

Archaeological Investigation of the Laundry Aiken-Rhett House, Charleston, SC

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Archaeological Contributions 49

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Fieldwork was conducted by Archaeological Research Collective, Inc. under the direction of Nicole Isenbarger. Andrew Agha, Hayden Smith, Tariq Ghaffar, and Chris Young assisted with fieldwork, as did field school students from the College of Charleston, volunteers from Historic Charleston Foundation, and assorted friends.

Artifacts were transferred to The Charleston Museum in August 2015. Washing and analysis proceeded through the next calendar year, to roughly August 2016. Laboratory analysis was directed by Martha Zierden and conducted by College of Charleston interns Holly Adington, Dale Ryan, Erin Kane, Craig Garrison, Dan Simpson, and Molly Van Ostran, and long-time volunteers Barbara Aldrich and Linda Wilson. Juliana Falk assisted with button analysis from 48 Laurens, the Miles Brewton House, and the Aiken-Rhett Laundry. Museum archaeologist Ron Anthony and volunteer conservation specialist William Turner completed conservation of iron and copper alloy artifacts.

At HCF, Lauren Northrup coordinated the laboratory project, with able assistance from Valerie Perry. Preservation staff members Winslow Hastie and Katherine Pemberton were always available for consultation and assistance. Research for a cultural landscape analysis by proceeded concurrent with the laboratory analysis, and conversations with Suzanne Turner and John Welch throughout the year contributed to the success of the archaeological project.

Archivist Jennifer McCormick helped with documentary research on the laundry, and exhibits coordinator Sean Money photographed the artifacts. Lauren Northrup coordinated final curation of the materials at Historic Charleston Foundation. Funding for the archaeological project was provided by a special bequest to Historic Charleston Foundation.

Chapter I Introduction

The Aiken-Rhett house, built in 1820 and home to the Aiken family from 1833 until 1975, is unique among Charleston's historic house museum as that all of the service buildings, as well as the main house, remain intact. An enormous amount of historic fabric survives in each of the structures. The buildings contain paint finishes, wallpapers, and lighting fixtures of national significance. Careful exploration of all aspects of material evidence, including archaeological resources is considered by Historic Charleston Foundation to be essential to the informed conservation and preservation of the property. Archaeological study was, therefore, part of the overall plan for conversion of the rear ground-floor room of the kitchen/quarters building into an educational center.

Excavations of the room interior were conducted by Archaeological Research Collective, Inc, directed by Nicole Isenbarger. Laboratory analysis of the recovered materials was conducted at The Charleston Museum under the direction of Martha Zierden. A number of HCF staff members, anthropology students from the College of Charleston, and volunteers assisted in the field and the lab.

The Aiken-Rhett house remained in the same family until it was acquired by The Charleston Museum through a bequest in 1975. It was opened to the public as a historic house museum in 1982. In 1995, Historic Charleston Foundation acquired the Aiken-Rhett house from The Charleston Museum. The mission of HCF for the property is to “conserve and interpret the townhouse complex built by John Robinson in 1820 and enlarged by the Aiken family in 1833 and 1857.” The mission statement continues:

“The house and outbuildings with their surviving early decorative schemes and furnishings provide an interpretive framework to explore the evolution in taste in antebellum Charleston and to place the family and their slaves within Charleston's urban culture and its regional, national, and international context...”(HCF 2001).



Figure 1: The Aiken-Rhett house

A bequest from the estate of Theodore Maybank and a grant from the Joanna Foundation in 2001 enabled the Foundation to engage a group of consultants to analyze the property and prepare a full Historic Structures Analysis. This research extended to the outbuildings in 2011 and to the

laundry room in 2015. The Historic Structures Analysis guides all archaeological study of the Aiken-Rhett property.

Archaeology at the Aiken-Rhett Property

Numerous archaeological projects have been conducted at the Aiken-Rhett site, ranging from monitoring of small construction or repair projects to testing and excavation. The most significant projects are summarized here, to provide context for the present study. The first archaeological testing of the Aiken-Rhett property was also the first townhouse exploration by the present author. A 1985 Survey and Planning grant administered by the South Carolina Department of Archives and History permitted excavation of 6 dispersed units in the rear yard (Zierden et al. 1986). The project encountered a stratified site with numerous features, and resulted in National Register status for the archaeological component. Significant features encountered included an elaborate brick-lined drainage system running the length of the rear yard.

Salvage excavations in the northern (laundry) room of the kitchen building in 1991 accompanied removal of the northern chimney following extensive roof damage from Hurricane Hugo in September 1989. The chimney was slated for reconstruction, but rescue archaeology in the vicinity of the chimney revealed numerous artifacts, intact stratigraphy, and a significant brick feature. At the time, Zierden noted that all of the features encountered bear further research. As a result, plans for chimney reconstruction were put on hold.

Hurricane Hugo also damaged the privy in the northeast corner of the property. This building was reconstructed under the direction of Glenn Keyes Architects in 1992. Excavations for the new foundations were monitored by Museum archaeologist Ron Anthony, and all soils were screened. The excavations encountered an internal brick wall, likely the privy vault. Smaller projects include 1996 monitoring of renovation to the western basement room, in the vicinity of the visitor restroom, and brief exploration of the large well near the rear courtyard stair in 2007.

The largest archaeological study occurred in 2001, as part of the Historic Structures Analysis project. Under the direction of architectural historians Willie Graham, Carl Lounsbury, and Orlando Ridout, ten test units were excavated through the rear yard, the courtyard, and the front garden. This ongoing analysis generated additional questions, so in 2002, an additional project was funded with a Preservation Services grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation and a donation from the Ceres Foundation. Ten additional test units were excavated during this phase. Together, the project explored garden features in the rear yard, tested both of the small buildings located along side walls (re-interpreted as garden follies), and probed beneath the brick-paved courtyard to better understand the undulating surface of this paved area. Additional units in the front yard area revealed an original drive surface and planting and garden features (Zierden 2003).



Figure 2: the Aiken-Rhett outbuildings. The laundry is the rear room on the right

The features encountered in the 1985, 2001, and 2002 excavation projects raised more questions than they answered, as is often the case with archaeological research. The Aiken-Rhett site proved to be particularly complex. The site produced features and deposits that span the 19th century, a period particularly difficult to date, because of the long manufacture range of materials from that period. Moreover, artifacts were relatively sparse across the site. Urban centers in general and the progressive Mr. Aiken in particular moved toward off-site refuse disposal during this period.

Finally, the new technology installed by Mr. Aiken in the 1830s and again in the 1850s produced complex, and sometimes ephemeral, architectural and archaeological features. These were often compromised by later, ongoing alterations, both above and below ground. The testing projects were not adequate to trace the extent of many of these. Finally, the site is further complicated by the likely presence of trenches and features associated with the siege of Charleston by British forces in 1780. The British took advantage of natural high ground, creeks, and marshes to build their lines, and so the natural terrain of the Aiken-Rhett yard, and surrounding area, was vastly altered prior to, as well as during, house construction.

Two short remote sensing projects provided some additional guidance to below-ground features. In 2012, Dr. Jon Marcoux, then of Auburn University-Montgomery, conducted a magnetic gradiometer study of portions of the rear yard, to search for remnants of the British second parallel, as well as 19th century yard features (Borick 2003). Marcoux notes this particular technology was compromised by the filling and reorganization of soils on the lot, the addition of manure from resident animals, and the introduction of numerous metal artifacts into the soil. Two iron water pipes from the 20th century, previously encountered in archaeological digs, were revealed in the survey. Despite these challenges, the survey identified possible ditches, fence posts, and garden plantings. Of particular interest are a potential line of posts, parallel to and on the east side of the central drive, in a similar position to those identified during the 2001 dig on the west side of the drive (Marcoux 2012).

Dr. Marcoux, currently of Salve Regina University, returned to the Aiken-Rhett yard in 2016, this time with ground-penetrating radar (GPR). Marcoux surveyed two blocks in the rear yard, located to avoid above ground obstacles. The survey revealed three features of interest; a ditch feature traversing the western half of the yard area, a hard-packed surface likely representing the central drive, and a pit or conduit located inside the garden building. All of these features await further testing (Marcoux 2016).

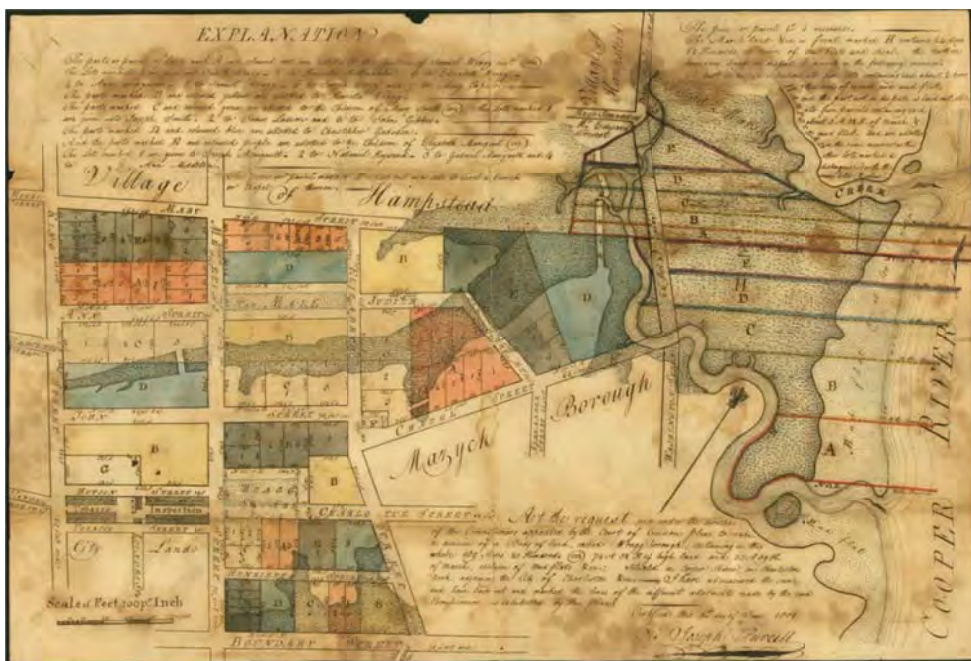
Concurrent with the present archaeological study, HCF procured the services of Suzanne Turner Associates to prepare a Cultural Landscape Report on the Aiken-Rhett property. This survey incorporates and includes all archaeological research performed to date, as well as documentary research and consultation with scholars from a host of disciplines. The final report on this project will be completed in the near future (Turner 2017).

Background

Joseph and Samuel Wragg received a tract of land on the Charleston peninsula, above the colonial city. Joseph Wragg's Barony of Wraggborough was divided among his children at his death in 1751. John Wragg inherited 79 acres east of the Broad Path (King Street) and created the neighborhood of Wraggborough. Two parks, Wragg Square and Wragg Mall, were set aside for public use by the estate of John Wragg in 1801, and they remain public spaces with the original configuration.

The lot at 48 Elizabeth Street was sold by the Wragg children in 1804 and acquired by John Robinson, a wealthy factor. Robinson also purchased a lot at 10 Judith Street and had dwellings constructed on both lots while residing at 10 Judith. Robinson sold the house and lot at 48 Elizabeth to satisfy creditors.

Figure 3: Plat of Wraggborough



The property passed to William Aiken, Sr. in 1827. Aiken, a cotton merchant, was considered one of the wealthiest men in the state. He was involved in development of the South Carolina Railroad. He leased the Elizabeth Street property and resided on King Street. William Aiken died in a carriage accident in 1831 and his son, William Aiken Jr., acquired the property in 1833. William Aiken married Harriet Lowndes that same year, and the couple made their residence at 48 Elizabeth Street.

Shortly thereafter, the Aikens began ambitious renovation and expansion of the house. They enlarged the house, modernized its layout and updated interior finishes. The central hall and front entrance were closed and a double-parlor plan was arranged. The main entrance was moved from Judith to Elizabeth Streets, with the addition of a more formal neoclassical façade. A massive two-story wing was added on the east side of the house, featuring a first floor dining room and second floor drawing room. A once-separate ground floor warming kitchen was enclosed beneath the wing, and a rear service staircase was added (Poston 1997:605; Graham et al. 2003).

Aiken's financial, political, and social success engendered another round of renovation and expansion to his Elizabeth Street house in the 1850s. He redecorated with lighting fixtures, wallpapers, and carpets, and added the art gallery wing to house items acquired in Europe in their year-long tour in 1857. The third floor was expanded to create additional chambers and service space, and modern conveniences were installed, including gas lighting, a service bell system, and improved plumbing.

William and Harriet Aiken remained in the Elizabeth Street house after the Civil War, until Aiken's death in Flat Rock, North Carolina in 1887. The house reputedly changed little during the postbellum period, and slowly deteriorated. But recent research reveals an additional round of renovation, refurbishing, and re-landscaping during the 1870s. Third floor rooms were reorganized to accommodate new bathroom fixtures. Aiken purchased bedroom furniture and hired an upholsterer for a long list of tasks in 1876. He ordered new carpets in 1884. The Aiken's only daughter, Henrietta, married Andrew Burnet Rhett in 1862, and the couple lived in the Elizabeth Street mansion with her parents until his death in 1879. The two widows continued to make improvements to the house, including extensive repainting in 1891, major plumbing work in 1895, and new carpeting and curtains in 1897. Descendants of Henrietta Aiken Rhett lived in the house until 1975, when the property was bequeathed to The Charleston Museum. Periodic renovations to the property included the outbuildings and grounds, as well as the main dwelling.

Aiken's 1830s renovations included the service buildings. The two-story kitchen building was doubled in size to include the laundry room, covering a privy located along the back of the building. There is some evidence that the stable building received a second story at this time. Any previous entries to these buildings from the street were closed, including the Judith Street access to the rear yard, covered by the dining room wing. Access to the property was now limited to the rear gate on Mary Street. Gothic Revival detailing was added to the outbuildings, and it appears that the gothic privies in the rear corners and the garden structures along the side

walls were built at this time. The brick wall that enclosed the property, built after 1825, was raised to its present level (Graham et al. 2003).

Traditional interpretation of the property (Jones 1977) held that the rear yard was used in its entirety as a service yard, with no gardens. The avenue of magnolias were interpreted as the only landscape feature and the rectangular structures in the center of the east and west walls interpreted as a cow shed (destroyed in the 1886 earthquake) and chicken coop. These buildings have been reinterpreted as garden follies, and a significant portion of the yard area as gardens. The pleasure garden was accessed from the rear of the house through a well-ordered work yard.

Nor was the yard and garden a stagnant feature. Henrietta Aiken Rhett purchased a variety of landscaping plants in the spring of 1881 and summer and fall of 1882. There is further evidence that the avenue of magnolias in the rear yard was planted after the Civil War; archaeology suggests they replaced a fence or trellis of some sort (Bridgens and Allen 1852; Drie 1872). Additional changes occurred after the earthquake of 1886 and in the early 1890s.

Research and Interpretation

Since 1980, archaeological research in Charleston has been guided by long-term research goals. Studies at individual sites have been cumulative, as well as comparative, in nature. The broad base of comparative data proved useful in interpreting the finds from the current project. Projects conducted by The Charleston Museum and associates on historic museum properties, whether large or small, have three concurrent goals:

- To provide direct evidence about site features and their evolution
- To contribute information to public interpretation of the house and grounds as relevant to the social history of the city
- To contribute data to ongoing studies of the urban landscape, including social meaning encoded in its features and layout, animal use and provisioning in the city, and the material remains of its residents.

Research on the Aiken-Rhett laundry contributed to all of these goals, providing both site-specific and general interpretive data. Issues to be examined for the Aiken-Rhett site in particular included:

- Exposing and interpreting architectural features associated with the workings of the 1850s laundry system
- Understanding the archaeological site formation processes responsible for the archaeological deposits contained in the room, and beneath historic wooden floors. Dating these deposits and associating them with known occupational and functional periods of the kitchen building.

- Exploring evidence for room usage through identification and quantification of the recovered artifacts.
- Comparing the archaeological record to documented events at the site, to better understand the activities of servants, enslaved and free, on the property through the 19th century.

Analysis for issues 3 and 4 benefitted from comparison with other townhouse sites in Charleston, and elsewhere. The Aiken-Rhett site is one of eight elite townhouses investigated by The Charleston Museum, and data from these projects are used in the present study. These are located on figure 4 below. Of particular relevance are three townhouse properties built during the early 19th century. The 19th century assemblages of two other properties, built in the 18th century are also used in this study.

The Nathaniel Russell House, home to merchant Nathaniel Russell and wife Sarah, was constructed in 1808, when she was 56 and he 70. The large brick townhouse features a tripartite plan with a rectangular, elliptical, and square room on each floor. Wrought iron balconies inscribed with Russell's initials brought visitors outside. There they could view the formal garden on the southern half of the lot. The main house and service buildings fill the northern property boundary. The kitchen and quarters building was followed by a stable and carriage structure, both two stories, and an attached single-story privy. The Russell's home and garden immediately became the focus of much admiration and discussion, the front wrought iron balcony bearing Russell's cypher.

Russell died in 1820 but his widow, their children, and grandchildren remained in the mansion until 1857. The family inventory of Sarah Russell Dehon included silver, cutlery, tea wares and serving pieces of "Blue India China", plates, glassware, gold and white dessert ware. The house was acquired by R.F.W. Allston, a Georgetown planter and Governor of South Carolina. The family fled to the upstate during the Civil War, leaving their slaves in charge of the property. Allston died in 1864, but his wife and family returned to the home after the war's end, and opened a girls' school to make ends meet. In 1870, the Allstons sold the property to the Sisters of Charity, and they continued the girls' school on the property. Excavations were conducted as part of a Historic Structures study, directed by the same team of scholars that examined the Aiken-Rhett buildings. Test excavations in 1994 to 1995 were located adjacent to the main house, outbuildings, and garden. Excavations in the front yard in 2003 exposed garden features. The digs recovered examples of many of the artifact listed in the Russell inventory (Zierden 1996).

