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**FORT MORRIS AT SUNBURY:  
SURVEY AND FIRST  
EXCAVATIONS**

GORDON MOODY MIDGETTE



FORT MORRIS AT SUNBURY:  
SURVEY AND FIRST EXCAVATIONS

by

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SURVEY AND FIRST EXCAVATIONS

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### General History of the 1971 Excavations

During the spring and summer of 1971 the author conducted a topographic survey and archaeological excavation at Fort Morris, an 18th century European style earthwork fortification originally built to protect the port city of Sunbury, Georgia. This thesis is the result of that work combined with subsequent historical research and analysis of the artifacts from the 1971 season.

The Historical Commission acquired Fort Morris for the State of Georgia through the cooperation of interested citizens in Liberty County, Georgia in 1968, and interpretive planning called for placing Fort Morris as the State's only remaining Revolutionary fortification in the foreground of Georgia's part in the celebration of the Bicentennial of the American Revolution.

Steven Baker, my predecessor as staff archaeologist with the Georgia Historical Commission, and Mrs. Mary Jewett, Executive Director of the Georgia Historical Commission, had planned for a survey and archaeological testing program at Sunbury for 1971. At the time that the author assumed direction of the archaeological program, the

decision to excavate had been made and funds applied for under the National Register of Historic Places as provided for by Public Law 89-665.

### Brief History of Previous Research

Prior to his departure from the Historical Commission in the late summer of 1970 Steven Baker made a brief summary of his work with the documentary sources concerning Fort Morris and Sunbury and made recommendations concerning further work.<sup>1</sup> Baker stressed the necessity for a historical study of the physical aspects of the site prior to excavation, the need for a detailed topographic map of the site and limited stratigraphic testing, and the absolute necessity of not treating Fort Morris as a separate entity apart from the total context of events both in the Fort and in Sunbury.

Although many of Baker's conclusions concerning the documentary and historical nature of Fort Morris and Sunbury have proved incorrect, he was well aware of the limited nature of his exposure to the documentary materials as well as the short period of time in which he was

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<sup>1</sup>Steven Baker. Fort Morris, A Preliminary Review. Pp. 1-26. Unpublished manuscript, on file, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, State of Georgia, Atlanta, 1970. Baker's report is included in this thesis as Appendix I.



able to evaluate available data, and stated as much in his report.<sup>2</sup>

Baker summarized his interpretative discussion on the historical development of Fort Morris with the following statement:

Jones and others have consistently referred to the present fortification (Figures 2, 3, 4) as the original Revolutionary Period earthwork. The present writer would not agree with this point of view due to known construction activity during the War of 1812 and probable activity during the Civil War, as well as the map of Josiah Powell, 1786. We have no reference to the fort during the Civil War, but it is unlikely that in times of patriotic fervor, such as occurred in the American Civil War, that no effort would be made to place Fort Morris in some form of defensible condition (even if only token), notwithstanding the fact that Sunbury was no longer strategically important. Gun batteries sprang up all along the coast, and the Midway River, being close to Savannah, should be no exception. Records of this period and particularly those of the local militia units should be closely checked in this connection.<sup>3</sup>

Although Baker rejected the extant fortification identified by Jones as the Revolutionary Fort Morris, Baker did accept the physical location of the present fort as the probable site of Fort Morris.

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 9-10.

More recent work by Agnew,<sup>4</sup> in addition to rejecting a Revolutionary origin for the present fortification, totally rejects the idea that Fort Morris was located where the existing fortification is built.

#### Objectives of the 1971 Excavation

The major objectives of the 1971 survey and excavation were:

1. To obtain evidence that would clarify whether or not Fort Morris had undergone major modifications following the Revolution.
2. To map Fort Morris topographically.
3. To gain some understanding of the Fort's stratigraphy with a limited amount of excavation.
4. To document Fort Morris and establish a basis for a comparative study of sites relevant to the Fort's history.
5. To do a complete photographic documentation of Fort Morris.
6. To provide a basic body of data that would allow for preliminary interpretation and planning of the site.

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<sup>4</sup>Tom Agnew. "A Study of the Fortifications at Fort Morris in Sunbury, Georgia From the Revolutionary War to the War of 1812." (Paper submitted from the Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, January 11, 1974).

### Purpose and Primary Conclusions

The present thesis is an attempt to resolve the questions of historical identification concerning Fort Morris. Based on the two kinds of data utilized, archaeological and historical, it is concluded that C. C. Jones, Jr.'s original identification of the site as published in his major essay on Sunbury,<sup>5</sup> is correct and is identical to the site purchased in 1968 by the State of Georgia for development as Georgia's major and only surviving Revolutionary War fortification. While there were probably some minor alterations when repairs were made during the War of 1812, it is concluded, based on the evidence presented in the following pages, that Fort Morris occupied the same site during both the Revolution and the War of 1812 and was then abandoned for military purposes. There is nothing from either documentary or archaeological data that remotely suggests that the present fortification was the result of Civil War activity.

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<sup>5</sup>C. C. Jones, Jr., "Sunbury," The Dead Towns of Georgia, Collections of the Georgia Historical Society, Vol. IV (Savannah, Georgia: Morning News Steam Printing House, 1878).

## CHAPTER II

### GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF FORT MORRIS

#### Location

Fort Morris at  $31^{\circ} 45' 5''$  latitude and  $81^{\circ} 17' 4''$  longitude in Liberty County, Georgia occupies a bluff overlooking a broad span of marsh and a sweeping bend in the Midway River. Directly north of the fort about 350 yards is the southern limit of Sunbury. The mouth of the Midway River, St. Catherine's Sound, as well as the southern tip of Ossabaw Island and the northwestern shores of St. Catherine's Island are clearly visible from the eastern face of the fort (see Figures 1, 2, and Plate 12).

The fort is currently reached from Savannah, 25 miles to the north, or Darien, 35 miles to the south, by traveling over U.S. Highway #17 to Midway, Georgia and at Midway turning east onto a remnant of the oak-lined Sunbury Road originally constructed in the 18th century.<sup>1</sup> After traveling east about ten miles from Midway Church after leaving U.S. #17 one reaches Sunbury and Fort Morris. At the present time Interstate #95 is under construction

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<sup>1</sup>John H. Goff. "The Old Sunbury Road." Georgia Mineral Newsletter, 8(3):116-122. 1955.



