians as raw material and the bracelets were made locally.

Historic Artifacts

A total of 463 historic artifacts were collected during the excavations. The historic assemblage is composed of ceramics, glass, and iron artifacts in abundance, with minor amounts of brass, lead, and clay materials. Artifacts were identified using standard sources, such as Noel Hume (1969), South (1977), and Price (1979), and less circulated manuscripts, including Lewis and Haskell (1981), Bartovics (1978), and Quimby (1966). The materials range in date of manufacture from the mid-seventeenth through mid-nineteenth centuries. The material are typical of those recovered on British colonial and antebellum sites; no unusual or previously undescribed items were recovered. For a complete list of materials recovered, the reader is referred to Table 3.

The assemblage was first examined as a single unit. For the purposes of organization and comparison with other assemblages, the collection was arranged by artifact categories used by South (1977) in defining the Carolina Artifact Pattern. This division is seen in Table 4.

A recent thrust of historical archaeological theory has been the recognition of site patterning based on the quantification of the materials which form the archaeological record. The underlying premise is that human behavior is patterned, non-random, and that quantification is necessary to study the regularities of culture (South 1977:88). South defined the Carolina Artifact Pattern as a general pattern of domestic discard activity, as revealed in the ratios of various classes of cultural remains. The classes are defined by artifact form and function. This pattern is based on the entire collection of artifacts from an occupational site, not selected proveniences. Deviance from the Carolina Artifact Pattern should reflect specialized site use, other than domestic activity (South 1977:83-88).

The Wachesaw assemblage generally conforms to the Carolina Artifact Pattern (Table 4), with only slight variations in the ratios. While these figures do not necessarily substantiate a totally domestic use for the site, they do not immediately suggest any other type of specialized site use. A domestic function is consistent with the documented use of the site in the nineteenth century as a plantation.

(Lachicotte 1955). The conflict between the archaeological data and the documentary data led to a more detailed examination of the archaeological materials.

A closer examination of the ceramics reveals that, even though the materials span two centuries, there is not an even continuum in terms of data of manufacture. Instead, there are two distinct date clusters. A group of 99 ceramics were manufactured between 1600 and 1775 and are most often associated with late seventeenth century to early eighteenth century occupations. The Mean Ceramic Date for these materials is 1719, as shown in Table 6. Likewise, 97 ceramics were manufactured between 1760 and 1850, most often representing an early nineteenth century occupation. This was supported by a Mean Ceramic Date of 1819. In

Late 17th to early 18th century ceramics - 99
 Mid 18th century ceramics - 6
 Late 18th to early 19th century ceramics - 97
 Unknown manufacture date - 1

Early Eighteenth Century Assemblage

xi	fi	xi·fi
1700	15	25500
1700	14	23800
1713	5	8565
1733	22	38126
1700	8	13600
1733	21	36393
1733	2	3466
1668	1	1668
1738	4	6952
1730	6	10380
1730	1	1730
	99	170180

$$Y = 1718.98$$

Early Nineteenth Century Assemblage

xi	fi	xi·fi
1791	21	37611
1800	19	34200
1805	5	9025
1805	4	7220
1805	7	12635
1805	2	3610
1818	8	14544
1860	17	31620
1860	1	1860
1860	1	1860
1860	10	18600
1815	1	1815
1860	1	1860
	97	176460

$$Y = 1819.18$$

Table 6. Mean Ceramic Dates of two suggested assemblages.

contrast, only six ceramics traditionally associated with a mid-eighteenth century occupation are present.

The data suggest that evidence of two historic occupations are represented in the mixed plowzone deposit; one dating to the late seventeenth - early eighteenth century and another beginning in the early nineteenth century. This is more in conformance with the available documentary evidence. The early nineteenth century assemblage is no doubt associated with plantation activities at Wachesaw, probably initiated by James Belin.

The association of the early eighteenth century materials is not clear,

however. They may be associated with early, undocumented plantation activity; they may reflect the rumored early tavern; or, they may be associated with the historic Indian occupation. The last explanation seems the most plausible. A Mean Ceramic Date of 1719 roughly coincides with the documented accounts of Indian trade in the area, and the suggested date of disappearance for the Waccamaw in the early 1720s. An examination of the historic assemblage further supports the suggested association of the early historic material.

South has indicated that an import function of the Carolina Artifact Pattern is to reveal contrasting patterns that reflect specialized behavioral activities. A closer examination of the artifact ratios in Table 4 indicates a difference in relative percentages in the Personal Group and in the Tobacco Group. Both categories are higher at Wachesaw than is expected, 0.42% versus 0.21% and 10.58% versus 5.8%, respectively. Both of these categories contain items commonly associated with the Indian trade, such as glass beads, brass jewelry, and kaolin tobacco pipes.

At this point, a more detailed examination of the tobacco pipe fragments was initiated. Kaolin pipes are a standard feature of historic sites, from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries, and pipes from all historic sites are similar. However, a general trend in their manufacture is that the bore diameter of the stem decreases through time. Binford (1962) developed a formula for dating historic sites based on the relative percentage of absolute bore diameter sizes, based on modern measurements. Binford's formula is:

$$Y = 1931.85 - 38.26x$$

where Y is the mean date for the sample and x is the mean hole diameter for the sample. Binford's formula provides a mean date of site occupation of 1725. This deviates sharply from the Mean Ceramic Date of 1768 for the site assemblage. The results of this test suggest that the majority of the kaolin pipes recovered are associated with the early occupation of the site, lending further credence to the hypothesis that the early occupation is associated with the Waccamaw Indians.

An obvious bias here is the small sample size for the pipestems. A minimum sample of about 100 or more pipestems is required to produce an accurate mean date of occupation (Noel Hume 1978:300-301; Kathleen Deagan, personal communication); only 40 examples were available from Wachesaw. The small sample size is a problem to be noted when using this tool for interpretive purposes.

Unfortunately, other items of non-ceramic material culture could not be as tightly dated as the kaolin pipes. Therefore, the collection as a unit could not be neatly divided into two separate assemblages, as could the ceramics.

In order to strengthen the suggestions made here, additional testing

will be required. Extensive excavations are needed to isolate contexts dating to the plantation period and to determine the behavior resulting in the early historic deposits. Nonetheless, examination of the historic materials of the plowzone deposit suggests two historic occupations at the site; a late seventeenth to early eighteenth century deposit, probably associated with historic Waccamaw Indian occupation, and a late eighteenth to early nineteenth century occupation, associated with Wachesaw's use as a plantation.

Waccamaw Indian site