The Simmons-Edwards house at 14 Legare Street is a neoclassical building of national significance. Planter Francis Simmons built the house in 1801. Beaufort planter George Edwards purchased the property in 1816 and added many elegant features, including the famous towering brick columns for the entry gate, wrought iron entry panels bearing his initials, and an elaborate formal garden in the side yard. The garden remained intact through the 1880s. Extensive archaeological excavations proceeded in concert with extensive renovation and interpretation of the house and grounds. The primary goal was to locate and document the pleasure garden. Archaeology proceeded in five phases, beginning with limited testing. The discovery of possible

garden features prompted a block excavation to expose the northern half of the formal garden. Excavations also explored the middle and rear gardens, and the work yard (Zierden 2001).

The more modest wood single house at 48 Laurens Street was built for French merchant and consul Simon Jude Chancognie after 1807, when lands of Christopher Gadsden were subdivided and sold. Chancognie built a three-story neoclassical home on the corner lot, and lived there for ten years before returning to France. The property changed hands several times; most notable owner was William Patton, a wealthy merchant involved in the slave trade and the steam packet business. Merchant John Lesemann purchased the property in 1867. The property changed hands several times in the 20th century, and was purchased by Historic Charleston Foundation in 1959 as part of the Ansonborough Rehabilitation Project (Lavelle 2011). Archaeological excavation in the rear corner of the property in 2016 revealed the foundations of the privy building, and evidence that the privy vault was excavated in the 1970s. Archaeologists recovered artifacts left behind by the diggers, and exposed intact stratigraphic deposits spanning the 19th century (Zierden 2017).

The Heyward-Washington house at 87 Church Street was built in 1772, the third home on the property. The three-story brick double house served as the city home of Thomas Heyward and his family until 1792. During the last few years, the house was occupied by Heyward's aunt, Rebecca Jameson, who operated a boarding school for girls. The property was purchased by planter and Judge John F. Grimke; in 1820 the property passed to Margaret Munroe, who operated a boarding house. The property served as a multi-family dwelling throughout the 19th century, and in 1883 the Fuseler family used the outbuildings for a bakery. The Heyward property is site of the first, and still the most extensive, archaeological excavation in the city. Elaine Herold excavated much of the property in the 1970s, though the artifacts are not yet completely tabulated. A smaller excavation in the stable building was conducted in 2002. The cellars of the outbuildings, in particular, contain a range of 19th century artifacts (Herold 1978; Zierden and Reitz 2007).

Most germane to study of the Aiken-Rhett site is the Miles Brewton property on lower King Street. The large lot was unimproved until Brewton, grown wealthy from trade, built a grand townhouse there in 1769. His sister inherited the house five years later when he and his family were lost at sea. Rebecca Brewton Motte maintained the house through the Revolutionary War and the two-year British occupation. Her daughter's family, the William Alstons, expanded the house and added to the inventory of outbuildings during their 1791-1839 tenure. The family's fortunes waned thereafter. William Alston's youngest daughter, Mary Motte Alston and her husband William Bull Pringle sold the back half of the lot and garden in 1857. In 1865 the Pringle family lived upstate as refugees; the Union Army occupying the city used their townhouse as headquarters. The family lost their plantation in 1871 and retained the townhouse, but lived there in reduced circumstances. Instead of 34 enslaved laborers, Mary Pringle hired three house servants. Every space capable of generating income was rented out.

The Brewton house has remained in family hands throughout its history. In 1987 the owners embarked on full restoration that included architectural, documentary, and archaeological research. Excavations in 1988 were placed to answer questions germane to each discipline. A

second archaeological project, in 1989, focused on mitigating the impact of service trenches across the yard and investigating evidence of a formal garden (Zierden 2001).

These properties provide a framework for exploring the archaeological record of activities and technological developments in Charleston through the 19th century. The comparative exercise underscores the value of cumulative archaeological study, at an individual site and multiple sites across the city. Consistent use of standard archaeological methods to recover and study Charleston's physical remains enables us to consider the Aiken-Rhett project in a broader context.

Archaeology's role in the preservation of a property such as the Aiken-Rhett house is two-fold. First, the archaeological record is part of the total historic fabric. Further, the archaeological record is non-renewable, damaged or destroyed by any ground-disturbing activity. At the same time, the ground-altering activities of the modern era, just as those of the 18th and 19th centuries, are part of the ongoing changes and additions to a continually-occupied archaeological site.

Public Sites

- 1 Atlantic Wharf
- 2 Beef Market/City Hall
- 3 Charleston County Courthouse
- 4 Dock Street Theatre
- 5 Exchange Building/Half Moon Battery
- 6 Granville Bastion/Missroon House
- 7 Lodge Alley/State Street
- 8 McCrady's Tavern and Lorgroom
- 9 Powder Magazine
- 10 South Adger's Wharf/Lower Market
- 11 Vendue/Prioleau

Commercial/Residential

- 12 Charleston Judicial Center
- 13 Charleston Place
- 14 First Trident
- 15 Hollings Center
- 16 Saks Building
- 17 Visitor Reception and Transportation Center

Residences

- 18 Aiken-Rhett House
- 19 Heyward-Washington House
- 20 John Rutledge House
- 21 Miles Brewton House
- 22 Nathaniel Russell House
- 23 Post Office/Courthouse
- 24 Simmons-Edwards House
- 25 William Gibbes House
- 26 Juliana Dupre House
- 27 Hieronymus-Roper House
- 28 Jackson House
- 29 Kohne-Leslie House
- 30 Sanders House
- 31 Gaillard Auditorium
- 32 President Street/MUSC

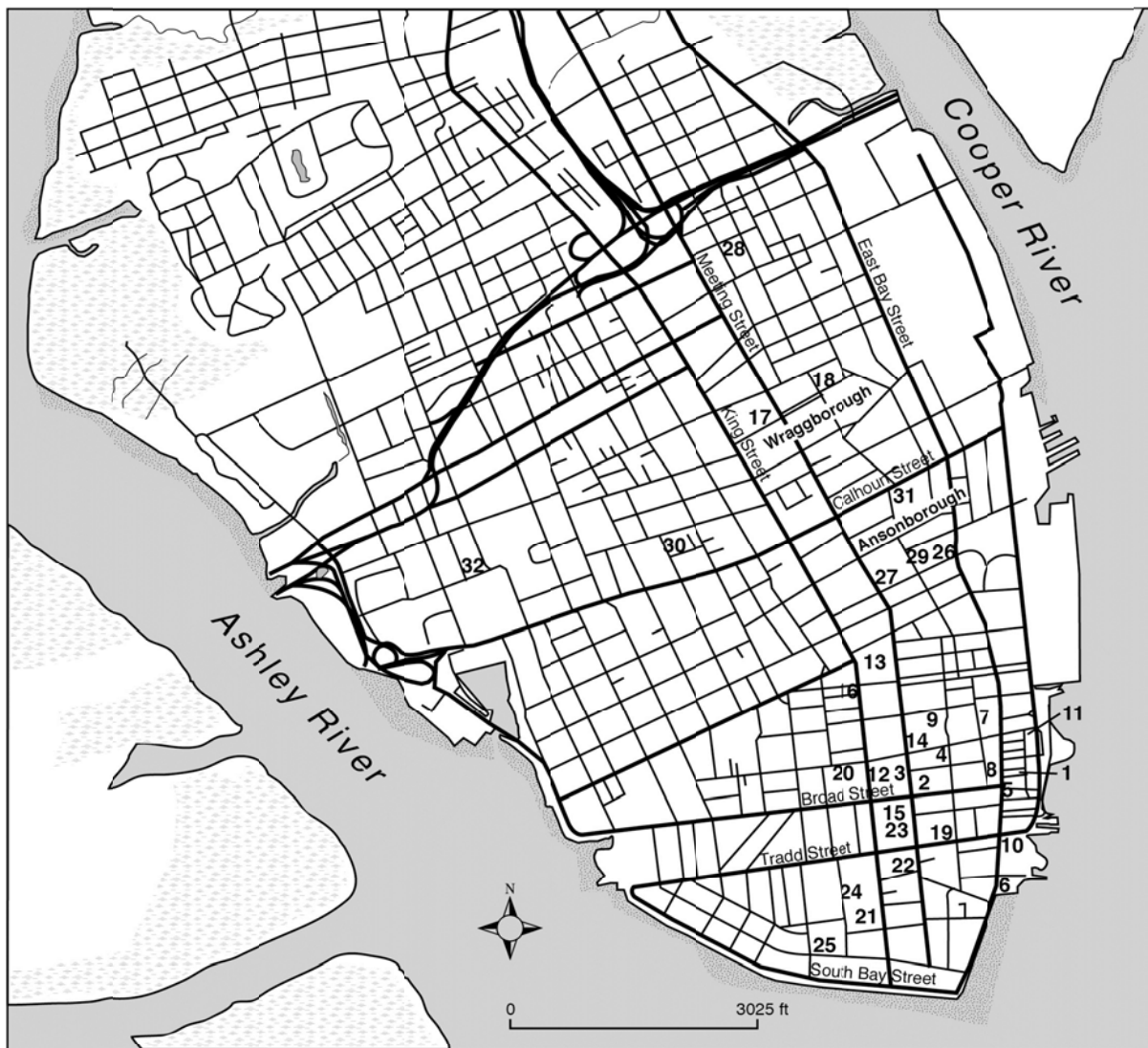




Figure 5: Features excavated in the laundry

Chapter II Fieldwork

Archaeological Research Collective, Inc.

Excavations in the laundry facility, the ground-floor room at the rear of the kitchen/quarters building, were conducted from March to August 2015. Archaeological Research Collective, Inc. engaged in the work at the request of Historic Charleston Foundation (HCF). Brandy Culp, former curator with HCF, requested archaeological consultation and excavations below the floorboards of the Laundry to mitigate adverse effect to the potential archaeological resource lying below the room. Historical research details the innovations and technology that the Aikens experienced first-hand while traveling in Europe during the 1830s, and HCF and architectural historians involved with the Aiken-Rhett house believe that the laundry room was fashioned after European examples.

Plan of Work

HCF believed that evidence of how the laundry room worked, what apparatuses were present, how they functioned, how water entered and left the room, and how the heat required for boiling water was generated could be learned through archaeological investigations. Besides the laundry itself, we hoped to recover artifacts reflective of the enslaved Africans who worked in the laundry room. The archaeology, then, had the chance to uncover the technology implemented by the Aikens, which was utilized and mastered by their enslaved laborers.

In 1989 Hurricane Hugo inflicted heavy damage on the laundry room. The storm toppled an internal chimney located on the room's east wall. Afterwards, Restoration Contractor Richard "Moby" Marks explored the foundation of the chimney and Martha Zierden from The Charleston Museum had the opportunity to see what was present below the floorboards. Only a small window was opened as Marks' crew cleaned out the ruined chimney. Zierden documented a strange brick feature that was adjacent to the northern edge of the chimney, but further investigations were outside of the scope of the Hurricane Hugo mitigation. After these archaeological investigations, the contractor repaired the damage from the toppled chimney, the debris was returned to the room and the floor was repaired. This mitigation process did not involve the search for artifacts, so this debris still contained a large number of artifacts despite the context having been compromised.

Knowing that brick features besides the chimney foundation were present, we had a good idea that we would be able to expose potential laundry elements for HCF's study of the laundry room. All archaeology was performed to mitigate adverse effect to the soil below the floorboards because HCF was planning a museum room within the laundry. Although the architectural plan for the education room was unknown at the time, we excavated knowing that some damage to the resource might occur when the facility was built. Besides mitigation, this project would recover artifacts that could help tell the story of the laundry, the Aikens, and the enslaved Africans who worked in the room.

We planned to excavate as much of the room as possible, in order to mitigate as much effect as possible and to recover a large amount of information. Previous archaeological investigations in the yard at the Aiken-Rhett house did not recover large quantities of artifacts and so we expected to encounter similar contexts within the laundry room. The interior of the room measures 16.8' feet east/west and 27.75' feet north/south. Based on these measurements we calculated units that were 5.6' feet square, in order to dig from wall-to-wall.

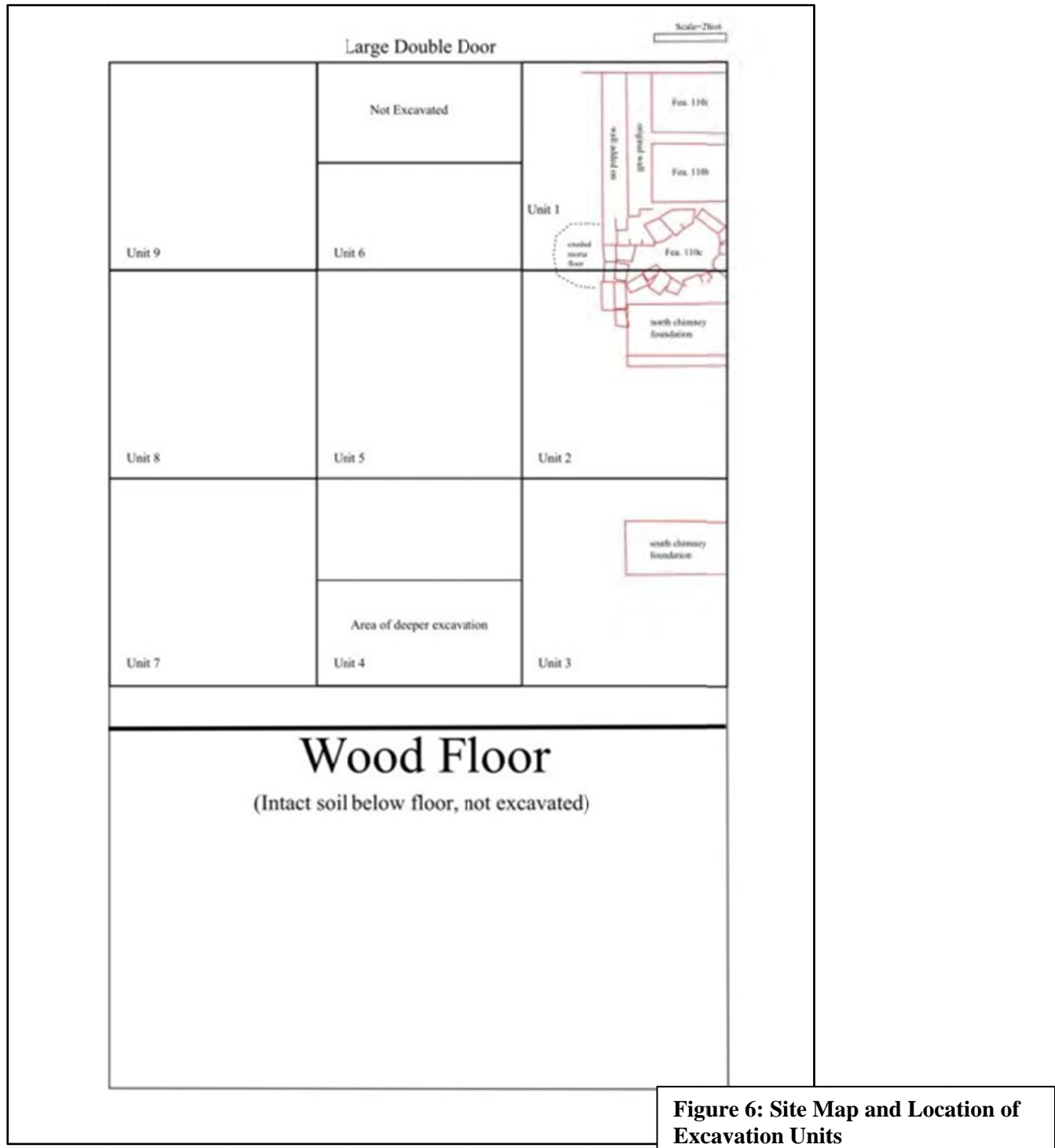


Figure 6: Site Map and Location of Excavation Units

Nine of these units were excavated, leaving the three southern units unexcavated. Units were given numbers for names instead of coordinates. Unit 1 was placed in the northeast corner of the room; Units 2 and 3 were established to the south of Unit 1, along the eastern wall where the chimney once stood. All units were contiguous. The wooden floor was removed from the front $\frac{3}{4}$ of the room but remained in the south part of the room for the entirety of the project; we did not excavate underneath this portion of the floor. The south wall of Unit 3 fell within 1 foot of the remaining wooden floor.

Units 4, 5 and 6 were established in the middle of the room. Unit 4 sat west of Unit 3, Unit 5 sat west of Unit 2, and Unit 6 sat west of Unit 1. Because Unit 6 faced the large door that we used to get in and out of the room, and which was also the door that we moved dirt out of the room in order to get it to the screens, we opted to excavate a smaller unit in this location. Besides these reasons, a support beam for the wooden floor came out of the wall in this spot and cinder blocks were sandwiched between this beam and the dirt floor for stability. This architectural element was protected and we made Unit 6 a half-unit measuring 5.6x2.8 feet.