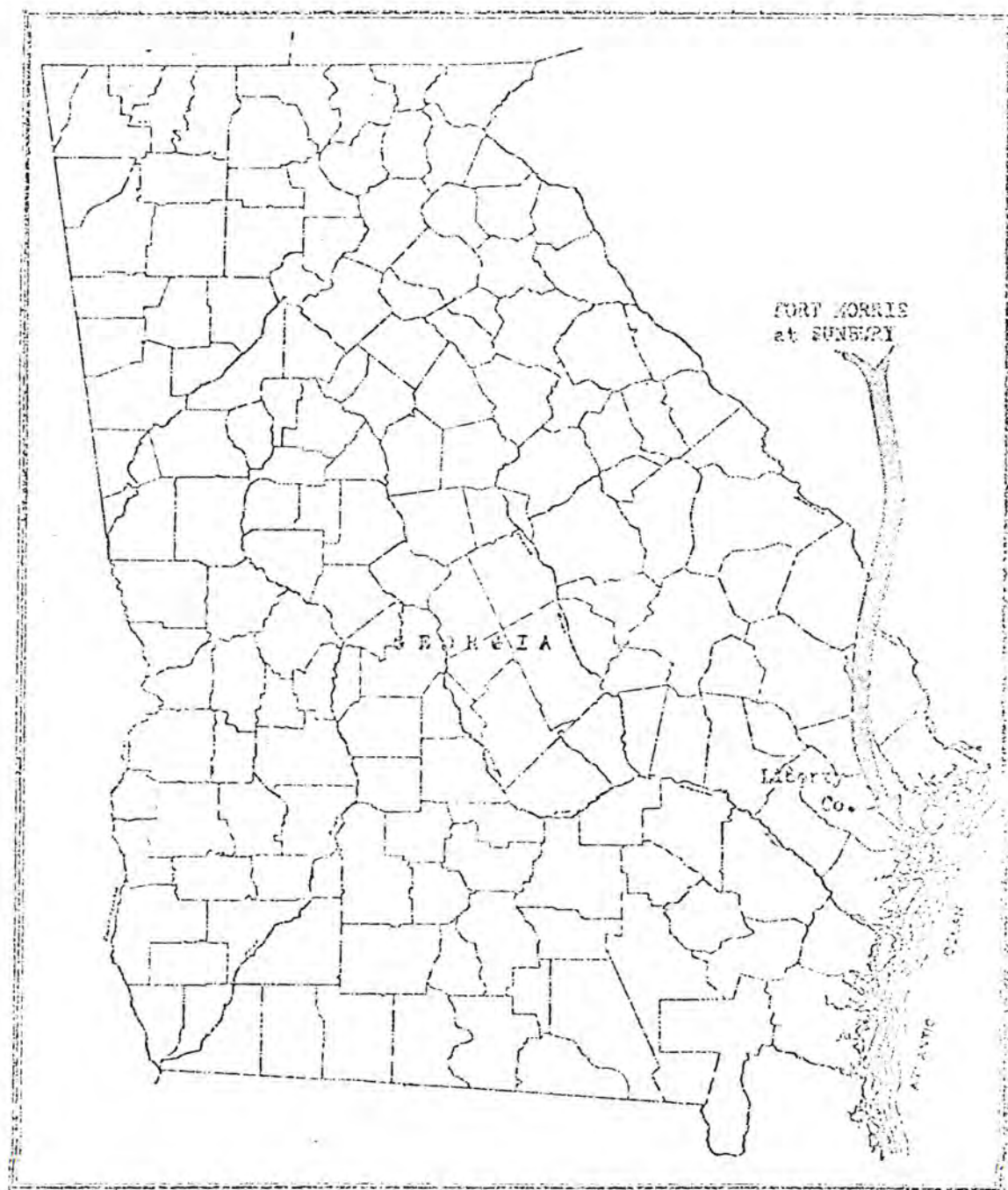


Figure 1  
Location of Sunbury and Fort Morris in  
Georgia

between Midway and Sunbury, and when complete will offer an access at the crossing of the old Sunbury Road about five miles from the site.

#### Physical Description of Fort Morris

Fort Morris is easily one of the best preserved fortifications from the Revolutionary era and based on combined archaeological and historical evidence appears today very much as it did in 1776 and in 1878 when Charles C. Jones, Jr. published in the Dead Towns of Georgia the following description:

Located some three hundred and fifty yards due south of Sunbury, and occupying the bluff where it first confronts Midway river as, trending inward from the sound, it bends to the north, Fort Morris was intended to cover not only the direct water approach to the town, but also the back river by means of which that place might be passed and taken in reverse. Its position was well chosen for defensive purposes. To the south stretched a widespread and impracticable marsh permeated by Pole-haul and Dickerson creeks, -- two tributaries of Midway river, -- whose mouths were commanded by the guns of the fort. This marsh also extended in front of the work, constituting a narrow and yet substantial protection against landing parties, and gradually contracting as it approached the southern boundary of Sunbury. This fortification was an enclosed earthwork, substantially constructed. Its wall embraced a parade about an acre in extent. The eastern face, confronting the river, was two hundred and seventy-five feet in length. Here the heaviest guns were mounted. The northern and southern faces were respectively one hundred and ninety-one, and one hundred and forty feet in length, while the curtain, looking to the west, was two hundred and forty-one feet long.