The three units against the west wall of the laundry were slightly smaller than Units 1 through 5. During excavations of Units 1 through 3, architects involved with the project strongly suggested we do not dig below 2.0 feet below the grade elevation outside the room. This would ensure the structural integrity of the laundry's walls would be upheld. The ground surface inside the room, before our units were excavated, was roughly 1.0 feet below grade. To protect the west wall as much as possible, Units 7, 8 and 9 were excavated with a baulk left between them. Unit 7 comprised the southwest corner unit of our 9-unit block. The 1 foot baulk was left in the north end of the unit. After this unit was completed it was backfilled before Unit 8 to its north was excavated. The same north baulk procedure was repeated for Unit 8 before Unit 9 was excavated. This assured the most strength possible for the west wall and the architects agreed that this was a safe plan for the superstructure.

All soil was removed, mainly by buckets, taken out of the room and screened outside through $\frac{1}{4}$ " hardware cloth. All rubble was weighed in the field and discarded according to provenience; some architectural samples were kept for curation purposes. Artifacts were bagged according to provenience. Some soil samples were taken for future processing and analyses. All artifacts were processed by The Charleston Museum. Notes were kept for each unit and high resolution digital photographs were taken with a Canon PowerShot SX230 HS 12.1 mega pixel camera.

Description of Excavated Proveniences

Brick architecture was already visible on the surface of Unit 1 before we began to dig. A large brick wall that runs north/south from the north wall of the laundry room created a separation so Zone 1 west of this wall was removed first. After 0.3 tenths of Zone 1 removal the builder's trench for this wall appeared as dense rubble in a 10YR3/2 very dark grayish brown sandy loam. To sample this trench and the zone deposits adjacent to it the unit was bisected to create north/south halves. The south half of the unit was taken down with the builder's trench excavated a little bit and then the intact matrix to the west was taken down. This resulted in the exposure of several zones of soil and the intact builder's trench next to them. Figure 7 displays a plan view drawing of all identified brick features in the laundry room. Figure 8 displays a north profile drawing of these results. The east side of this large brick wall consists of a rectangular cell of soil

outlined by brick. This cell is called Feature 110. It is separated in the middle by a one-course wide row of brick that appeared to be an intact foundation held together with mortar. This central brick line splits the cell into two squares; the north half is Feature 110a and the south half is Feature 110b. South of 110b is a circular brick feature that is called Feature 110c. Feature 110c was the brick feature documented by Martha Zierden during the Hurricane Hugo mitigation.

These brick features comprise the base of the laundry apparatus, with faint markings still being visible in the building's wall where the top of the laundry and the flue were located. Features 110a and 110b are likely the sinks and Feature 110c is likely associated with the boiler and flue. Feature 110c was filled with debris from the Hurricane Hugo mitigation. Unlike the rest of the room had a strong pungent smell, which may be associated with the former function or chemicals used historically. The base of Feature 110c was lined with brick, one of which appears to have been removed during the Hurricane Hugo mitigation. It has a small opening on the front or west side of this circular box likely to allow access for stoking the fire. The front of the brick laundry feature had a prepared floor of mortar and smaller brick fragments. This floor appears to have mostly been disturbed and destroyed during Hurricane Hugo, so only a small portion remained for us to document. Zone 1 was removed first through two levels to a depth of 1.6 feet b.d. Hurricane Hugo clean up appeared in the southern part of Unit 1 and extended from the southern profile north 8/10ths of a foot. This is likely the edge of the work performed to clean up the chimney fall during Hugo. Found in the fill was a Strawberry Sunkist plastic soda bottle. This disturbance was isolated and removed to a depth of 2.0 feet b.d. Once this modern disturbance was gone Zone 2 was excavated to a depth of 1.8 feet b.d. Zone 3, noted for its dense charcoal and very dark to black soil color, followed Zone 2 and terminated at 2.0 feet below datum (b.d.) on top of an extremely hard packed mortar lens.

As Unit 2 dealt mostly with Hugo clean-up, Zone 1 was the only intact zone that overlaid the entire unit. This terminated at 1.4 feet b.d. and gave way to clearly defined Hugo clean up in some spots while other times it seemed as if the Hugo debris was intact soils. Excavation was carefully performed in this unit to make sure that the intact deposits were isolated from the modern trash.

Unit 3 was treated the same way as Unit 2 except that much more intact soil was encountered through zone deposits that sat in the southwestern corner of the unit. Zone 1 was separated into five distinct proveniences: Zone 1, Zone 1a, Zone 1b, Zone 1c and Zone 1d. Each one of these designations is not related entirely to depth but more to strange discreet deposits of fill intermixed within the soil that overlays Zone 2. For instance Zones 1 and 1a contain mortar rubble while Zone 1b is simply a lens of mortar powder. Zone 1c contains no rubble and Zone 1d is a thin 10YR2/1 black silt lens that separates Zone 1b from Zone 2. Zone 2 has both an amorphous top and bottom and is a 2.5Y4/1 silty sand with moderate mortar and brick rubble inclusions. Zone 3 was defined as being almost the consistency of worm castings and was highly organic and jet black in color. This zone also contained dense mortar rubble.

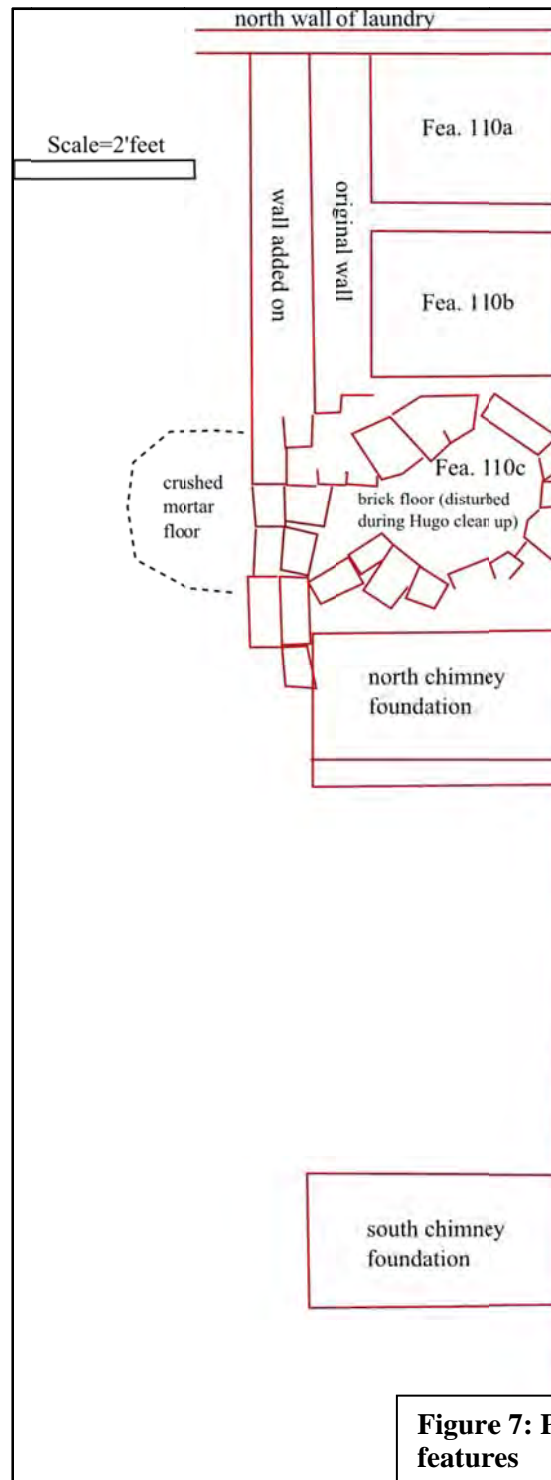


Figure 7: Plan view of all identified brick features

Zone 4 below this consisted of two distinct deposits, named Zone 4 and Zone 4a for differentiation. Zone 4, which was consistent across the entire room in Units 4 through 9, was a deposit of 10YR4/3 loamy sand with mortar and brick rubble in it, and Zone 4a was a 2.5Y4/2 silty sand with light amounts of charcoal and mortar. In the southern part of the unit a densely packed mottled clay prepared surface was identified and named Zone 5. This surface was cut through to obtain a sample of it and also understand the nature of its fill but it was not removed completely. A level floor was reached at the depth required by the architects; we did not surpass 2.0 feet below grade at their request to maintain structural stability of the superstructure of the laundry building.

The remaining six units contained relatively the exact same stratigraphy, which was defined in Unit 3. The only anomaly to this consistency is that Units 6 and 9 encountered only Zone 4. Figure 9 displays a west profile drawing of Unit 5, showing the gradual disappearance of Zones 1, 2 and 3 where the only soil left is Zone 4. Figure 10 shows the north profile. Figure 11 displays the plan view photo of Unit 6, where only Zone 4 overlaid the clay floor. Zone 4 overlays Zone 5 in all units. Zone 5 is a prepared clay floor, and is possibly the most important soil discovered within the laundry. Once this clay floor was reached all unit excavations ceased. Zone 5, the clay floor, was identified in Units 4 through 9. Since the clay floor is basically level across the whole room, it seems that Zone 4 was deposited in greater amounts towards the north half of the room and was thinner in the south half. Zones 1 through 3, then, were obviously later and their origins may have come about as past people were trying to fill the room in to a level floor while the laundry was being constructed, or when the flooring was put in so that the laundry mechanisms could be operated.

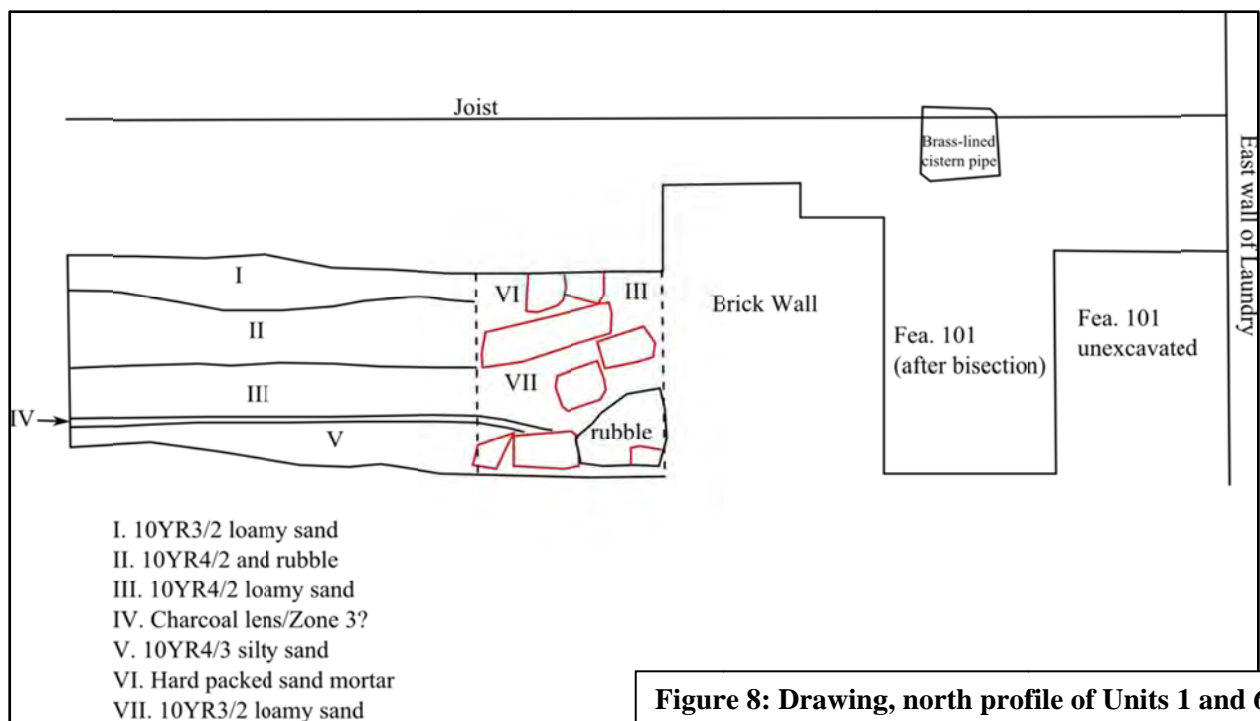


Figure 8: Drawing, north profile of Units 1 and 6.

Zone 3, being so organically rich and having the modern-day consistency of worm compost, might have been created through the clean out of the privy in the southeast corner of the room. We cannot imagine that the privy was open, or used, while the Aiken's expensive and highly advanced laundry facility was in operation. It seems most likely that the privy was cleaned out, capped and closed prior to the flooring of the laundry room. It is even possible that some of the trash, like the whole bottles and other large ceramics, were removed from the privy when it was cleaned out, since Zone 3 contains so much large debris, this interpretation is plausible. Zones 1 and 2, then, may only represent Aiken-period, active laundry room accumulation.

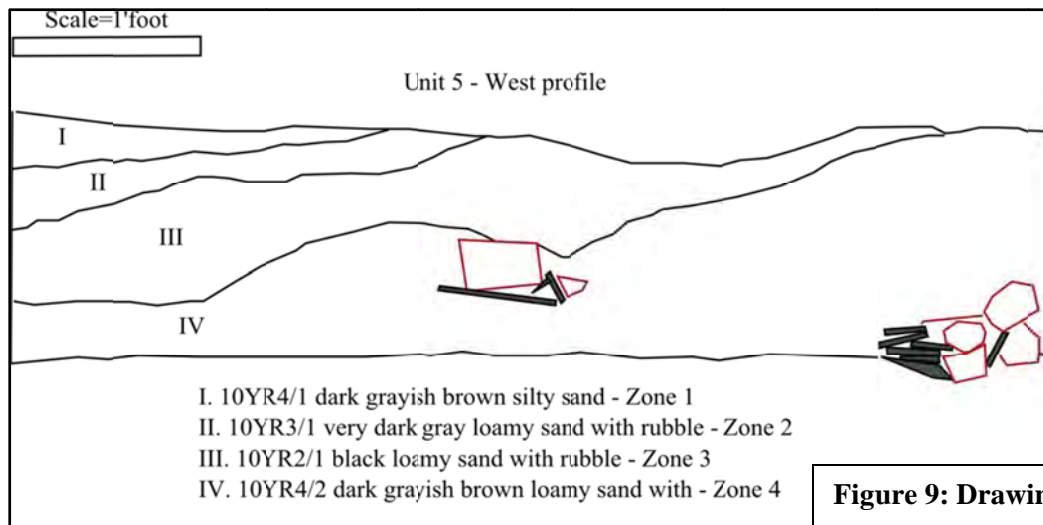


Figure 9: Drawing, west profile of Unit 5

Our goal was to recover as much Aiken period material as possible; hence our excavations ceased when the clay floor was encountered. We can safely and easily say that the clay floor predated the construction of the extension of the kitchen, which became the laundry, due to the fact that the builder's trench for the west wall cuts through the clay floor. Figure 12 displays a plan view and photo of Unit 7 Zone 5 clearly being interrupted by the wall trench. Since it is obvious that the clay floor predates the room, and the fill on top of the clay floor was brought in either during or after the room was built, what was the function of the clay floor? It appears that it was laid down to serve a function relegated to outdoor activities. Did the floor serve a purpose north of the kitchen, when the laundry wing did not exist?

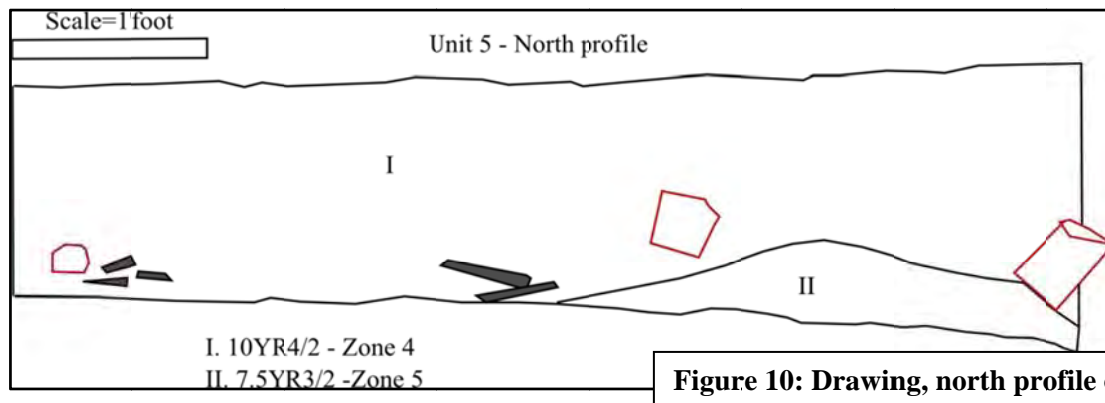


Figure 10: Drawing, north profile of Unit 5

To learn more about the floor we excavated down through Zone 5 in Unit 4. Figure 13 displays a south profile drawing and photo to show the soils that we encountered below this prepared floor. Only the south half of Unit 4 was excavated to sample the soils below Zone 5, and this half unit was halved so that southeast and southwest quadrants were created to maintain as much control as possible. The clay floor is roughly 0.3' feet thick in the south profile with a relatively flat bottom. It overlays a new soil encountered in the room that we named Zone 6. This soil layer was characterized by an evenly mottled 10YR3/2 and 10YR4/2 sandy loam that sometimes had the consistency of ash. Some cinders and charcoal were noted throughout this lens. Figure 14 displays a photo of *in situ* artifacts found in Zone 6.