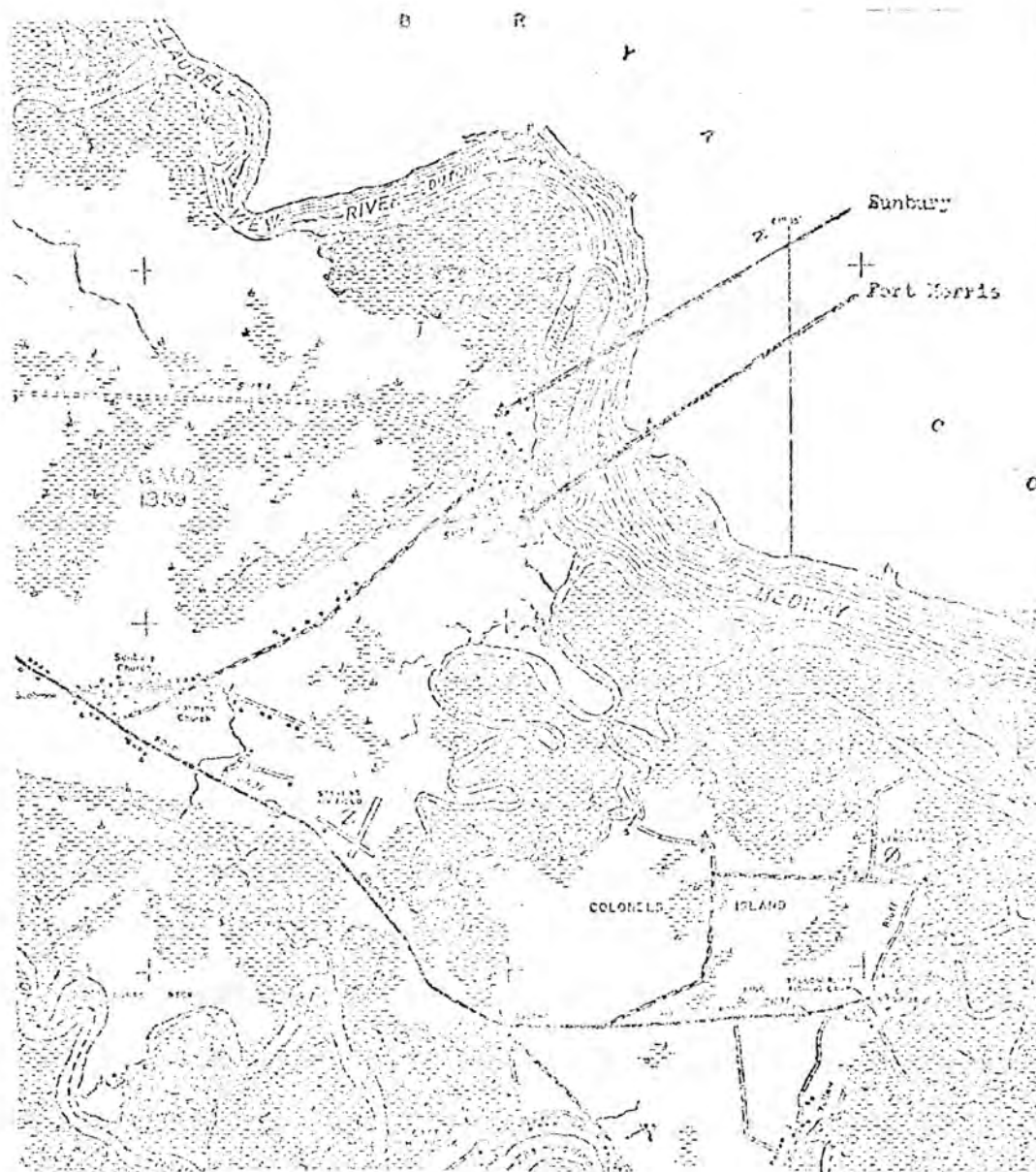


Figure 2

Section of U.S.G.S. topographic survey map showing the immediate area of Fort Morris and Sunbury



Although quadrangular, the work was somewhat irregular in shape. From the southern face and the curtain, no guns could be brought to bear upon the river. Those there mounted served only for defense against a land attack. The armament of the northern face could be opposed to ships which succeeded in passing the fort, until they ascended the river so far as to get beyond range. It also commanded the town and the intervening space. The guns were mounted en barbette, without transverses. Seven embrasures may still be seen, each about five feet wide. The parapet, ten feet wide, rises six feet above the parade of the fort, and its superior slope is about twenty-five feet above the level of the river at high tide. Surrounding the work is a moat at present ten feet wide at the bottom, and twice that width at the top. Near the middle of the curtain may be seen traces of a sally-port or gateway, fifteen feet wide. Such is the appearance of this abandoned work ascertained by recent survey. Completely overgrown by cedars, myrtles, and vines, its presence would not be suspected, even at a short remove, by those unacquainted with the locality.<sup>2</sup>

Fort Morris was stratigically located to keep hostile ships out of range of Sunbury, and the concentration of gun embrasures on the east face of the fort was probably designed to allow maximum concentration of artillery fire on the bend of the river immediately below the town.

The position of the fort relative to the town and its role as a water battery as illustrated in the survey map accompanying Jones' description above<sup>3</sup> is a classical

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<sup>2</sup>C.C. Jones, Jr. The Dead Towns of Georgia. Savannah: Morning News Steam Printing House, 1878.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 180.





example of 18th century military planning (see Figure 3). In terms of placement strategy Fort Morris is a close parallel to Fort Frederica on St. Simon's Island.<sup>4</sup>

#### Area Description and Setting

Currently the immediate approaches to Fort Morris and Sunbury are free of billboards and other commercial advertising and the entire fort area is covered with large water oaks, magnolia grandiflora, cabbage palms, towering pines, and other vegetation that, combined with the surrounding expanse of marsh land and tidal river, create a natural setting of great natural beauty. Although the pristine wilderness that Jones described as meeting Oglethorpe's eye in 1734 is no longer present, the setting that greeted Oglethorpe is not hard to imagine:

. . .magnificent live oaks, in full grown stature and solemn mien, crowned the high-ground even to the very verge where the tide kissed the shore, Cedar, festooned with vines, overhung the waters. The magnolia grandiflora,--queen on the forest, --excited on everyhand the admiration of the early visitor. The sweet-scented myrtle, the tall pine, the odoriferous bay, and other indigenous trees lent their charms to a spot whose primal beauty had encountered no change at the hand of man. The woods were resonant with the

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<sup>4</sup>Albert C. Manucy. "The Fort at Frederica." Notes in Anthropology, Vol. 5, Florida State University, 1962.

songs of birds, whose bright plumage vied in coloring with the native flowers which gladdened the eye and gave gentle odors to the ambient air. Fishes abounded in the waters, and game on the land. Cool sea-breezes tempered the heat of summer, and the rigor of cold was unknown in the depth of winter. It was a gentle, attractive place, --this bold bluff, --as it came from the hand of Nature. Some scene like this did the Poet Waller have in view as he sang;

"Heav'n sure has kept this spot of earth uncurst,  
To show how all things were created first."<sup>5</sup>

Some of the colorful birds such as the Carolina parakeet are extinct, but the oaks and other trees are teeming with the purple, blue, red, yellow and green of the painted bunting and the graceful egrets and other marsh birds are frequently visible in the surrounding marshland.

#### Photographic Description of Fort Morris

The following series of plates, one through sixteen, is arranged to give a visual overview of the more important features of the Fort Morris earthwork. The line diagram of Fort Morris in the lower right hand corner of each photograph indicates the camera angle of each successive plate. This series of plates follows a generally counter-clockwise sequence beginning at the break in the earthwork which corresponds with Jones' placement of the gate to Fort Morris in his original 1878 description.

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<sup>5</sup>Jones, op. cit., pp. 142-143.



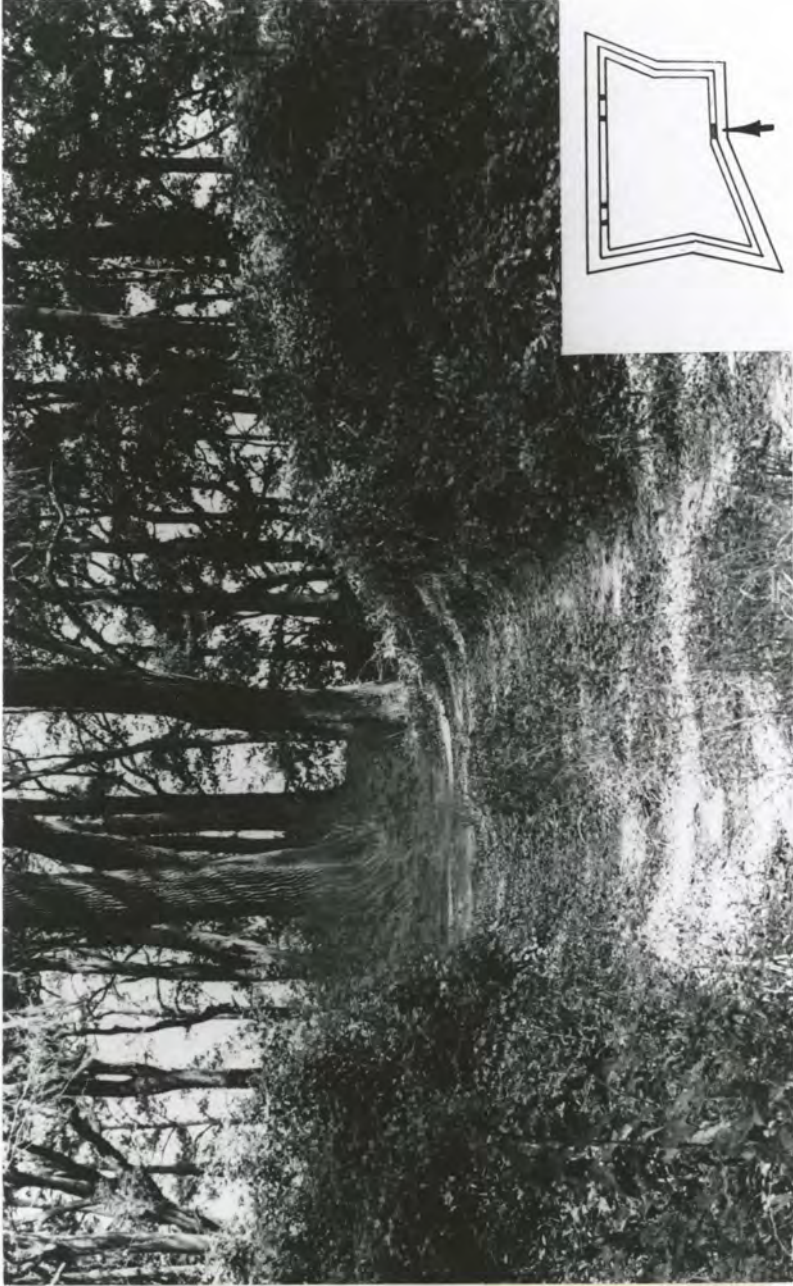


Plate 1

Original entrance or gate to Fort Morris



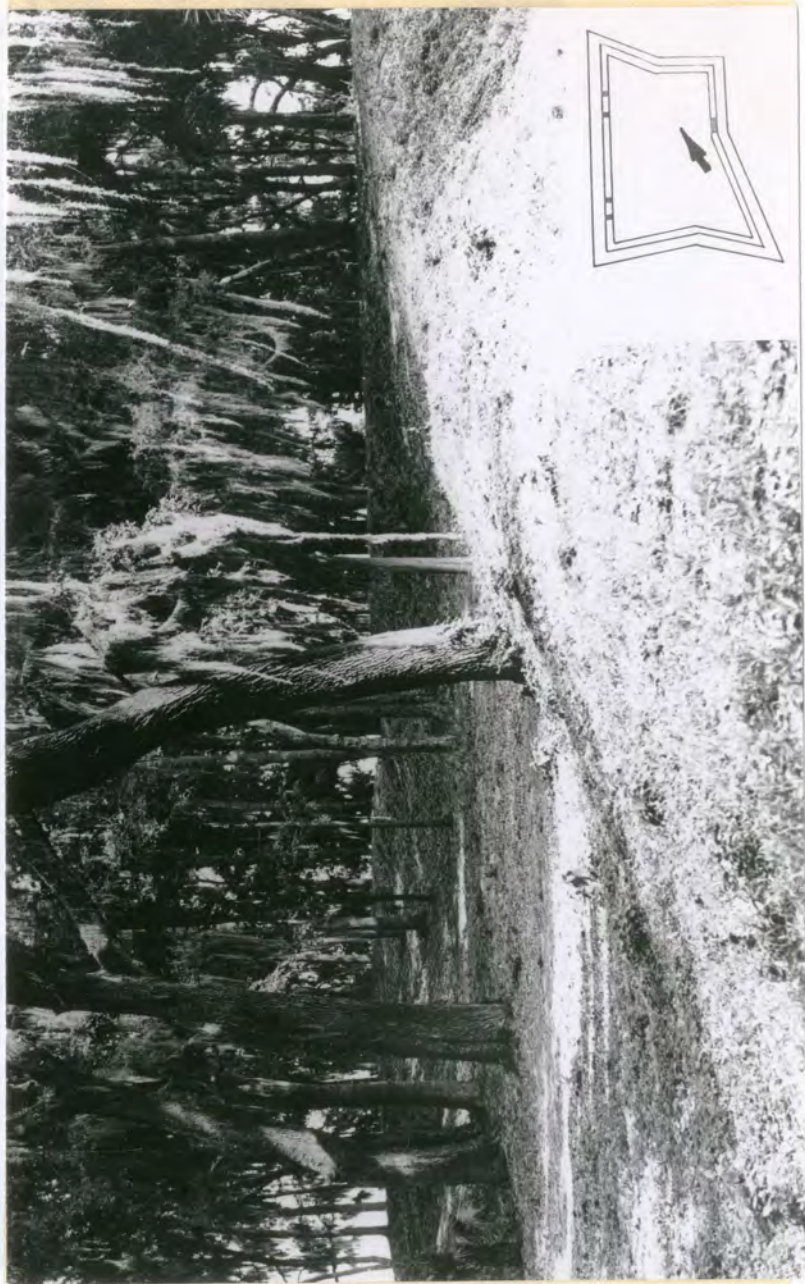


Plate 2

View from gate to southeast bastion

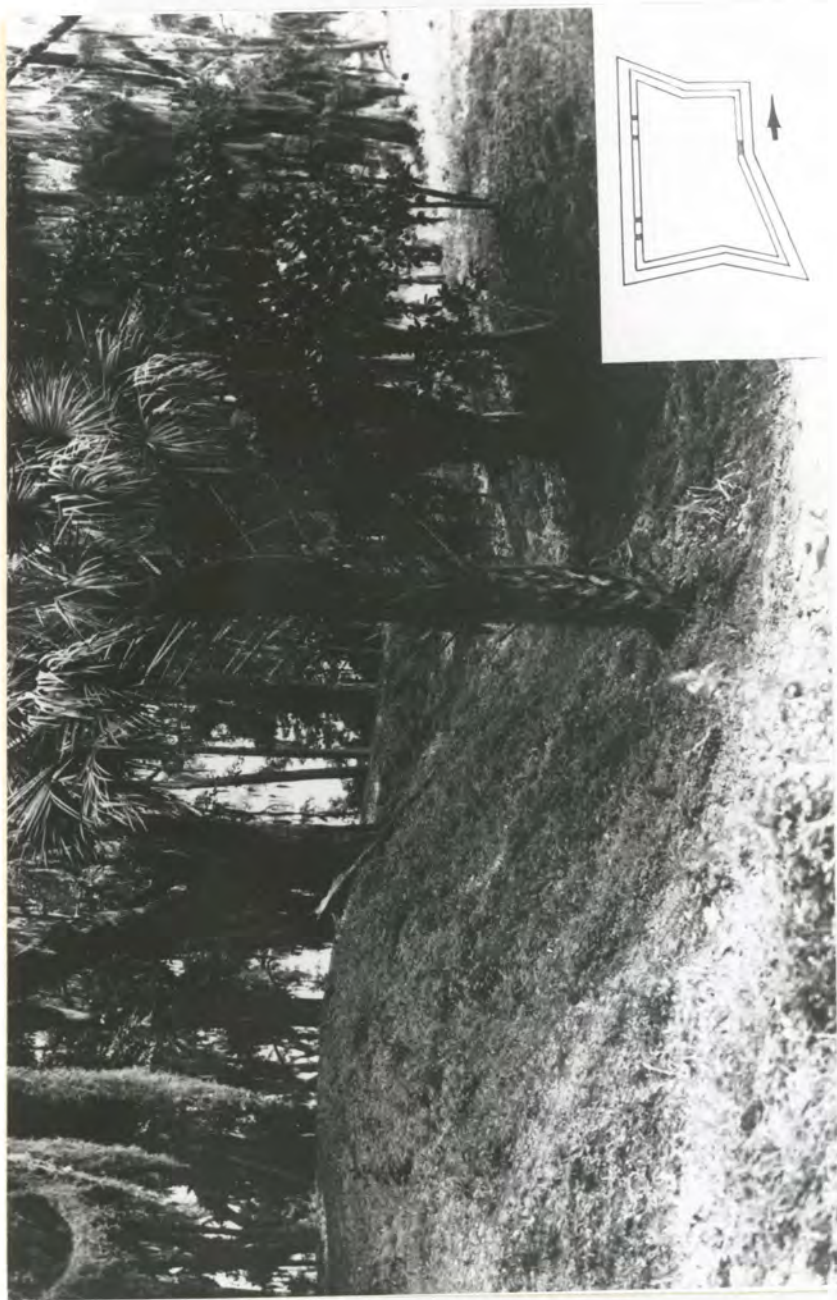


Plate 3

View from gate along the exterior of the  
west face to the southwest bastion





Plate 4

View from bottom of the southwest bastion along the  
exterior of the south face to the southeast  
bastion