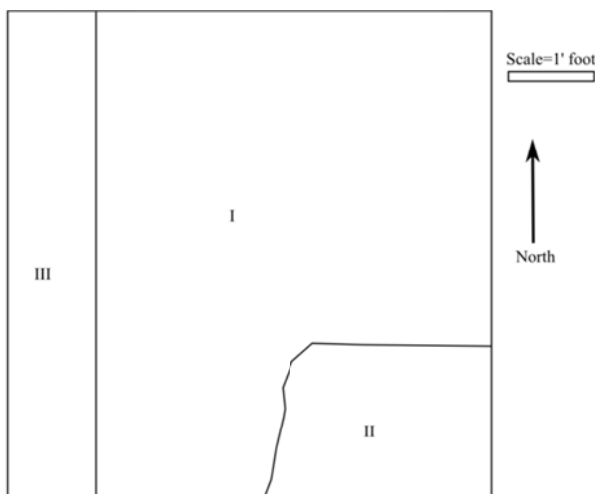
Zone 6 was excavated through two arbitrary levels, and gave way to a thin lens of finely crushed shell. This crushed shell lens covers an extremely mottled soil. Because this soil was so

mottled we chose to excavate roughly 0.4 feet of this soil to learn if features were present. Subsoil was quickly encountered directly underneath just a small patch of the shell at the base of Zone 6 Level 2, but it was not recognized until we had excavated these few tenths of a foot. This last excavated layer was named Zone 7. At 4.2 feet below datum, which is roughly even with the grassy yard outside the laundry room, we terminated excavation. Soils were becoming saturated with water and almost the entire floor consisted of features. Figure 15 displays a plan view drawing and photo of the base of Zone 7.



Figure 11: Photo, plan view of the top of zone 5 in Unit 6

We interpret Zone 7 as being a mass of features that could only be understood if a much larger space was excavated. The Zone 6 soil appears to have been laid down by Robinson, the previous owner and improver of the lot before the Aiken's lived there. It is unknown if the Aikens or Robinson built the clay floor. It seems that all of the fill in this part of yard, which is consistent with Zierden's findings along the eastern brick wall that retains the Aiken yard, was used to reclaim the marshland associated with a creek that once passed by the current Aiken yard. It is also very possible that other soils in the spaces outside of the laundry relate to the pre-Aiken period.



- I. 10YR5/4 yellowish brown sandy clay - Zone 5
- II. 10YR3/1 very dark gray loose sand with rubble - potential feature
- III. 10YR2/1 black sandy loam with rubble and mortar - builder's trench



Figure 12: Drawing and photo, top of zone 5 in Unit 7

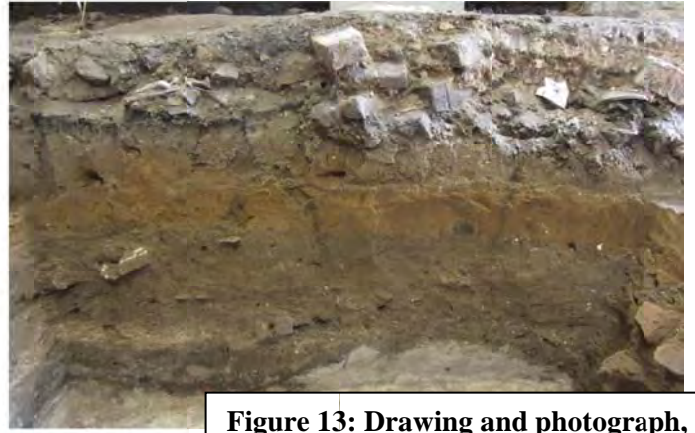
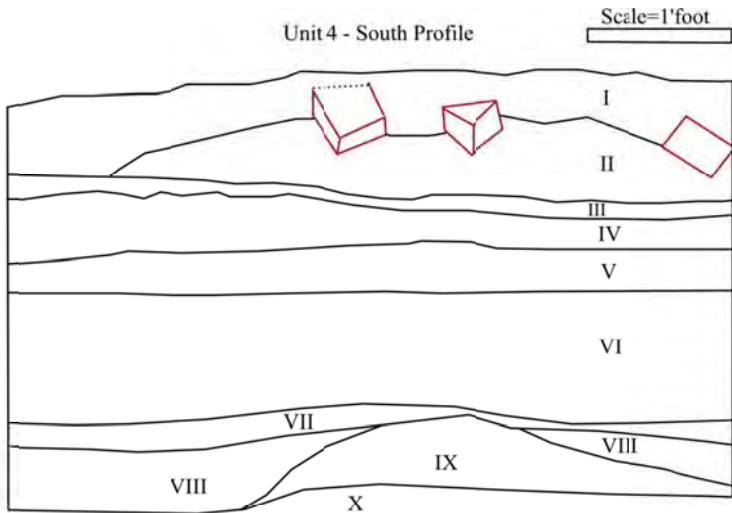


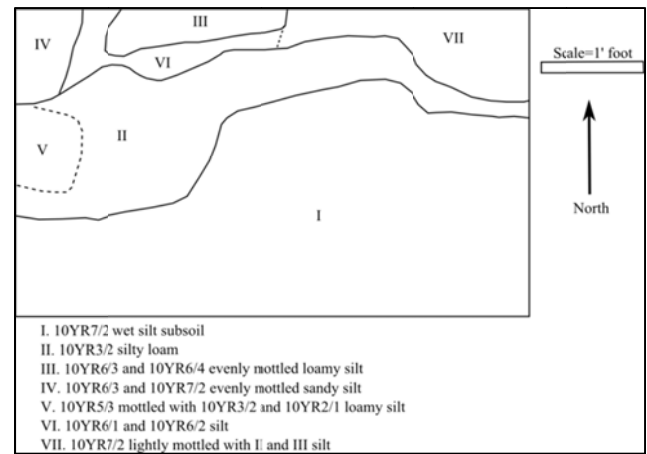
Figure 13: Drawing and photograph, south profile of Unit 4

- I. 10YR3/1 silty loam with rubble - Zone 1
- II. 10YR5/3 sandy loam with heavy rubble and large artifacts - Zone 2(almost no dirt present)
- III. 10YR2/1 black midden soil - Zone 3
- IV. 10YR3/4 overburden with fine rubble - Zone 4
- V. 10YR4/6 and 7/5YR4/4 mottled clay - Zone 5
- VI. 10YR3/2 and 10YR4/2 evenly mottled silty loam - Zone 6
- VII. 10YR5/3 fine water-washed crushed shell and coarse sand - Zone 7
- VIII. 10YR3/2 and 10YR5/3 heavy mottled loamy silt - Zone 8
- IX. 10YR6/2 silt subscil - Zone 8
- X. 10YR7/2 wet silt subsoil (unexcavated)

= brick



Figure 14: Photo, in situ artifacts found in Unit 4 zone 6



- I. 10YR7/2 wet silt subsoil
- II. 10YR3/2 silty loam
- III. 10YR6/3 and 10YR6/4 evenly mottled loamy silt
- IV. 10YR6/3 and 10YR7/2 evenly mottled sandy silt
- V. 10YR5/3 mottled with 10YR3/2 and 10YR2/1 loamy silt
- VI. 10YR6/1 and 10YR6/2 silt
- VII. 10YR7/2 lightly mottled with I and III silt

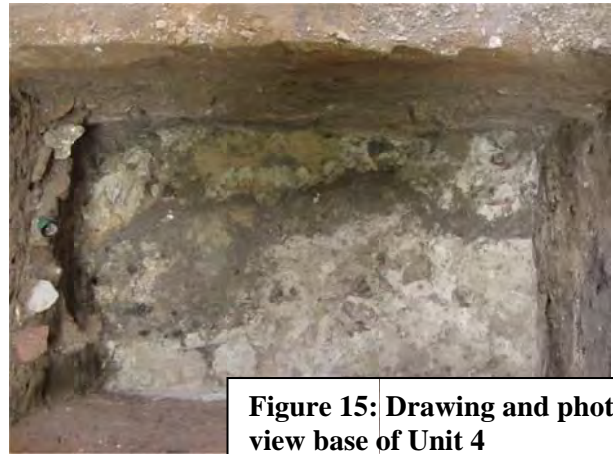


Figure 15: Drawing and photo, plan view base of Unit 4

Excavations in Feature 110 proved to be important but also extremely confusing. Each “box” of the feature was excavated separately. The south box, Feature 110b, was excavated first and quickly revealed the two builder’s trenches for both the central, single-course brick “wall” and the more substantial curved foundation wall for the circular brick feature to its south. These builder’s trenches were excavated separately for maximum control. This box was bisected along a north/south access and the west half was excavated; the same was done for Feature 110a to the north. Figure 16 displays a plan view drawing of 110b and a plan view photo of Feature 110a and 110b. Figure 17 displays an east profile drawing and photo of Feature 110b. The feature fill between these builder’s trenches was a 10YR4/4 loamy sand. After 0.4 feet of excavation in this box the builder’s trenches for both north and south brick walls disappeared. The northern one terminated into the next major soil change and did not continue, although the wall did continue for two more courses of brick and a brick footer was found at the bottom. The southern builder’s trench faded away after 0.5 feet, but again, the wall continued (refer to Figure 18). Below the top level of 110a lies a very dense mortar fill with a slight amount of 10YR5/4 sandy silt included in it. This terminated into an extremely dense packed mortar surface, similar to that seen at the opening of the brick circular feature. Isenbarger identified this mortar surface in Unit 1 at the base of her excavations there, and suspected it had something to do with water or air going in or out of the circular feature.

The north box, Feature 110a, was excavated as a single provenience due to the extremely dense rubble fill that never changed the further down into the box we dug. It is a 10YR5/4 and 10YR4/2 loose loamy sand that is slightly intermixed into the rubble, some of which is whole or half bricks. Figure 18 displays an east profile drawing and photograph of 110a. Numerous air pockets were encountered during excavation. Again, a dense mortar bed was encountered at the base. Attempts to push a chaining pin and trowel into this surface proved unsuccessful. The mortar’s purpose is unknown.

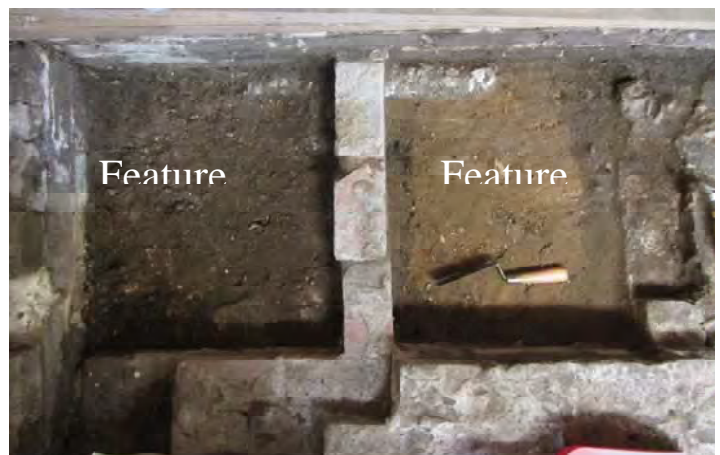
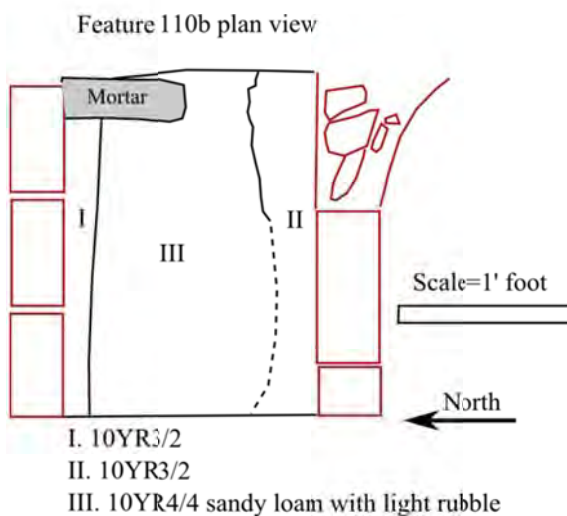


Figure 16: Plan view drawing of feature 110b and plan view photo of feature 110a and 110b

There is a cistern outside the laundry room directly north of Feature 110. In the wall above the brick boxes is a brass chute that appears to have delivered water into the room. Did Feature 110 collect that water, or did it go past it and into another receptacle? The puzzling part of Feature 110 is that it was filled with dirt and brick/mortar rubble before the brick partition wall was built down the center of the rectangular space. We have to question if the builder's trench for the center wall was really a builder's trench or was it some other kind of soil deposit that paralleled and abutted against the bricks? Why are Feature 110a and 110b filled with different kinds of fill: one being primarily rubble and the other mostly sandy loam? What function did the mortar bed at the bottom of the feature serve? Or, were these brick chambers supposed to be filled in after they were built? Currently it seems that this feature served some purpose for water but what that purpose was may only be understood through archival work.

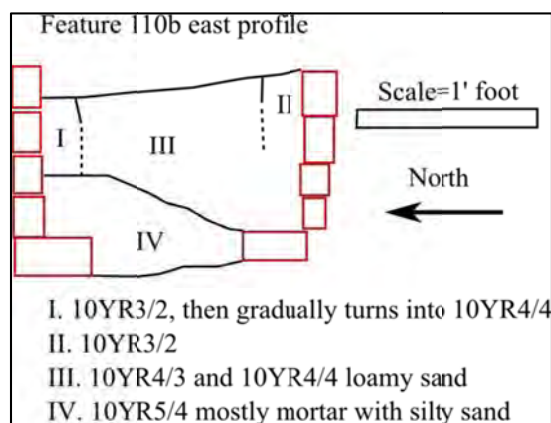
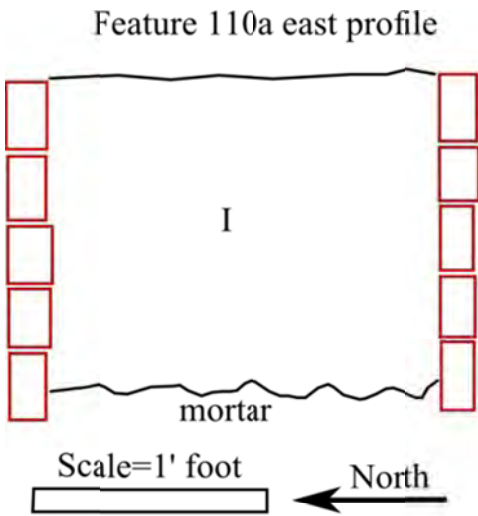


Figure 17: Photo and drawing, profile of feature 110b



I. Heavy brick rubble in a
10YR5/4 and 10YR4/2
loose loamy sand



Figure 18: Drawing and photograph, profile of feature 110

Table 1: Provenience Guide by Temporal Period

| FS# | Unit | Provenience | TPQ | Date/depos. |
|-----|--------------|---|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| 330 | Unit 1 | Feature 110, south half | whiteware | |
| 334 | Unit 1 | Feature 110, level 2 | glass marble | |
| 343 | Unit 1 | Feature 110d, top | clear glass | |
| 344 | Unit 1 | Feature 110a, top | white porcelain | |
| 345 | Unit 1 | Feature 110d, top | nail | |
| 382 | Unit 1 | Feature 110, north box | white porcelain | |
| 383 | Unit 1 | Feature 110, south box | white porcelain | |
| 385 | Unit 1 | Feature 110,S, north builders trench | iron flake | |
| 386 | Unit 1 | Feature 110, south box, builders trench | bottle base | |
| 387 | Unit 1 | Feature 110, south box, center fill | clear flat glass | |
| 389 | Unit 1 | Feature 110, south box, level 2 | pearlware | |
| 390 | Unit 1 | Feature 110, south box, level 3 | pharmaceutical glass | |
| 335 | Unit 1 | zone 3 | panel bottle | |
| 346 | Unit 2 | zone 3 | white porcelain/gilt ironstone | |
| 348 | Unit 3 | zone 3a | glass marble/tr.pr.ww, 1870 | |
| 358 | Unit 4 | zone 3/2? | Chero-cola, 1904, tr pr. 1880 | |
| 359 | Unit 4 | zone 3 | crown cap, gold/blue ww, 1870 | |
| 360 | Unit 4 | zone 3, n.e. | white porcelain | |
| 366 | Unit 5 | zone 3 | glass marble, green/grey ww, 1880 | |
| 368 | Unit 6 | zone 3 | milk glass, white porcelain | |
| 371 | Unit 7 | zone 3 | hard rubber button, marmalade, 1862 | |
| 375 | Unit 8 | zone 3 | white porcelain/gold luster | |
| 394 | Unit 3 | east wall, z 3-4 | canton porcelain | |
| 342 | Unit 1 | zone 4 | hand paint whiteware | |
| 347 | Unit 2 | zone 4 | flow blue ww/gold trim soft porc. | |
| 349 | Unit 3 | zone 4 | Rockingham/white porcelain | |
| 361 | Unit 4 | zone 4, south half | sponged ww | |
| 362 | Unit 4 | zone 4, north half | brown bottle glass | |
| 367 | Unit 5 | zone 4 | hand painted ww | |
| 372 | Unit 7 | zone 4 | porcelain, 1870 | |
| 373 | Unit 7 | zone 4/feature | glass | |
| 377 | Unit 8 | zone 4 | whiteware/glass marble | |
| 378 | Unit 9 | zone 4 | porcelain, gold stripe | |
| 379 | Unit 4 | zone 5 | transfer print pw | |
| 350 | Unit 3 | zone 5 | transfer print pw | |
| 399 | Unit 3 samp. | zone 5-6 | prosser button | |
| 384 | Unit 4 | zone 5 | transfer print pw/ww | |

| | | | |
|-----|--------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 381 | Unit 4 | zone 6 | transfer print ww |
| 380 | Unit 4 | zone 6 | luster ware/pw. |
| 391 | Unit 4 | zone 6 lev 2, se quad | white porcelain |
| 388 | Unit 4 | zone 6 lev 1 | whiteware |
| 392 | Unit 4 | zone 7 | lead glazed earthenware |

Chapter III Laboratory Analysis

Records and Curation

Field methods and record-keeping followed procedures established by The Charleston Museum with the first project in 1985. Field records included photographs, a photo log, narrative notes, plan view and profile maps. All artifacts were bagged by provenience, and each provenience received a field specimen number (FS#) in ordinal fashion. Numbers have been assigned consecutively since the 1985 project; the 2015 laundry excavations included FS# 329-399.