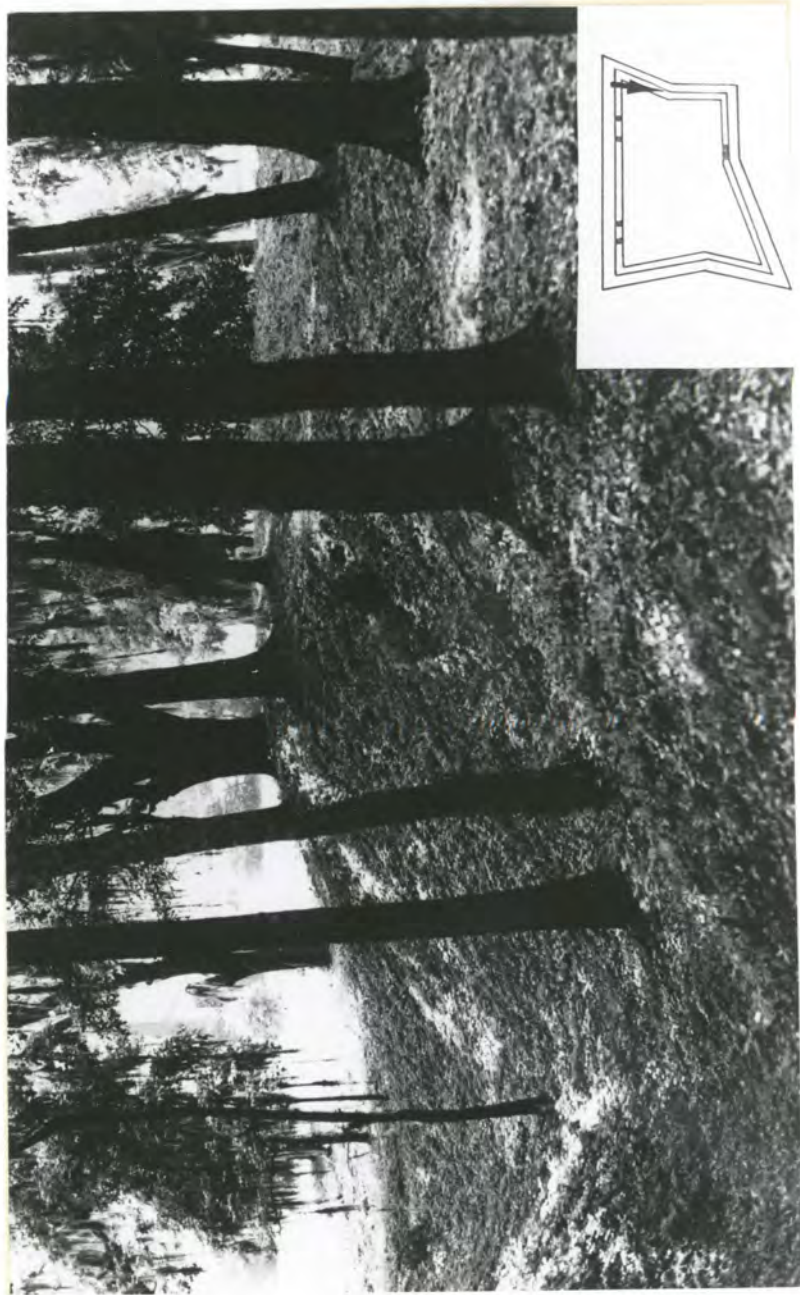


Plate 5

View from midway along the south rampart back  
to the southwest bastion



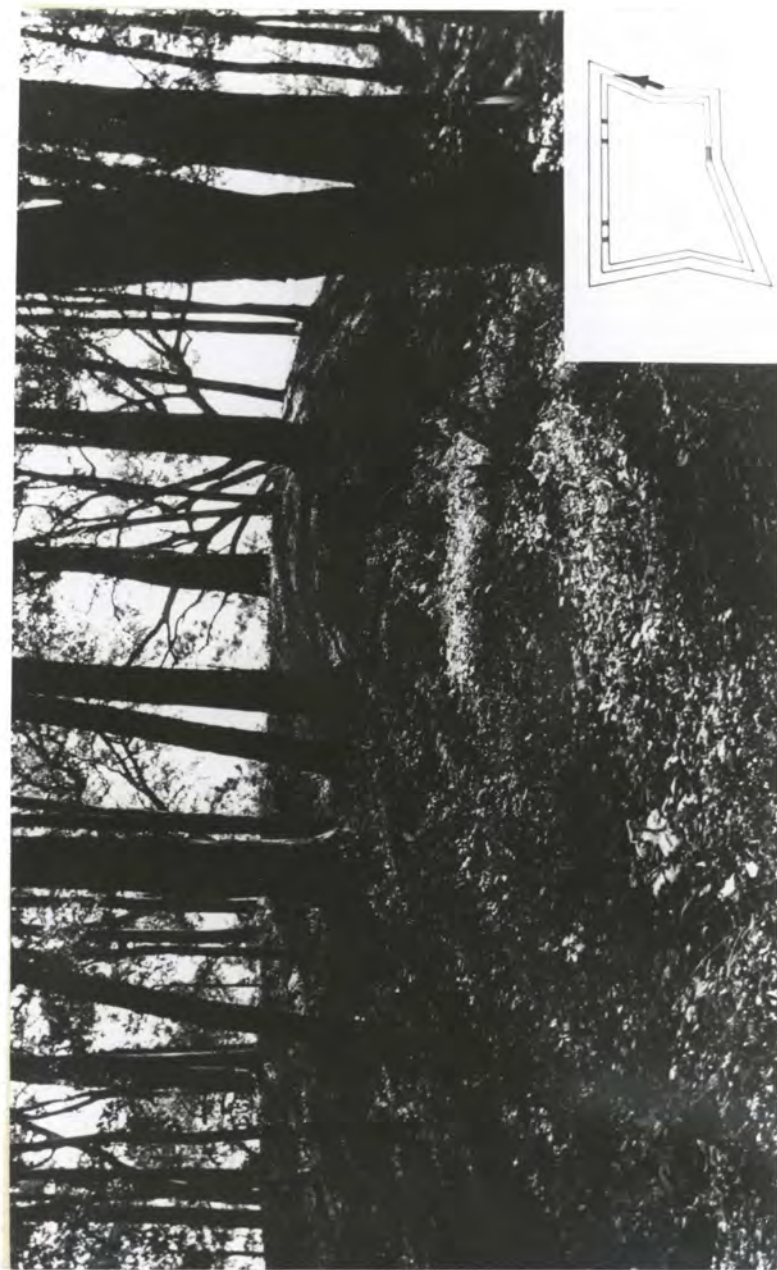


Plate 6

View from midway along the top of the  
south face to the southeast bastion



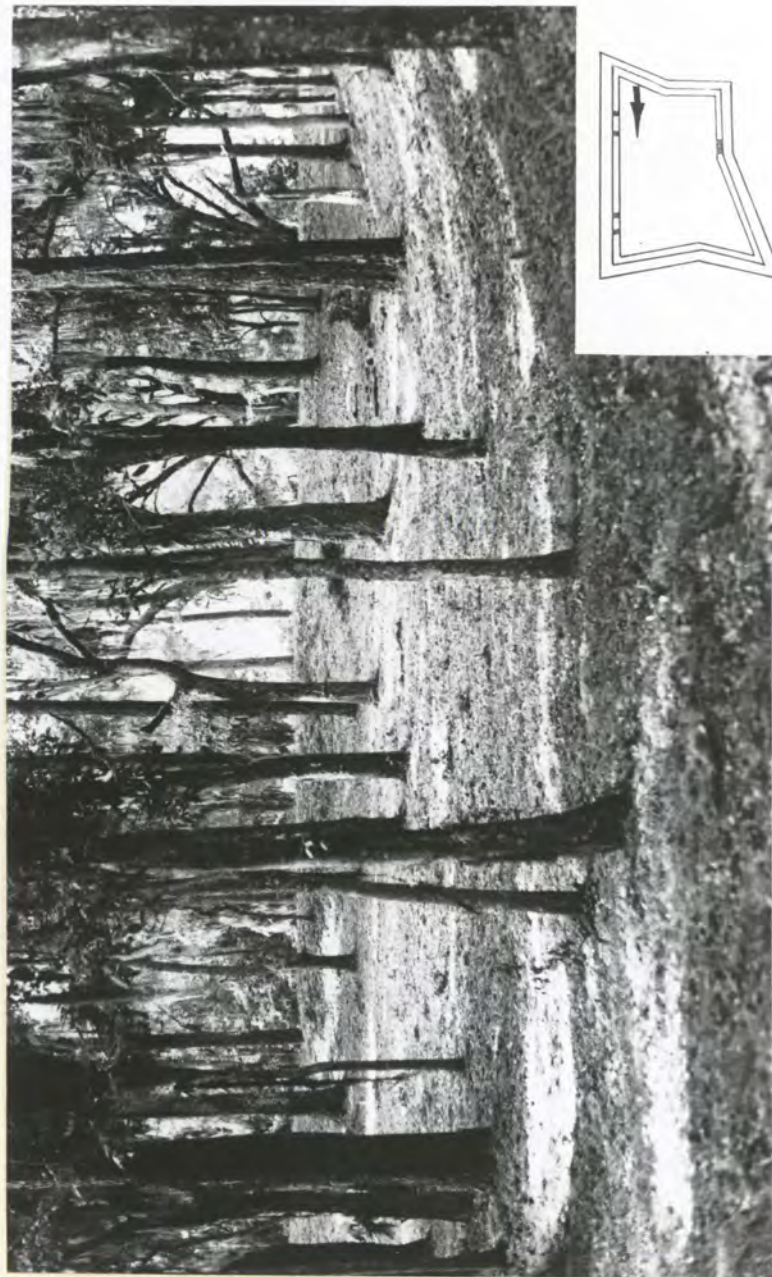


Plate 7

View from the southeast bastion across the  
parade ground to the north wall; this  
photo also shows the edge of the east  
wall

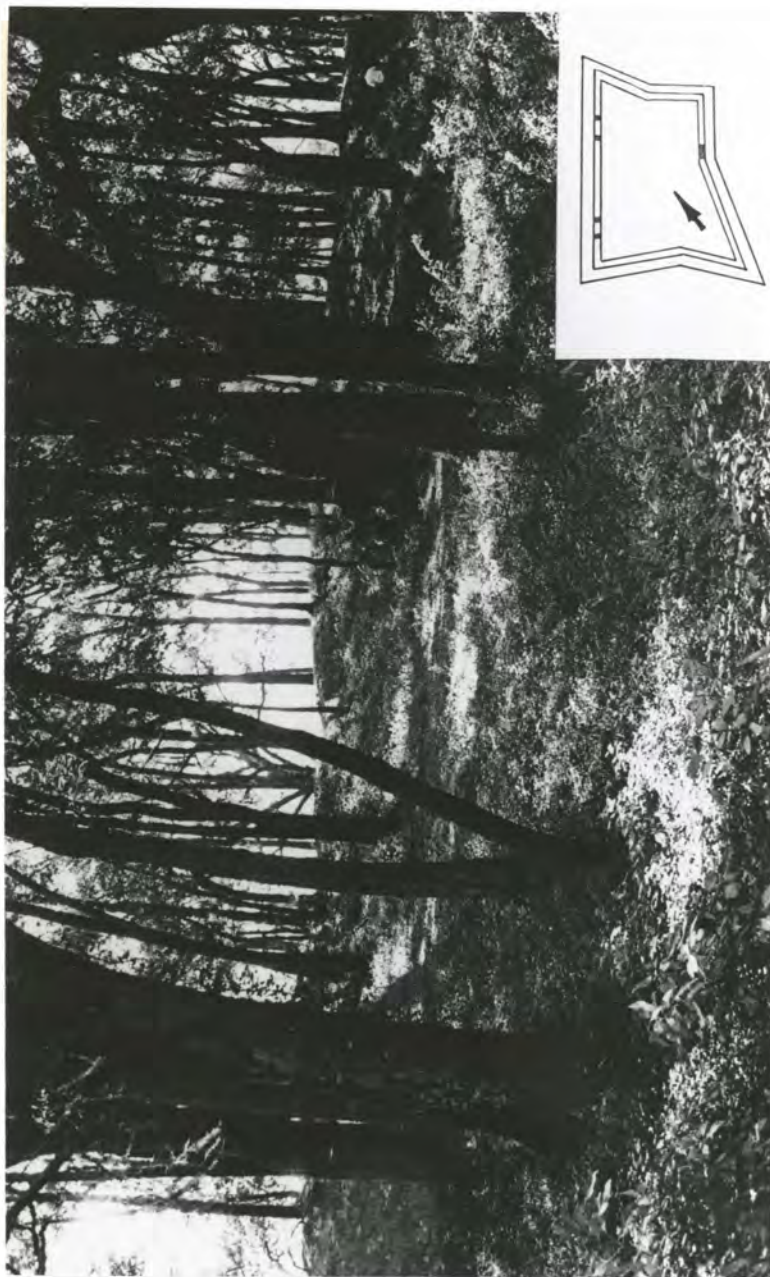


Plate 8

View from the northwest bastion across the parade  
to the southeast bastion showing the east wall.  
Note the gun embrasure and gun position about  
midway along the east curtain