Following excavation, all materials were transferred from Historic Charleston Foundation and Archaeological Research Collective Inc. to The Charleston Museum in August 2015. All bagged materials were sorted by field provenience number (FS# 329-399), washed with warm water, air-dried, and re-bagged. Artifacts in each provenience were then sorted, identified, counted, and catalogued on paper records. Washing and sorting commenced in August 2015 and continued for a year; the analysis was conducted by trained laboratory technicians, anthropology interns from the College of Charleston, and experienced volunteers.

All non-ferrous and selected ferrous artifacts were scheduled for conservation treatment through electrolytic reduction. The ferrous items were placed in electrolysis in a weak sodium carbonate solution with a current of six amperes. Upon completion of electrolysis, ranging from a few weeks to a few months, they were placed in distilled water to remove chlorides and air dried. The artifacts were coated with a solution of tannic acid and phosphoric acid, and dipped in microcrystalline wax to protect the surfaces. Non-ferrous artifacts were also placed in electrolytic reduction, in a more concentrated solution with a current of 12 amperes. Electrolytic reduction of these artifacts was usually accomplished in a few days. They were then placed in distilled water baths to remove surface chlorides, air-dried, and gently polished before being coated with Incralac to protect the surfaces.

Faunal material (animal bones) were washed, separated from other materials, and weighed by provenience. On October 26, 2016, these were delivered to the zooarchaeology laboratory, University of Georgia for analysis by zooarchaeology students in the spring of 2017. Papers from the class will be delivered to Historic Charleston Foundation, as will a final report when funds are available to complete analysis by Dr. Elizabeth Reitz.

Soil samples were recovered from selected proveniences, as were intact architectural samples (brick, stone, mortar, etc.). Soil and architecture samples were bagged separately and inventoried. Soil samples were double-bagged for long-term storage. Upon completion of laboratory analysis, all materials were returned to Historic Charleston Foundation for permanent curation at the Aiken-Rhett house.

Analysis

The first step in analysis was identification of the artifacts. The Museum's type collection, Noel Hume (1969), Stone (1974), Ferguson (1992) and Deagan (1987) are classic sources for ceramics of the colonial era. As the Aiken Rhett collection contains materials that span the 19th century, new and additional sources were used, including the new source on post-colonial ceramics, Diagnostic Artifacts of Maryland (<http://www.jefpat.org/diagnostic/Index.htm>), as well as Coysh (1972, 1974), Godden (1964), Sussman (1997) and Baldwin (1993). Identification of 19th century bottles and container glass was based on the Historic Glass Bottle Identification & Information Website maintained by the Society for Historical Archaeology (<https://sha.org/bottle/>), as well as more traditional sources, including Lorrain (1968), Huggins (1971), Kechum (1975), and Switzer (1974). Deagan (2002), Epstein (1968), Luscomb (1967), South (1964), Sprague (2002), and Taunton (1997) were used for the detailed study of buttons and clothing artifacts. Carskaddan and Gartley (1990, 1998) and Barrett (1994) were used to date marbles. Deagan (2002) and Miller et al. (2000) provided guidance for a range of materials.

For basic descriptive purposes, the artifacts were sorted by temporal association and then into eight categories based on function, following South's (1977) model. South's methodology for the Carolina Artifact Pattern has been used to sort the Charleston data for decades, so that initial first step continues for the sake of continuity. Artifacts are quantified in proportion to each other, for comparative studies. The goal of this analysis is to classify the artifacts by function, or how they were used in the everyday life of their owners. South's original methodology called for identifying broad regularities, or patterns, in these proportions to describe the retinue of daily activities on British colonial sites. Subsequent researchers have taken issue with this method, and with the placement of particular artifact types (Hudgins 2014)

The relative proportions of a variety of artifact types were measured based on the work of King (1990, 1992) and many others in the mid-Atlantic region. This ongoing analysis (Zierden 2009; Zierden and Reitz 2016) provided more details on proportion of consumer goods and how they were used by Charlestonians.

Temporal Subdivisions

As with previous field projects (1985, 2001, 2002), the archaeological deposits from the laundry were subdivided into five temporal periods, associated with occupational and architectural changes to the property, as documented by architectural historians and site interpreters (Poston 1997; Albee 2001; Buck 2003; Graham et al. 2003). The first period, 1817-1833, covers construction of the house by John Robinson, sale of the property in 1825, and transfer of the property to William Aiken, Jr. in 1833.

Aiken made significant changes to the house and property upon acquisition, beginning in 1833. These changes include removal of the entry from Judith to Elizabeth Streets, construction of the entrance foyer, and construction of the eastern wing, including the dining room and ball room. Pertinent to the present study, the service buildings were enlarged and remodeled, and the garden buildings constructed. The second period, then, begins in 1833 and continues to 1857.

The third period, 1857-1876, covers a second major remodeling of the house, including construction of the art gallery wing, extensive redecorating of the house interior, and the addition of gas lighting and improved plumbing.

Recently discovered documentary evidence for another round of changes, reflected in the archaeological record, prompted delineation of a fourth period from 1876 to 1900. This period includes renovation for a series of family events, as well as repair from natural disasters such as the 1886 earthquake (Stockton 1986; Williams and Hoffius 2011). The final period spans the 20th century. To this list may be added a sixth, earlier period. Documentary and cartographic evidence, as well as archaeological remote sensing, suggests that the British approach lines of the 1780 siege of Charleston crossed the Aiken-Rhett property. A small number of artifacts and features date to the late 18th century, prior to construction of the Robinson house, and these are isolated and delineated to better understand this event.

Stratigraphy and Temporality

The soil deposits inside the laundry were clearly stratified and filled with cultural materials. The soils were somewhat dry and unconsolidated, making some mixing inevitable. However, the stratigraphy was straightforward and clearly represented distinct events.

Zone 1 was a very dark greyish brown sandy loam (10yr3/2) with dense brick and mortar rubble. In some units, zone 1 contained modern debris, likely resulting from Hurricane Hugo mitigation. In other units, the zone 1 matrix exhibited discrete bands of distinct materials. Zone 2 was a silty sand (2.5y4/1) with moderate mortar and brick inclusions. Zone 3 was dark, organic soil, with a high organic content in some units and heavy coal and charcoal deposits in other areas. Zone 4 was consistent across the room as a dark brown (10yr4/3) loamy sand with mortar and brick rubble. This was followed by a prepared clay surface designated zone 5. Cultural layers continued below this surface, but only a small sample in Unit 4 was excavated.

These deposits were consistent across the room, with some variation. Zone 5, the prepared clay floor, was identified in Units 4 through 9. Zone 4, the artifact-bearing soil above, was deposited in greater amounts in the northern portion of the room, with a narrower layer in the southern portion. Zones 1-3 were absent in the northernmost units. Isenbarger noted the rich dark soil and the dense cultural content of zone 3, leading to speculation that these materials were cleaned out of the privy in the southeast corner, and spread across the room, prior to installation of the current wooden flooring. Zones 1 and 2 accumulated after this floor, or floors, decayed. Based on stratigraphy, and the relation of the builder's trench for the laundry to the clay floor, it is clear that the clay floor was established prior to construction of the laundry building. Artifacts recovered in overlying zone 4 consistently date to the second quarter of the 19th century. All of the zone 4 proveniences contained whitewares manufactured after 1820 and, in some cases, after 1840. The clay floor, zone 5, in contrast, contains principally pearlwares, dating before 1820, with occasional whitewares from the 1830s. The interpretation of the clay floor as a prepared work surface, predating the building, has merit. However, the small sample of zones underlying the clay floor all contained later artifacts, including luster ware, whiteware, and white porcelain, all mid-19th century artifacts.

The above zone 4 contained artifacts that span the second and third quarter of the 19th century, suggesting their accumulation is associated with the entire period of active use of the room as a laundry. Items providing a TPQ for zone 3 include panel bottles from 1867, white porcelain from 1850, glass marbles from the late 19th century, hard rubber buttons postdating 1859. A distinctive set of transfer printed tableware, with a maker's mark, was developed in 1880. This ceramic set was recovered throughout the laundry, and has been recovered from the yard, as well. Zone 3 may reflect use of the building after the laundry features were added in 1858.

Zone 2 contained similar artifacts, in terms of TPQ, suggesting a date of deposition close to the end date for zone 3. Zone 2 likely accumulated in the final quarter of the 19th century. Additional fragments of the 1880s transfer print ware were recovered in zone 2, for example.

Zone 1 accumulated in the 20th century; the hallmark artifacts were fragments of phonograph albums. The thickness and diameter of the records suggest they are 331/3 speed albums, and not earlier discs. Fragments of these records were found in the 2001 yard excavations, as well.

The recovered artifacts and stratigraphy, then, place zone 4 in Period II, 1833-1858. Zones 3 best associates with Period III, 1858-1876, though the zone contains some artifacts from the fourth quarter of the 19th century. Based on stratigraphic superimposition, Zone 2 is associated with Period IV, 1876-1900. Zone 1 is a 20th century event.

Description of the Artifacts

Kitchen

Artifacts associated with foodways, dining, and kitchen activities accounted for over half of the materials recovered in zone 1 and in the earliest deposits, zones 5 through 7. Kitchen items were slightly less common in zones 2 and 3. Ceramics and bottle glass dominated the group. Container glass ranged from those for alcoholic beverages, to condiments, to medicines. The great majority of the ceramics were tablewares, particularly a variety of refined earthenwares.

Table ceramics, refined earthenwares and porcelains, dominate the ceramics throughout the zone deposits. Utilitarian storage vessels and cooking vessels are nearly absent from the ceramic assemblage; earthenwares and stonewares comprise 2-5% of the total ceramics. A small number of ceramics from the second half of the 18th century were recovered throughout the room. Single examples of Staffordshire slipware, Philadelphia slipware, French faience, and white saltglazed stoneware were found in the 19th century zones (zones 3 and 4). A few lead-glazed earthenwares were recovered in these zones, and in the underlying zones 5-7.

Refined earthenwares developed in the 1780s and 1790s, and used through the first quarter of the 19th century are the earliest type of ceramic found in any quantity. Creamware was the first refined earthenware, developed by Josiah Wedgwood in the 1760s, and popular by the 1770s. These thin, hard-fired earthenwares were dipped in a clear glaze and fired at a lower temperature than stonewares. The resulting wares were durable, attractive, and inexpensive, and they rapidly spread across the globe. The late 18th century creamwares were the latest rage, and

came in a variety of elaborate forms as well as everyday wares (Martin 1994, 1996). This ware persists as an inexpensive, undecorated ware in common forms through the 19th century. Creamware is most common in the early zones, and only a few fragments were identified in zones 1 and 2.

The blue-tinged refined ceramic known to archaeologists as pearlware was developed in 1780 (Miller and Hunter 2001). The earliest styles feature a molded shell-edged design, painted in blue or green, while the majority of the flatware vessels were undecorated. Hollow ware vessels – bowls, cans, cups – were painted in blue, often in Chinoiserie or floral designs, or in a palette of earthenware colors in a variety of floral sprays, sprigs, and stripes.



Figure 19: pearlware styles



Figure 20: annular and cabled ware

Styles developed in the 1790s include transfer or bat printing. This style involved the creation of detailed designs in a variety of patterns. North Staffordshire potters, led by Josiah Spode, successfully produced this blue on white ware in 1784. This development, coupled with a significant reduction in the importation of porcelains from Canton after 1793, resulted in a large market for the new ware (Copeland 1994:7; Miller 1991). Transfer print wares were the most expensive of the decorated pearlwares, available in a variety of forms; plates of all sizes, bowls of all sizes, teacups and coffee cups, with or without handles, mugs and saucers. Service pieces include platters, tureens, sauce boats, and teawares. A concurrent development were annular, or “dipped wares.” Usually limited to bowls, mugs, jugs, pitchers, or chamber pots, they were the least expensive wares available with decoration (Miller 1991:6). These vessels feature machine-turned decorations with bright bands of color. Sometimes a wide band was filled with marbled slips in a variety of patterns known as cabled, cat’s eye, fanning and turning (Sussman 1997). Engine-turned designs feature black and white checkerboard patterns, or impressed rim treatments.

Pearlwares were recovered from all of the zones in the laundry, but become less common through time, reflecting the temporal sequencing of the soil deposits. Pearlware comprise 68% of the ceramics in zones 5-7 and 36% in zone 4. They are less than 20% of the ceramics in the later zone deposits. The Aiken-Rhett laundry assemblage included hand painted and annular wares, as



Figure 21: Transfer-printed pearlware, “Peaceable Kingdom



Figure 22: Decorative pearlwares

well as undecorated portions of (likely) shell edged wares. Blue transfer printed wares were the most common. The most distinctive piece was a small handled cup featuring the “Peaceable Kingdom”.

Table 2: Proportion of Pearlware

| Ceramics | zone 1 | zone 2 | F. 110 | Zone 3 | Zone 4 | Zones 5-7 |
|----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-----------|
| Total ceramics | 147 | 80 | 16 | 207 | 258 | 252 |
| Pearlware # | 15 | 3 | 3 | 26 | 95 | 173 |
| % of ceramics | 10.2 | 3.7 | 18.7 | 12.5 | 36.8 | 68.6 |
| Utilitarian # | 3 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 11 | 14 |
| % of ceramics | 2.0 | 0 | 0 | 2.8 | 4.2 | 5.5 |

Whitewares were the majority of the recovered ceramics. British potters, including Wedgwood, continued to refine the glaze formula for refined earthenwares, so that by the 1820s the blue tinge had been removed from the wares, leaving a white china. Archaeologists refer to these as whitewares. The same decorative motifs continue from pearlware to whiteware, challenging archaeologists to correctly identify and date ceramic fragments. Transfer printing continues, in blue and a variety of additional colors. Annular wares were manufactured throughout the period, with only a few discernable stylistic differences through the decades. Shell and hand-painted ware remained popular. Some variations in rim style have recognized date ranges (Miller 1991; Miller et al. 2000). Throughout the antebellum period, undecorated whiteware increased in popularity; ceramic assemblages of the third quarter of the 19th century are dominated by heavy, undecorated wares, often in paneled, molded, or octagonal forms.

Difficulty in dating whitewares, particularly transfer printed wares, may be reduced when a maker’s mark is intact on a ceramic basal fragment. A distinctive style of grey transfer-printed ware was recovered throughout the laundry deposits, and elsewhere on the Aiken lot in earlier digs. The set is marked “John Maddock & Sons. England. Royal Vitreous.” This particular mark is dated 1880 to 1896 (Godden 1964). Recovered vessels include plates, cups, and a distinctive tureen with a pedestaled base and rounded shoulders, decorated in gold along the rim and handles. Fragments of this ware were recovered in zones 2, 3, and 4.



Figure 23: Transfer-printed whiteware by John Maddock & Sons Figure 24: Lustered and printed whitewares

Luster-decorated wares were developed in the 1840s. Copper or platinum salts produced a metallic glaze in gold or silver, and this was applied to earthenware or whiteware. Lustered wares were produced by C.J. Mason and company, among others. A few fragments of luster ware were recovered in the laundry.

Two types of porcelains are important dating tools for 19th century sites. “Canton” refers to poorer-quality Chinese export porcelain that reached the United States and Europe in the first four decades of the 19th century. This ware is distinguished from the blue-on-white wares of the previous century by a greyer paste and glaze, thicker vessels, and an overall darker and less detailed painted execution (Noel Hume 1969:262). With the opening of the China trade in 1784, these wares were shipped to America in great quantity through the 19th century (Mudge 1986). Only a few fragments of Canton porcelain were recovered from the Aiken-Rhett site.

Far more common is the undecorated white porcelain manufactured and distributed in the United States after 1850. These wares dominate ceramic assemblages in the second half of the 19th century and are an important dating tool. These all-white dishes served as everyday wares; after 1880 they were often trimmed in gold. White porcelain comes in a variety of tableware forms, including plates and hollow wares, as well as decorative forms such as vases and dishes. The upper zones contained several examples of soft-paste e porcelain.



Figure 25: White American porcelain



Figure 26: European and Chinese porcelain

Many of the Aiken-Rhett ceramics, particularly from the upper zones, were classified as soft-paste porcelains. These wares were harder-fired than the refined earthenwares, but not as hard as white porcelain. The identified fragments have an off-white glaze color, and exhibit crazing similar to refined earthenwares. The terms ironstone and granite china are also applied to such intermediate wares of the 19th century (www.jefpat.org/diagnostic/post-colonialceramics).

The Aiken-Rhett assemblage contained a few fragments of elaborate, expensive porcelains. Two fragments from a teapot rim are decorated with a hand-painted gold filigree decoration. Similar wares were identified at the Nathaniel Russell House. They date to the early 19th century and are likely French. A small Chinese export porcelain fragment may be a candlestick or other specialty ware. The recovered fragment is decorated in blue underglaze and red overglaze enamel.

Two refined earthenwares served utilitarian purpose. Rockingham, or Bennington, ware is distinguished by a yellow body and blotched brown and yellow glaze. Pitchers and teapots,

particularly those molded with “Rebecca at the Well” are the most common form in the early 19th century. This ware was mass produced in America and other countries for a century beginning in the 1830s (Claney 1996:107). A comparable ware, more common on Charleston sites, is Yellow ware, again an American product produced for more than a century, beginning in 1810. This ware features a buff to yellow body and plain mustard-yellow lead glaze. Some of the larger vessels, such as bowls and chamber pots, feature white bands or wide white stripes with dendritic designs in blue or green.



When quantified by zone, the kitchen group varied through time. These differences reflect change in manufacturing technology, as well as change in function of the room, and variation in site formation processes. This is particularly pronounced in the artifact profile of zones 5-7, those associated with Period 1 before construction of the building addition. These deepest zones exhibit a preponderance of ceramics compared to glass and other kitchen artifacts (66% of the kitchen artifacts). The overall artifact profile for zones 5-7 is more in line with the standard, the Carolina Artifact Pattern (South 1977) that reflects a general pattern of daily life. This supports the suggestion by Isenbarger in Chapter 2 that zones 5-7 reflect outdoor, kitchen-related, activities from Period 1.

Table 3: Kitchen Artifacts

| Artifact type | Zone 1 | Zone 2 | Fea 110 | Zone 3 | Zone 4 | Zone 5-7 |
|---------------|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|----------|
| Ceramics | 147 | 80 | 6 | 207 | 258 | 252 |
| Glass | 668 | 386 | 14 | 376 | 353 | 88 |
| Other | 56 | 57 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 40 |

The ceramics decrease in proportion to glass artifacts in zones 3 and 4, those associated with the later 19th century and with active use of the laundry facility. Here, ceramics are 35-40% of the kitchen items. The later zones, zones 1 and 2, contain only 15% ceramics, with large amount of bottle glass and metal can fragments making up the remainder of the kitchen group. This reflects the explosion of disposable glass bottles available by the late 19th century. The figures also support the interpretation of zones 1 and 2 as general discard, or abandoned storage, rather than of materials actively used in the household.

Container glass dominated the kitchen and hygiene artifacts recovered in the laundry, as is typical of 19th century sites. Fragments of clear, aqua, brown, and olive green glass characterize the assemblage. Glass bottles were hand-blown until 1820, and then were blown into a mold. For the remainder of the century, the bodies of bottles were molded and the necks and lips were finished by hand. Mold seams on these bottles are visible on the bottom and sides of the containers and disappear at the hand-blown neck (Jones and Sullivan 1985; Lorrain 1968). A fully automatic bottle machine was developed in 1903, and the necks more uniform. The mold seam is visible along the neck and over the top of the opening. Crown bottle caps, and the necks that received them, were patented in 1892 (Lorrain 1968:44; <https://sha.org/bottle/>)

Olive green glass bottles often held wine or liquor. The hand-blown bottles typical of the 18th century were gradually replaced by mold-blown bottles, and those from the 19th century are also known as “black glass.” A few large fragments of wine bottle bases came from the laundry. The most distinctive was a wine bottle neck with an applied seal reading “Chateau Mouton.” Despite extensive research, this particular seal could not be identified with temporal certainty. The wine estate of Chateau Mouton Rothschild is located in Pauillac, a village north of Bordeaux, famous for its wines. The initial name of the label was Chateau Brane-Mouton. In 1853 Nathaniel de Rothschild renamed the wine and called it Chateau Mouton, as appears on the Aiken-Rhett seal. At the time, the estate was one of the first to have its wine bottled. The winery remains famous for its high quality wines (www.history1700s.com/index.php/articles/14-guest-authors/970-theadornig-history-of-chateau-mouton-rothschild-label.html).



Figure 28: Wine bottle with “Chateau Mouton” seal

Brown glass containers often held liquors or beers. The Aiken-Rhett assemblage included smaller pint flasks and rounded beer bottles. The latter were principally from the 20th century, and featured crown cap necks. Blue bottle glass is most often associated with mineral or soda water, which became popular by the mid-19th century and common in the third quarter of the century. Soda water bottles were also made in clear and green glass; they are squat, heavy bottles with a thick rounded lip. The Aiken-Rhett laundry features a bottle from a more unusual source. Several fragments of a distinctive emerald green bottle were recovered, marked “Red Spring” and “toga”, for Saratoga. The bottle dates to the 1870s, based on similar examples. Saratoga,



Figure 29: “Red Spring” water bottle

Figure 30: Various bottles, including those for beverages, sauces, and pharmaceuticals

New York is famous for several springs, each of which has unique properties and benefits. Red Spring was known as the “beauty spring” because the water was believed to be good for the skin. The springs were well-known to the Mohawk people, and in the late 18th to 19th century became the location of healing spas (<http://bohemiandraveler.com/2011/10/springs-of-saratoga>).

Other kitchen items included some cutlery, including an iron knife blade, a pewter spoon handle, and an iron spoon. The most common artifact, after fragments of glass, were fragments of tin cans, most very friable and fragmentary. Though the sealing of food in iron cans was patented in 1810, “tin” cans became common in the 1860s, particularly during the Civil War, as a means of processing and preserving foods. Meats were the first products placed in cans, while West coast canners specialized in the packaging of fish products. Concentrated milk was developed by Gail Borden in 1861, followed by concentrated cider and fruit juices. As the 19th century progressed, a variety of vegetables, fruits, and meats were preserved in tin cans (Lord 1969; Rock 1984).

Architecture

Architectural items comprised half of all artifacts recovered, reflecting the cycles of construction, alteration, and abandonment of the room. Only the Period I deposits, that predate the laundry, contain a lower proportion of architectural materials (38%). Nearly half the architectural items were fragments of window glass. The glass ranged from the hand-blown light aqua glass typical of the 18th century, to clear glass common in the 19th and 20th centuries, in a range of thickness. Clear glass was more common in the laundry collections.

Most of the recovered nails and nail fragments were too corroded for firm identification, but it was possible in some cases to distinguish among hand-wrought, machine-cut, and wire nails. Hand-wrought nails are the earliest type recovered in Charleston, and are common through the 18th century. Machine-cut nails were developed in 1790; these types featured shanks sliced from sheet iron by machine, then fitted with a hammered head. After 1815, the nail head was also machine-made. Wire nails, with a round shaft cut from lengths of wire were developed in 1850, but were not common until the last quarter of the 19th century. While a small portion of the identifiable nails were hand-wrought, the majority from the laundry were machine-cut. Wire nails were most numerous in Zone 1, but several were recovered from zone 4, as well.

While some of the nails recovered from laundry room soils could be identified, most were too corroded. Those with a head, regardless of length, were counted as unidentified nails. Those without a head, regardless of length, were counted as nail fragments. The largest numbers of both types were recovered from zones 3 and 4, the soil deposits associated with active use of the laundry facility. Other architectural hardware items included fence staples, miscellaneous wire, bolts, and screws. Identifiable items included two latch hooks, a shutter dog, and portions of grating. Slate roofing was reflected in the recovery of a few brass nails.

Two types of tile were discovered. The first is a fragment of blue-painted delft tile. Delft tiles surrounded the fireplaces of homes in Charleston throughout the 18th century. On the opposite end of the temporal scale are encaustic tiles with a glazed surface. The tiles are mottled brown with light blue



Figure 33: Encaustic tiles

areas. No such tiles are extant in the house or outbuildings, though similar tiles with a green glaze were added to the front parlor in the 1890s.

Arms

Artifacts related to guns and armament averaged .2% of the artifacts. Brass shell casings were the most common artifacts, followed by shotgun shell bases. The shell casings came from .32 caliber and .22 caliber rounds. Two lead shot, two gunflints, and a lead flint grip were also recovered. The gunflints and flint grip are associated with flintlock rifles in use through the early 19th century, while the casings, developed in 1846, reflect mid to late-19th century weapons (Miller et al 2000:14).

Clothing

The clothing group was numerous and diverse, ranging from 2.5% to 4% of the total artifact assemblage, by temporal period. Buttons were the dominant artifact, and prosser buttons were the most common (76). These white porcelain buttons were developed in 1840. Quartz or finely ground ceramic wasters was added to a fine white clay, then pressed into cast-iron molds. Prosser buttons have a smooth surface and often a pebbly or orange-peel rear surface (Sprague 2002). Most have four holes, though some very small buttons feature three holes. Those from the Aiken-Rhett laundry cluster in three sizes, .8mm, 1.1mm, and 1.8mm. The most common form is the dish type, with rounded edges and depressed center. Other types present include those in colors other than white – in this case, grey and black. There was also a single example of a calico button decorated in green and a rimmed button with colored edge. The rimmed buttons, colored or plain, and those molded with the piecrust decoration appear to be used slightly later than the standard dish variety.

Bone buttons are common on archaeological sites throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, and they were the next most common in the Aiken-Rhett laundry (28). Bone discs with a single hole in the center served as the foundation for fabric or thread-covered buttons and are characteristic of the 18th and early 19th centuries. Bones with four holes, or with four holes plus a fifth, central hole, were developed in the early 19th century. While some were locally produced, cut from scraps of animal bone, most were manufactured, as reflected in a machine-cut depressed center.

Buttons of shell, or mother-of-pearl, were available through the 18th and 19th centuries, gradually decreasing in size (Deagan 2002:172). They became more common after the mid-19th century, when machine methods made mass production possible (Epstein 1968; Claasen 1994). They came in a variety of sizes, and the four-holed variety was most common. Those with two holes centered in a fish-eye cut were developed after 1902. The Aiken-Rhett assemblage includes two pearl buttons with brass shanks, one with a domed top and the second a plain flat disc.



Figure 34: Charleston Police button

All of the flat buttons, of prosser, bone, and shell, were for shirts or undergarments, daily wear, or children's clothes, those garments that would be laundered most frequently. Less common were brass buttons (14), usually flat discs with a central wire eye or molded shank, or

two-part hollow buttons with a brass top. These were from outer garments such as coats and vests, or dresses, and so would be laundered less frequently (Tice 2003; South 1964; Deagan 2002).

A few examples of buttons developed in the second half of the 19th century were recovered. Black glass buttons, in imitation of jet, became popular following Queen Victoria's use of jet buttons after the death of Prince Albert in 1861 (Epstein 1968). Her mourning made such black garments fashionable, and the demand for jet created the market for black glass imitations, which were often carved, molded, or otherwise decorated. A single example was recovered at Aiken-Rhett. Two large iron buttons with a fiber center came from zone 3. Finally, hard rubber buttons were developed by the Goodyear company and patented in 1851 (Miller et al. 2000:16).



Figure 35: Buttons from the Aiken-Rhett laundry; bone, prosser, shell, hard rubber, glass

Other clothing fasteners came from the soils in the laundry (18). Brass hook and eye closures were the most common, followed by newer style closures, including snaps. Some of the snaps had decorative brass or iron covers. There were also brass or iron grommets, for shoes (9). Four clothing buckles were recovered. Two fragments from safety pins or decorative brooches were recovered.

The laundry soils contained some sewing items, including straight pins (7), thimbles (4), and portions of bone sewing needle cases or lace bobbins (Hopewell 1994; Johnson 1978). The smallest item was the most unique; a tiny bone object in the shape of a sphere, followed by a flat round collar before coming to a sharp point. Sewing boxes in the collections of The Charleston Museum and shown in the volume by Taunton (1997) feature comparable knob handles on small box covers; however, wear on the top of the bone sphere suggest this was instead a foot to a small sewing box. Two glass beads, both 18th century types, were discovered in the laundry.



Figure 36: Clothing fasteners



Figure 37: Sewing tools; needle case, foot from sewing box, unknown bone rod, thimbles

Personal Possession

Items of personal possession ranged from .7% to .3% of the site assemblage. This group includes a range of items, commonly kept by individuals. Slate pencils (11) for use with writing slates were scattered throughout the deposits. There were four bits of parasol or umbrella hardware, including the central brass slide and brass or bone tips to the ribs, and a pocket knife.



Figure 38: Parasol hardware; pocket knife sections



Figure 39: tooth brushes

Bone toothbrushes and hair brushes, both hallmarks of the 19th century, underscore an increasing emphasis on cleanliness and personal hygiene, as does the modernized laundry itself. Tooth brushes were available in America by the late 18th century, and first manufactured in America by the turn of the 19th century. Two-sided, or double-headed tooth brushes were the first type available. By 1840, toothbrushes were produced in large quantity, and some were marked with the manufacturers' names. Particularly

ornate brushes with elaborately carved handles were produced after the Civil War (Mattick 1998).

The most interesting and evocative artifacts were the numerous coins recovered from the soil deposits; 16 were recovered. Almost all were one cent coins. Zone 2 produced a single coin, a large 1c coin dating to 1800. Zone 3 contained 9 coins. Three large "lady Liberty" (2.8mm) pennies date to 1818, 1819, and 1853, while two smaller (1.9mm) "Indian head" pennies are both dated 1860. A small eagle penny dates to 1858. A damaged British George II halfpenny is the outlier, dating to 1757. A large silver-plated coin was an 8 reale, or "Spanish dollar" minted in Mexico. The date is illegible, but may be 1854.

The underlying zone 4 produced five coins, all larger Lady Liberty pennies. The earliest is illegible but is a style known as "classic head" dating between 1811 and 1814. A second dates to 1819. Two "matron head" cents date to 1831 and 1832, while the "braided head" penny dates to 1847. It is interesting to note that the date ranges of the coin assemblages correspond with the dates of deposition proposed from other artifact sources; zone 4 has been associated with Period II, 1833-1857, and all of the coins recovered from zone 4 predate 1857. The coins from zone 3, associated with Period III, 1858-1876, fall closer to that time period, with coins from the 1850s and 1860s.

The final coin, recovered from the earliest deposit, zone 5, is not associated with the laundry at all, and was not legal tender during the era of laundry operation. It is a Roman coin from the first century a.d. It was identified by Holly Adington, an intern working on the Aiken Rhett analysis and a classics/anthropology major at the College of Charleston. The coin shows “Titus as Augustus” or Sestertius, and dates to 80 a.d. This is more likely an item that the Aikens acquired on their grand tour, or was in their possession as a curiosity or antiquity.



Figure 40: British and American coins



Figure 41: Mexican coin; 1st century Roman coin

Furniture

Artifacts from furniture comprised less than 1% of the assemblage. The most common furniture items were brass upholstery tacks, an artifact whose form remained unchanged from the 18th through 20th centuries. Three chandelier prisms, similar to those remaining on fixtures in the house, came from the laundry soils. Others of this type were recovered from units near the laundry. Furniture hardware included brass curtain rings and a large decorative drawer pull medallion.



Figure 42: Chandelier prisms



Figure 43: Delft tile; furniture hardware

Tobacco

Tobacco pipes ranged from .3 to 1.5% of the temporal assemblages. These included white ball clay stem fragments and larger fragments of pipe bowls. Some fragments of red clay pipes and glazed stub-stemmed



Figure 44: Kaolin and red clay tobacco pipes

pipes were recovered as well. The decorative stub-stemmed pipes are hallmarks of the 19th century.

Activities

Items associated with a range of on-site activities, outside of eating and sewing, are classified as “activities.” These items include toys associated with children’s play, entertainment items, and a variety of products and by-products associated with storage, blacksmithing, mechanical work. In the case of the Aiken-Rhett laundry soils, a large number of items counted here are unidentified iron items, common in late 19th century deposits. Counting these items as “activities” is inaccurate, as their identity and function is really not known. These appear in the artifact tabulation as “miscellaneous iron”.

Lost, or discarded, children’s toys were found throughout the laundry. Marbles were the most common. The Aiken-Rhett assemblage ranged from plain grey and white clay to the more unusual stone marbles. German “chinas” or white clay marbles were imported to the United States in large numbers between 1840 and 1910. They are plain, or painted with wide or narrow lines, leaves, and pinwheels (Garskadden and Gartley 1990). Cane-cut, or latticino glass marbles were developed in Germany in the 1880s and produced until World War I (Block 1978; Barrett 1994). Solid colored glass marbles were also available by the late 19th to early 20th centuries.



Figure 45: Clay, china, and glass marbles

White porcelain doll fragments are another marker of the mid to late-19th century. They include separate arms, legs, and heads that were sewn to cloth bodies, and small, molded complete doll figures. Most such figures are depicted without clothing, designed for the addition of small clothes. One unusual example from the laundry is a small figure depicted in a blue and white flowing robe, belted at the waist, the hands fixed in prayer. The carefully painted face and head features flowing blond hair and a crown upon the head. Researchers debated the identity and intent of the figurine, whether a princess, an angel, or the Roman Catholic figure of the Infant of Prague. Another possible interpretation is Mary, mother of Jesus, crowned for the month of May. The reader may decide. The other common toy produced in white porcelain were miniature tea sets, including cups, saucers, tea pot, and sugar bowl. Two toy saucers came from the laundry.



Figure 46: Toy dishes, dolls Figure 47: Porcelain figure



The activities group included tools, or possible portions of tools. The one complete example was an iron axe head. The group also includes byproducts from industrial type activities, such as scrap brass, lead, or iron. Storage of supplies is represented by barrel straps or fragments of straps.

Gardening is reflected in tools, including a pitch fork, and in clay flower pots. Clay pots are commonly recovered on 18th and 19th century sites, and the Aiken-Rhett site contains a few examples of undecorated, utilitarian pots.



Figure 48: Clay flower pot fragments

Figure 49: Phonograph records

The final activity artifacts worth describing date to the second half of the 20th century. Several fragments of phonograph records were recovered from the upper zones. These are relatively thin, and so appear to be part of vinyl records from that era. Fragments of these records were found in the yard area in 2002, as well.