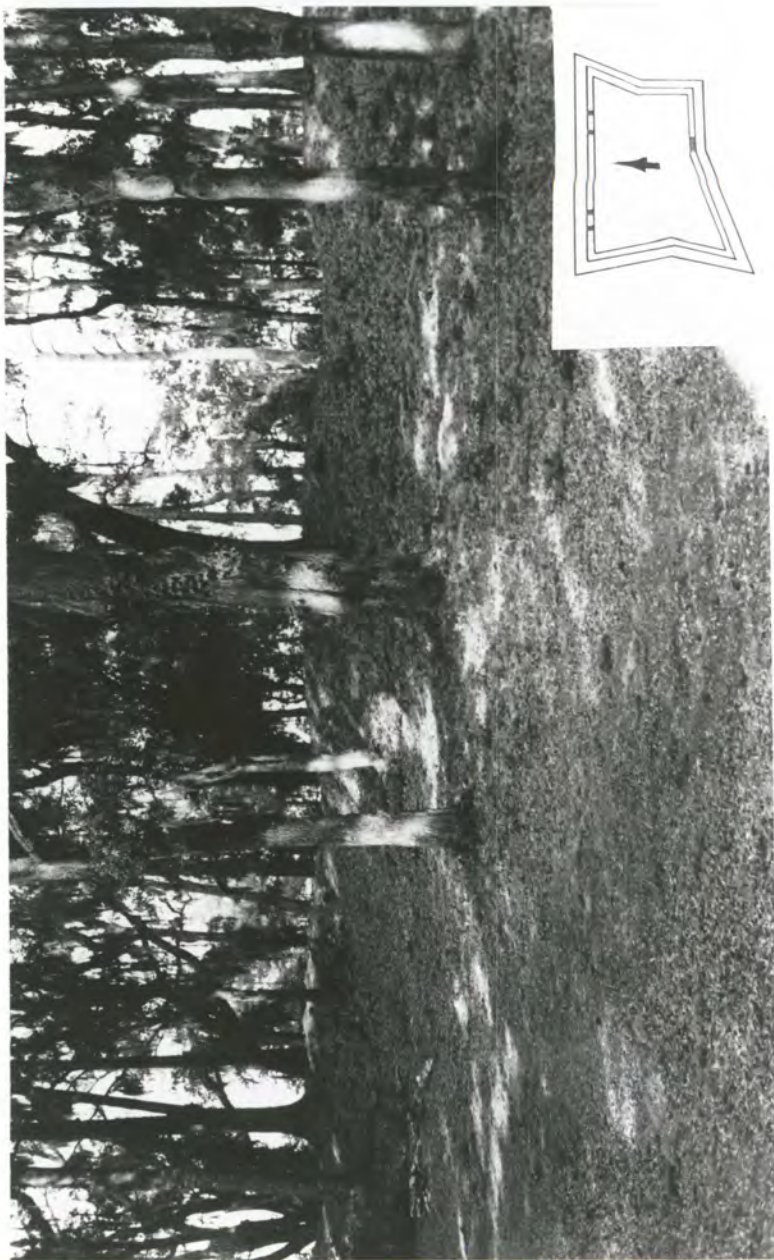


Plate 9

A closer view of the east wall showing the gun  
embrasures and gun positions

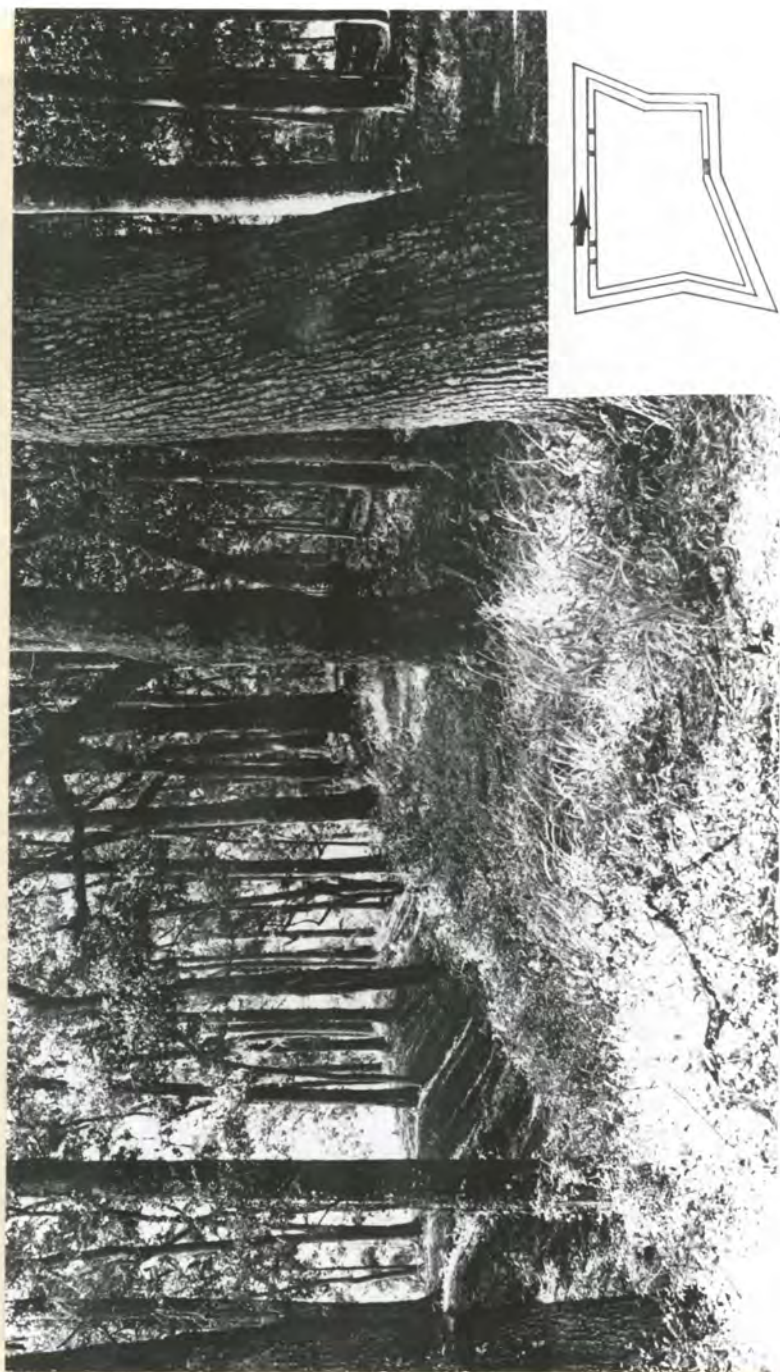


Plate 10

View along the top of the east face from the  
northeast bastion showing the moat