Environmental Artifacts

The Aiken-Rhett laundry produced a large collection of faunal remains, charcoal, and marine shells, all requiring analysis by specialists. Funds were not available for a complete analysis, but some studies moved forward on a volunteer basis. The faunal materials are a particularly valuable research collection, as well-provenienced materials from the second half of the 19th century are rare (Zierden and Reitz 2016). The faunal materials have been transferred to Dr. Elizabeth Reitz at the University of Georgia, and her zooarchaeology undergraduate class will rough-sort the materials during Spring 2017 semester. Oyster shells have been the subject of a study of pollution in the Charleston harbor, through the measurement of nitrogen loading (Payne 2016). Again, oyster samples from the late 19th century are small, and oyster was notably absent from the yard area of the Aiken-Rhett property. Oysters were deliberately collected from the laundry to enhance this sample. Oyster shells were transferred to graduate student Taylor Payne, under the direction of Dr. Fred Andrus at University of Alabama to enhance this study (Payne 2016). In addition, marine biology graduate students from the College of Charleston, under the direction of Dr. Erik Sotka (Sotka 2013) measured oysters from Aiken-Rhett as part of an ongoing ecosystem study. Marine shell, faunal, soil, and charcoal samples remain part of the overall collection.

Table 4
Quantification of the Assemblage, by Zone

| | Zone 1 | Zone 2 | Zone 3 | Zone 4 | Zone 5-7 | F.110 |
|-----------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------|-------|
| <u>Kitchen</u> | | | | | | |
| P.ware, undec | 4 | | 14 | 23 | 37 | 1 |
| Shell edge | 1 | | | 8 | 5 | |
| Hand paint | 2 | 1 | 2 | 12 | 17 | 1 |
| Trans. Pr. | 8 | 2 | 8 | 41 | 87 | |
| Annular | | | 1 | 11 | 27 | 1 |
| WW, undec | 56 | 26 | 66 | 22 | 7 | 2 |
| Trans. Print | 27 | 10 | 20 | 32 | 11 | 3 |
| Hand paint | 4 | 2 | 11 | 13 | 6 | |
| Shell edge | 1 | 2 | 7 | 2 | | |
| Annular | 9 | 4 | 16 | 12 | 3 | |
| Flow blue | | 1 | 2 | 4 | | |
| Sponged | | | 2 | 1 | 3 | |
| Gilt | | | 1 | 15 | | |
| Gold and blue | 2 | | 1 | | | |
| WW, grey transfer | | 5 | 2 | | | |
| WW, decaled | 1 | 9 | | | | |
| Creamware | 3 | 1 | 10 | 23 | 25 | |
| Rockingham | 1 | | 2 | | | |
| Yellow Ware | 5 | 6 | 4 | 3 | | 3 |
| Ud/burned | 3 | | 4 | 3 | 1 | |
| Porcelain, white | 15 | 8 | 18 | 22 | 2 | 5 |
| White porc, gilt | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| Canton | | | 1 | 2 | 2 | |
| Chinese Export | | | | 1 | | |
| Soft paste | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | |
| German | | | 1 | 2 | | |
| French gilt | | | 1 | | 1 | |
| Luster ware | | 1 | 3 | | 1 | |
| Faience | | | | 1 | | |
| Slipware, Philadelphia | | | 1 | | | |
| Slipware, Staffordshire | | | | 1 | | |
| Black lead-glazed ew | | | 2 | 1 | | |
| Lead glazed e.w. | | | | 5 | 9 | |
| White sg stoneware | | | | 1 | | |
| Brown sg stoneware | | | 1 | | 2 | |
| Grey sg stoneware | | 2 | 1 | 2 | | |
| 19 th c. St.ware | 1 | | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
| Edgefield ware | | | 1 | | | |
| Olive green glass | 70 | 72 | 62 | 58 | 41 | 1 |
| Clear glass | 1 | 4 | | | | 3 |
| Brown glass | | | | | | |
| Other container | 441 | 304 | 307 | 266 | 42 | 10 |
| Table glass | 156 | 6 | 7 | 29 | 5 | |
| Misc kitchen | 56 | 57 | 3 | | 40 | |
| <u>Architecture</u> | | | | | | |
| Nail, u.d. | 226 | 133 | 294 | 66 | 52 | 27 |
| Nail, wire | 46 | 16 | | 23 | | |
| Nail, cut | 43 | | | 9 | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|---|----|
| Nail, wrought | 15 | | | | | | | |
| Nail fragment | 266 | 137 | 224 | 204 | 105 | 16 | | |
| Window glass | 763 | 432 | 387 | 257 | 88 | 28 | | |
| Hardware | 1 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 5 | | | |
| Bolt | 2 | | | 1 | | | | |
| Brass nail | 1 | 2 | | 2 | | | | |
| Screw | 1 | | | 2 | | | | |
| Staple | 2 | | | | 5 | | | |
| <u>Arms</u> | | | | | | | | |
| Shell casing | 2 | 4 | 3 | | | | | 1 |
| Shotgun shell | 6 | | 2 | 2 | | | | |
| Lead shot | 1 | 1 | | | | | | |
| Gunflint | 2 | | | | | | | |
| Flint grip | | | | 1 | | | | |
| <u>Clothing</u> | | | | | | | | |
| Button, brass | 1 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 2 | | | 1 |
| Button, prosser | 16 | 18 | 12 | 21 | 9 | | | |
| Button, bone | 10 | | 6 | 8 | 4 | | | |
| Button, shell | 11 | | 2 | 3 | 1 | | | |
| Button, other | 2 | | 3 | 1 | 1 | | | |
| Fastener, other | 6 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 2 | | | 2 |
| Other | | | 1 | | 2 | | 1 | |
| Grommet | 3 | 3 | 1 | | 2 | | | |
| Straight pin | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 | | | | |
| Bead | 1 | | 1 | | | | | |
| Sewing | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 | | | | |
| Buckle | | | 4 | | | | | |
| <u>Personal</u> | | | | | | | | |
| Coin | | 1 | 9 | 5 | 1 | | | |
| Slate pencil | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | | | |
| Tooth brush | | | 1 | 6 | 2 | | | |
| Hair comb | 1 | | | | | | | |
| Parasol | 3 | | 1 | | | | | |
| Misc | | 2 | | | | | | |
| <u>Furniture</u> | | | | | | | | |
| Tack | 5 | 2 | 2 | | 3 | | | |
| Misc furniture | | 6 | 1 | | | | | |
| Vase | | 5 | | | | | | |
| <u>Tobacco</u> | | | | | | | | |
| Pipe stem | 9 | 2 | 16 | 18 | 5 | | | 2 |
| Pipe bowl | 15 | 3 | 10 | 4 | 1 | | | |
| <u>Activities</u> | | | | | | | | |
| Marble | 5 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 1 | | | 1 |
| Doll | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| Toy dish | | 1 | | 1 | | | | |
| Misc iron | 201 | 24 | 282 | 16 | 7 | | | 10 |
| ? | 14 | | 3 | | | | | |
| Phono record | 2 | | | | | | | |

Chapter IV Interpretations

Site Formation Considered

The horizontal variation among artifact categories of the same time period, and the changes in distribution through time and in association with various construction episodes are the building blocks of archaeological analysis. Consideration of the processes responsible for physical creation of an archaeological site is an essential first step in analyzing the materials retrieved from that site. Human habitation results in creation and gradual accumulation of soil.

In his now-classic articles, archaeologist Michael Schiffer divides the processes that transform materials from a living context into an archaeological context into two categories: normal and abandonment. Each process produces a slightly different assemblage. Discard is the most common normal process. Deposits created by discard are dominated by household trash, most of it building debris and artifacts related to food preparation, service, and storage. Sometimes discarded materials are found in clusters next to the main structure, and sometimes they are scattered about the property in a casual form of discard. Losing or hiding objects is another normal discard process, though it is likely that whoever hid the objects intended to retrieve them at some point. Lost or hidden finds are usually small, found in out-of-the-way places: in drains, beneath floors, or in small pits. Abandonment occurs when materials, some of which may still be useable, are discarded after a disaster such as fire or storm or when a building is remodeled. Such deposits contain objects that normally last a lifetime and seldom would be discarded under normal circumstances. Abandoned objects are often single artifacts such as scissors or swords, or clusters of related objects, such as the contents of a medical chest (Schiffer 1977, 1983).

Archaeologists distinguish between primary and secondary deposits. Objects in primary deposits are those that have not been moved since they were placed there by the people who originally used them. A scatter of pipe stems and bottles near a hearth may be evidence of activities that took place around that fire. Other deposits are secondary, places where refuse was discarded after being moved there from another location. An animal may be butchered in the work yard, with some portion of the butchered animal then dumped into the harbor and other portions discarded in a pit along the back of the property. Materials may be moved several times. Most urban archaeological deposits are secondary.

In an urban setting, the deliberate movement of soil and the artifacts contained in them is a common process, one that results in deep and complex archaeological deposits. A combination of stratigraphy (the layers of soil) and the artifacts contained in them help archaeologists determine if a soil deposit was deliberate or inadvertent, and when it happened.

Urban residents of the 18th and early 19th centuries deposited most of their refuse in the back yard or work yard, if they deposited it on-site. But crowded conditions and health considerations resulted in the deposition of refuse in any convenient place in the city. The numerous creeks, marshes, and wetland areas that criss-crossed the peninsula were likely

candidates, but open lots, unpaved streets, and alleys were also filled with trash from nearby households and activity areas. The filling of creeks and marshes created new real estate.

By the middle of the 19th century, most cities, Charleston included, began to centralize such services as firefighting, police protection, potable water, lighting, sewage management and trash removal. As the archaeological record reveals, Charleston had problems with garbage disposal. The creeks and marshes that laced the city had long been dumping grounds for refuse, offal, and night soil. Ordinances designed to curtail discarding garbage in the streets were first enacted in the 1760s. Frequent amendments to these ordinances indicate the town was largely unsuccessful in controlling this practice. Human scavengers hauled garbage to designated locations; an ordinance of 1806 directed that slaves be hired for this task. The abattoir on the banks of Gadsden's Creek, on the west side of the peninsula, was known as "Butcher Town". On an individual level, off-site refuse disposal gradually replaced on-site disposal, and precise dates for this change are not available. Clearly, many property owners had their refuse hauled away by the middle of the 19th century; the archaeological deposits of the rear yard suggest William Aiken's servants left very little of the household refuse on-site.

A surprising exception to this is the laundry interior, which contained relatively dense refuse deposits, spread through multiple superimposed zones. Similar deposits beneath service buildings were noted at the Nathaniel Russell House and the Heyward-Washington house. The cellar of the Russell kitchen was filled with three feet of soil and coal dust. The soils were filled with animal bone, particularly bones and teeth from cattle. Many of the specimens under that kitchen are characteristic of primary butchery. Enameled Chinese porcelain and sprigged whiteware indicate the material accumulated gradually, between 1820 and 1850. The kitchen cellars at the Heyward-Washington house and the Miles Brewton house likewise filled with debris and animal bone through the 19th century. While some of the items were small, likely lost, objects, there was plenty of larger ceramic and glass fragments, as well as animal bone (Zierden and Reitz 2016; Zierden 1996; Zierden 2001).

These signatures are similar to the Aiken laundry. The rich archaeological assemblage provided guidance to dating and understanding the superimposed deposits and what they tell us about site development. The provenience central to reconstructing the depositional events in the laundry is zone 5, the clay floor noted throughout the room. Zone 5 is level, and clearly a deliberately-created paving surface. The builder's trench for the rear wall of the structure intruded into the clay, so clearly zone 5 pre-dated construction of the room. An initial theory is that the clay reflected an exterior living/working surface for the Phase I Robinson building, sealed by the Phase II construction, and early ceramics recovered in zone 5 supports this. However, artifacts from the small sample of underlying zones are all later. This suggests the clay floor was established for construction of the building in 1833, with the wall construction trench excavated shortly thereafter. The later artifacts could be the result of mixing during construction and subsequent use of the area; a larger excavation would be necessary to determine the date and function of zones 6 and 7.

The mixed and mottled appearance of zones 6 and 7 may be the result of extensive filling of this portion of the property, as was noted during the 2001 excavations. Based on historic maps – and current elevations – the Aiken Rhett yard was an area of high land adjoining an expanse of

marsh. Despite decades of filling, a clear gradient is still visible from the back gate of the property toward the east, and the adjoining Mary Street property is significantly lower. The filling may also be associated with constructing and later abandonment of the 1780 siege lines. Again, a larger excavation of these deposits is necessary for clear interpretation. At present, the artifact content and stratigraphic position of zones 5, 6, and 7 present conflicting data.

All of the zone 4 proveniences contained whitewares manufactured after 1820 and, in some cases, after 1840. Some materials from the third quarter of the 19th century were recovered from zone 4, as well. The overall artifact profile from this zone, and the characteristics of the soil, are similar to those from elsewhere in the yard, outside of the room. This suggests that zone 4 reflects gradual refuse accumulation during the course of daily life at the site, as some refuse was deposited beneath flooring of the laundry.

The artifacts in the overlying zones 2 and 3 are similar in content and date. Both zones are filled with materials manufactured in the final quarter of the 19th century; moreover, the proportion of kitchen wares – ceramics and glass – decreases in relation to building and hardware items. Zones 2 and 3 may reflect deliberate fill episodes, perhaps associated with repair or replacement of wood flooring as the laundry room transitioned to other uses. The physical characteristics of the zone comprising zone 3 led to a suggestion that it came from the privy that was covered by the laundry; however, the majority of artifacts are from the late 19th century, and it seems unlikely that the privy was in use after the laundry was constructed over it in 1833. An alternate suggestion is that the abandoned privy pit was used for refuse disposal during the laundry period, and this refuse cleaned out in the late 19th century.

As is often the case on urban sites, the precise site formation sequence, and purpose, is difficult to interpret at the site. The clay floor is clearly a deliberate event, as is the intrusive builder's trench. Artifacts suggest it predates the 1833 construction of the room, but likely served as a foundation for this construction. Zone 4 appears to be a gradual, inadvertent zone accumulation, reflecting daily events and discard. Zones 2 and 3 may be fill or refuse disposal after active use of the space declined. This is supported by the large proportion of architectural debris in these soils.

The recovered artifacts and stratigraphy, then, place zone 4 in Period II, 1833-1858. Zone 3 best associates with Period III, 1858-1876, though the zone contains some artifacts from the fourth quarter of the 19th century. Based on stratigraphic superimposition, Zone 2 is associated with Period IV, 1876-1900. Zone 1 is a 20th century event.

Archaeological signature of the Laundry and its Workers

During the course of the excavation, archaeologists noted two characteristics of the archaeological assemblage: a large number and variety of buttons, and a large number of coins. During the laboratory analysis, all artifacts were quantified according to functional categories, and compared to a variety of Charleston assemblages to determine if the laundry assemblage was in fact unique.

The Aiken-Rhett assemblage produced 147 buttons, 14 other clothing fasteners, 8 sewing items, and 14 coins. The button assemblage is shown in Table 10 and figures 50-51. Four-hole prosser buttons, developed in 1840, dominate the assemblage (77). The standard dish-style, in three sizes, is most common, but the later styles (pie crust, calico, colored) are represented in smaller numbers. Bone buttons with four holes or 5 holes, developed in the early 19th century were also common (33). The third most common button type was shell or mother-of-pearl. Most were four-holed, but some featured two holes, including the fish-eye cut developed after 1902 (Claassen 1994). Other four-holed buttons of iron or white metal (2) were recovered.



Figure 50a, b: Buttons recovered from the Aiken-Rhett laundry

The collection included more unusual types that were available in the second half of the 19th century (2). Hard rubber buttons bear the Goodyear patent date of 1859. These commonly feature two holes. Decorative black glass buttons adorned women’s clothes, particularly the black mourning garments. A smaller number of brass buttons, from outer garments were part of the assemblage. Two brass discs, and three two-piece buttons, with iron or bone backs and brass tops, were recovered.

The most unusual button, and one that prompted research into laundry services for hire, was a brass Charleston police button. The button features the city seal, with lady liberty in the foreground and the harbor skyline in the background. The button is marked on the back “Horstmann NY & Phila.” The Horstmann family produced a wide variety of military goods, including uniforms and hats. Most of the metal buttons were actually manufactured by Scovill or by Steel & Johnson. Those marked “Horstmann” were produced during the founder’s tenure, up to 1850s. Some were produced after this date, but most of the later specimens also bear the name of his sons. According to images found on collector’s web sites, the Horstmann company also produced buttons for militia and police units, particularly during the 1850s.

A larger Charleston police button was recovered in 1987 at the MUSC Institute of Psychiatry site. This button was manufactured by the Waterbury Button company. The Waterbury Company was founded in 1812 and became the Waterbury Button Company in 1849. Uniform buttons were produced by the company after the Civil War into the 1900s. The term “police” was in use in Charleston by the 1850s, and buttons of this type are still used by the Charleston police on dress uniforms (Zierden and Raynor 1987:35). The police button was our first clue that clothes belonging to someone other than members of the Aiken family were laundered here.

Other clothing fasteners were part of the laundry assemblage. Fasteners from the mid to late-19th century include a prosser collar stud and three snaps. There were wire hook & eye fasteners (8) that are common from the late 16th century to the present. They were hand-made of wire until the early 19th century. The collection also included a few sewing items. These include a thimble, three straight pins, and two stick pins or safety pins. Safety pins were patented in 1849. Finally, three sewing box items were recovered. There were portions of two needle boxes or cases, cylindrical bone tubes fitted with a threaded cap. The most enigmatic item was a small sphere of bone, with a flat collar and pointed end. Perusal of the Charleston Museum’s collections and the text by Taunton (1997) suggest it is a foot, or a lid lifter from a relatively elaborate sewing box. Taunton shows several similar lid lifters, but wear on the bottom of the sphere indicates that it is more like a foot to a small box.

In all, the laundry produced 169 sewing or clothing items, or 3.9% of the assemblage. This is a large number of clothing items, but is the collection unique? To determine this, the laundry assemblage was compared to a number of other Charleston assemblages.

First, it is evident from the overall Charleston temporal assemblages that clothing items, particularly buttons, increase in frequency in the later 19th century. The Charleston sites have been tabulated together, and subdivided temporally for sites occupied throughout the city’s 300 year history. Charleston proveniences and their materials have generally been separated into three temporal subdivisions, 1670 to 1750, 1750 to 1830, and 1830-1900. The early period corresponds to Charleston’s role as a frontier outpost, then emerging port city. The second marks Charleston’s “golden years” as a leading seaport and center of wealth, built on the labor of enslaved Africans, and the third corresponds with the city’s economic stagnation and decline. More pertinent to this discussion, these periods also correspond to changes in ceramic and glass technology. The early period is that of relatively scarce and expensive material items, while the second corresponds with the rise of the British pottery industry and the development of refined earthenwares. The third period is characterized by a rise in mass-produced wares, particularly glass containers, but also buttons and hardware, with a decrease in distinct ceramic types.

The proportion of clothing items relative to the total assemblage steadily increases through time. Clothing is .6% of the items in the early period, 1.1% of those in the late 18th-early 19th century, and 3.5% of those in the post-1830 period. This suggests a dramatic increase in the number of buttons and other items across the city, regardless of specific site or provenience. The proportion of clothing items in the Aiken Rhett laundry is only slightly higher than this overall temporal assemblage (3.9% vs. 3.5%).

Table 5: Temporal Changes in Charleston Artifact Assemblages

| Artifact Category | 1670-1750 | 1750-1830 | 1830-1900 |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Kitchen | 55.8 | 58.5 | 43.6 |
| Architecture | 26.0 | 33.6 | 48.3 |
| Arms | .19 | .3 | .24 |
| Clothing | .64 | 1.13 | 3.52 |
| Personal | .29 | .45 | .61 |
| Furniture | .25 | .20 | .18 |
| Tobacco | 11.25 | 4.25 | 1.39 |
| Activities | 5.47 | 1.31 | 2.05 |

From there, we took a closer look at several 19th century assemblages, and noted a fair bit of variation. First, we tabulated the artifact groups from the laundry by zone, and therefore by temporal order. The proportion of clothing items remained fairly consistent through time, with the largest proportions noted in the deepest/earliest zones 5-7 (3%) and the latest, zone 1 (3.9%). Zones 2-4, spanning the second half of the 19th century, averaged 2.5%. This suggests a consistent use and discard pattern in the room.

Table 6: Aiken Rhett Laundry temporal Assemblages

| Groups (% of total) | zone 1 | zone 2 | zone 3 | zone 4 | zone 5-7 |
|---------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------|
| Kitchen | 59.8 | 40.2 | 31.1 | 46.1 | 55.4 |
| Architecture | 51.3 | 52.8 | 48.5 | 46.1 | 38.2 |
| Arms | .73 | .3 | .21 | .2 | .7 |
| Clothing | 3.9 | 2.4 | 2.3 | 2.7 | 3.0 |
| Personal | .87 | .45 | .94 | 1.0 | .5 |
| Furniture | .33 | 1.0 | .1 | .84 | 0 |
| Pipes | 1.6 | .3 | 1.3 | 1.54 | .8 |
| Activities | 14.9 | 2.2 | 15.3 | 1.4 | 1.7 |

However, a comparison of the laundry assemblage to the materials excavated in the yard revealed dramatic differences. The table below shows the yard divided by phases. There is more variation through time (.38% - .98%), with clothing items most prevalent in Phase III (1858-1876), but in all cases there are far fewer clothing items in the yard than in the laundry.

Table 7: Aiken Rhett Yard Assemblages

| Groups (% of total) | Phase II | Phase III | Phase IV |
|---------------------|----------|-----------|----------|
| Kitchen | 46.3 | 43.7 | 53.9 |

| | | | |
|--------------|------|------|------|
| Architecture | 49.4 | 50.6 | 40.8 |
| Arms | .57 | .49 | .65 |
| Clothing | .38 | .98 | .63 |
| Personal | .28 | .24 | .35 |
| Furniture | .38 | .21 | .97 |
| Pipes | .77 | 1.48 | .83 |
| Activities | 1.83 | 2.21 | 1.71 |

The Aiken Rhett assemblages were then compared to other 19th century townhouse sites assemblages, particularly those from large excavation projects. There was some variation in the proportion of clothing items. This was somewhat dependent on where the excavations were concentrated; as we shall see, the greatest variation occurred between excavations inside/beneath service buildings and excavations in the general yard area. The sites include the Nathaniel Russell house excavated in 1994-1995, including the R.F.W. Allston period (1857-1870) and the Sisters of Charity period (1870-1900). The Miles Brewton house, excavated in 1988-1989 included the period of occupation by the Pringle family and the three Frost sisters (1839-c.1918). The Heyward Washington stable building, excavated in 2002, included a late 19th century assemblage. The garden and work yard at 14 Legare Street, excavated in 2000-2001, has early 19th century and late 19th century assemblages. The rear yard of the townhouse at 48 Laurens Street produced artifacts that span the 19th century. These many site assemblages are shown below.

Table 8: 19th Century townhouse assemblages

| Groups (%) | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
|--------------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|------|------|
| Kitchen | 33.5 | 57.86 | 51.6 | 47.0 | 55.0 | 52.0 | 71.9 |
| Architecture | 53.21 | 35.36 | 43.69 | 43.0 | 42.0 | 44.0 | 22.5 |
| Arms | .7 | .03 | 0 | .22 | .21 | .33 | .56 |
| Clothing | 4.78 | 1.49 | .7 | 2.3 | .5 | .5 | 2.4 |
| Personal | 1.94 | .58 | .49 | .1 | .4 | .5 | 1.1 |
| Furniture | .2 | .54 | .07 | .34 | .18 | .3 | .4 |
| Pipes | 1.56 | 1.71 | 1.19 | 3.1 | 1.5 | 1.3 | 0 |
| Activities | 4.57 | 2.4 | 2.24 | 3.7 | .96 | 1.5 | .8 |

- 1) Pringle/Frost era (1849-1900), Miles Brewton House
- 2) Allston era (1857-1870), Nathaniel Russell House
- 3) Sisters of Charity era (1870-1900), Nathaniel Russell House
- 4) Stable, (1870s), Heyward-Washington house
- 5) Garden, (1818-1870), Simmons-Edwards House
- 6) Lawn, (1870-1900), Simmons-Edwards House
- 7) Rear yard, (1850s-1900), 48 Laurens Street



Figure 51: Button and clothing assemblage from units in the cellar, Miles Brewton service building

Most of these contained fewer clothing items than the Aiken Rhett laundry, with the exception of the Miles Brewton house, which produced clothing items nearly 5% of the site total. But closer examination of the Brewton project revealed a reason for this. Two units were excavated in the basement of the kitchen/laundry building. The cellar has a brick floor, and had filled with soil and debris in the second half of the 19th century; an 1863 coin recovered at the base of the soil layers, directly on top of the brick, provided a TPQ for the assemblage. When tabulated separately, the laundry unit clothing assemblage comprised 12.3% of the total. This anomalous assemblage, in turn, skewed both the overall Pringle/Frost assemblage and the Charleston 1830-1880 assemblage as a whole. As we shall see, it does provide a structure-specific assemblage comparable to the Aiken-Rhett laundry. The Pringle/Frost assemblage was re-tabulated without the service building units, and the differences, particularly in the clothing group, are significant. Clothing items comprise 2.6% of the yard assemblage, comparable to other townhouse sites. Clothing items from the service building cellar, in contrast, comprise 12.3% of that assemblage (Figure 52).

Table 9: Miles Brewton house: yard vs. service building

| Groups | Yard | | Service building | |
|--------------|------|--------|------------------|-------|
| Kitchen | 3243 | 33.80% | 887 | 34.0% |
| Architecture | 5305 | 57.10% | 1270 | 48.7% |
| Arms | 20 | .21% | 5 | .19% |
| Clothing | 248 | 2.60% | 322 | 12.3% |
| Personal | 60 | .64% | 27 | 1.0% |
| Furniture | 23 | .24% | 9 | .34% |
| Tobacco | 140 | 1.50% | 54 | 2.1% |
| Activities | 250 | 2.60% | 33 | 1.2% |

These exercises demonstrate that clothing items increase in frequency, overall, from the 18th to the 19th century, and from the early 19th century to the late 19th century. Assemblages from the second half of the 19th century, in particular, contain large numbers of mass-produced prosser buttons, as well as buttons of shell and bone. Nineteenth century sites are marked by a button assemblage comprising 2.5% or more of the total assemblage.

Using that figure as a baseline, the numbers suggest that there is a recognizable archaeological signature for historic buildings serving as laundry and/or sewing rooms, reflected in an increase in clothing artifacts. The Aiken-Rhett laundry contains significantly more items than the remainder of the site, 1% vs. 3.9%. The Miles Brewton kitchen/laundry contains significantly more, 2.6% vs. 12.3%. Both rooms contain more than the average for the period, 2.5%

The individual clothing artifacts from several 19th century assemblages, including these two buildings, were itemized to discern similarities and differences. The two building assemblages are comparable in the overall button assemblage, but differ in other ways, as seen below.

Table 10: Nineteenth Century Button Assemblages

| | <u>Aiken-Rhett Laundry (2015)</u> | <u>Brewton kitchen (1988)</u> | <u>Brewton kitchen (1998)</u> |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Prosser button | 76 | 44 | 338 |
| Mother-of-pearl button | 25 | 40 | 207 |
| Shell button | | 1 | |
| 4-hole bone button | 25 | 26 | 77 |
| 5-hole bone button | 7 | 6 | 20 |
| 1-hole bone button | 1 | 5 | 19 |
| Ferrous button | 2 | 5 | 16 |
| Hard rubber button | 1 | | 10 |
| Glass button | 1 | 1 | 19 |
| Brass button | 12 | 12 | 34 |
| Hook&eye | 8 | 3 | 1 |
| Collar stud | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| Buckle | | 3 | |
| Grommet | | 4 | 3 |
| Snap | 3 | | 15 |
| Straight pin | 3 | 167 | 4 |
| Thimble | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Bead | | 8 | |
| Sewing box | 2 | | 9 |
| Coin | 14 | 7 | |



Figure 52: Button and clothing assemblage from general excavation of the cellar at the Miles Brewton House kitchen; close-up views of portions of the assemblage.

Both assemblages are dominated by utilitarian buttons found on undergarments or everyday ware, and by small buttons from children’s clothing. Far less common are buttons from outer garments, such as brass buttons from men’s coats or vests, or the decorative glass or shell buttons from women’s dresses, cloaks, and coats. A principal difference between the two sites is the number of straight pins, or sewing items. These differences suggest that sewing was a regular activity in the Brewton laundry, while the Aiken-Rhett room focused principally on washing.

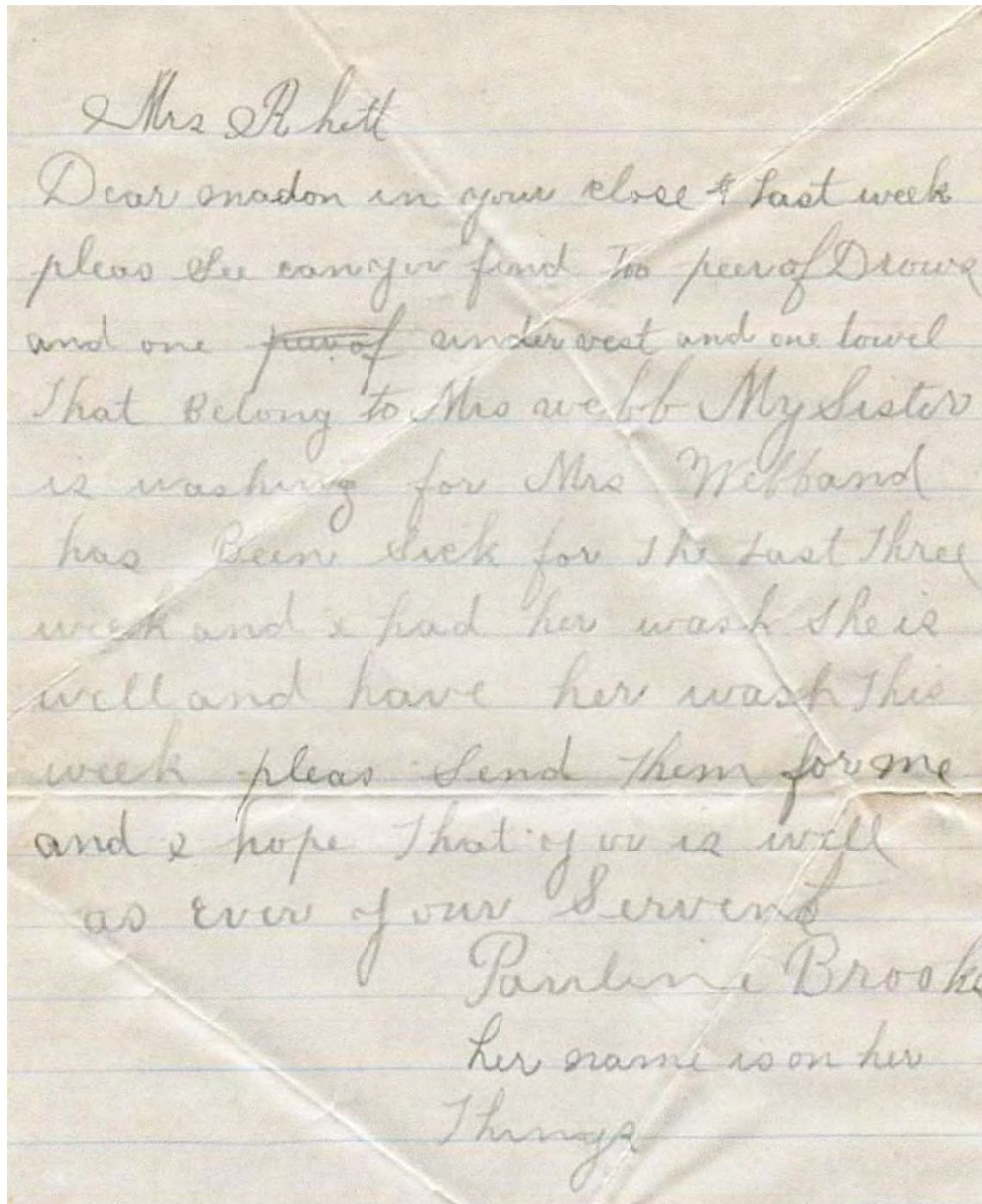
A third group of artifacts that may indicate particular site activities is coins. The unusual number of coins retrieved from the Aiken-Rhett laundry, coupled with the Charleston Police button, prompted consideration of hired-out laundry services by the slaves and later freed people working there. While not as common, a number of coins were also recovered from the Brewton cellar.



Figure 53: Charleston police button, coins from the Aiken-Rhett laundry

The discovery of coins prompted HCF staff Lauren Northrup and Valerie Perry to search the Aiken family papers for any mention of outside hire, as they continued to comb the documentary record for discussion of the room. A most remarkable discovery was a note to “Mrs. Rhett” (Henrietta Aiken Rhett) from Pauline Brooks, notifying her that two “pair of

Drawers and one undervest and one towel” that belonged to Mrs. Webb was possibly mixed with her own clean clothes. The mix-up was attributed to Mrs. Brooks’ sister. While the note is not dated, it must post-date Henrietta Aiken’s marriage to Robert Barnwell Rhett in 1862. It is therefore a note from the postbellum period, and Pauline Brooks and her sister were free women. It does support the notion that those laboring in the Aiken facility were supplementing their income by laundering for clients outside of the Aiken household.



Mrs Rhett
Dear madam in your close & last week
pleas see can you find two pair of Drawers
and one pair of undervest and one towel
that belong to Mrs webb My sister
is washing for Mrs Webb and
has been sick for the last three
week and I had her wash she is
well and have her wash this
week pleas send them for me
and I hope that you is well
as ever of our Servant
Pauline Brooks
her name is on her
Things

Figure 54: Note to “Mrs. Rhett”. Collections of The Charleston Museum

Summary

The Aiken-Rhett laundry interior was filled with soils and artifacts spanning the 19th and 20th centuries, reflecting activities from construction of the building, to use of the room as a laundry, to abandonment of the laundry function and use of the space as a semi-abandoned space. The soils contained a range of artifacts typical of domestic sites in the 19th century, including table ceramics, glass containers, architectural debris, and a range of small finds. The preponderance of architectural debris in zones 2 and 3 reflect architectural abandonment and change, comparable to other townhouse properties in Charleston. The proportional decline in kitchen wares reflects a growing pattern of off-site refuse disposal as the 19th century progressed.

The assemblage contained a large number and variety of buttons, recognized in the field and quantified in the laboratory. Quantification of the assemblage and comparison with a number of others suggest that there is a recognizable, quantifiable signature for the Aiken-Rhett laundry, and for laundry facilities in Charleston (see Beaudry 2006). An increase in the number and variety of buttons is typical of 19th century sites, but the laundry locations contain a higher number than other locales of the same time period. Further, it was possible to discern subtle differences in artifacts and activities, particularly whether sewing was a common activity in the laundry. Finally, the recovery of a number of coins led researchers to the possibility of business enterprise in the function of the laundry.

The laundry was clearly the domain of household servants, those whose work supported the lavish lifestyle of the Aiken family. William Aiken installed the latest laundry facilities, copying European features, but his enslaved workers, and newly-freed servants toiled in that space and lived above it. They took on additional, outside tasks to expand their earnings. Their entrepreneurial spirit is reflected in the archaeological evidence for hiring their own services. Moreover, the relatively even distribution of clothing items and cash indicate that these enterprises occurred before and after emancipation.

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