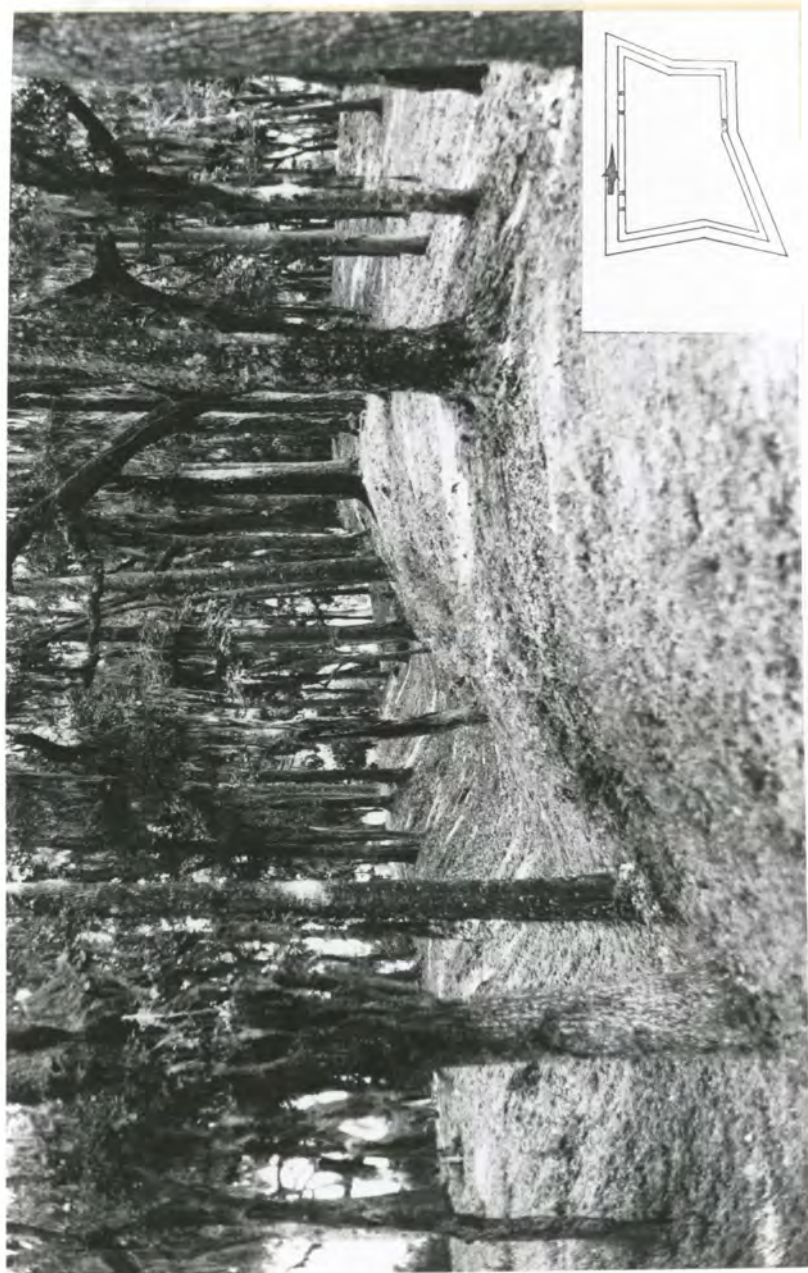


Plate 11

A second view along the top of the east face from the  
northeast bastion showing the moat





Plate 12

The firing angle of the gun positions from the top of the east face showing the intervening span of marsh between the fort and the Midway River at low tide. This angle is directly in line with the bend in the river. St. Catherine's Sound is on the horizon

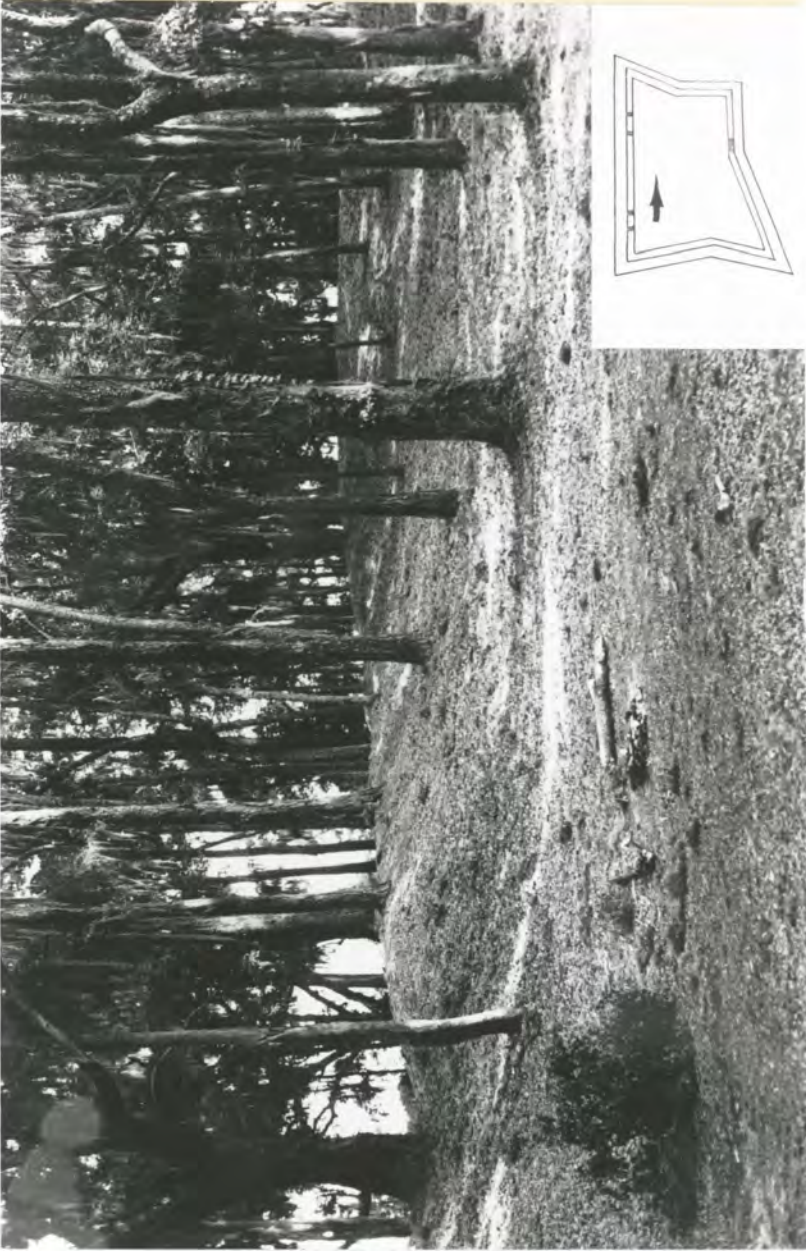


Plate 13

View of the east face in looking towards the southeast bastion



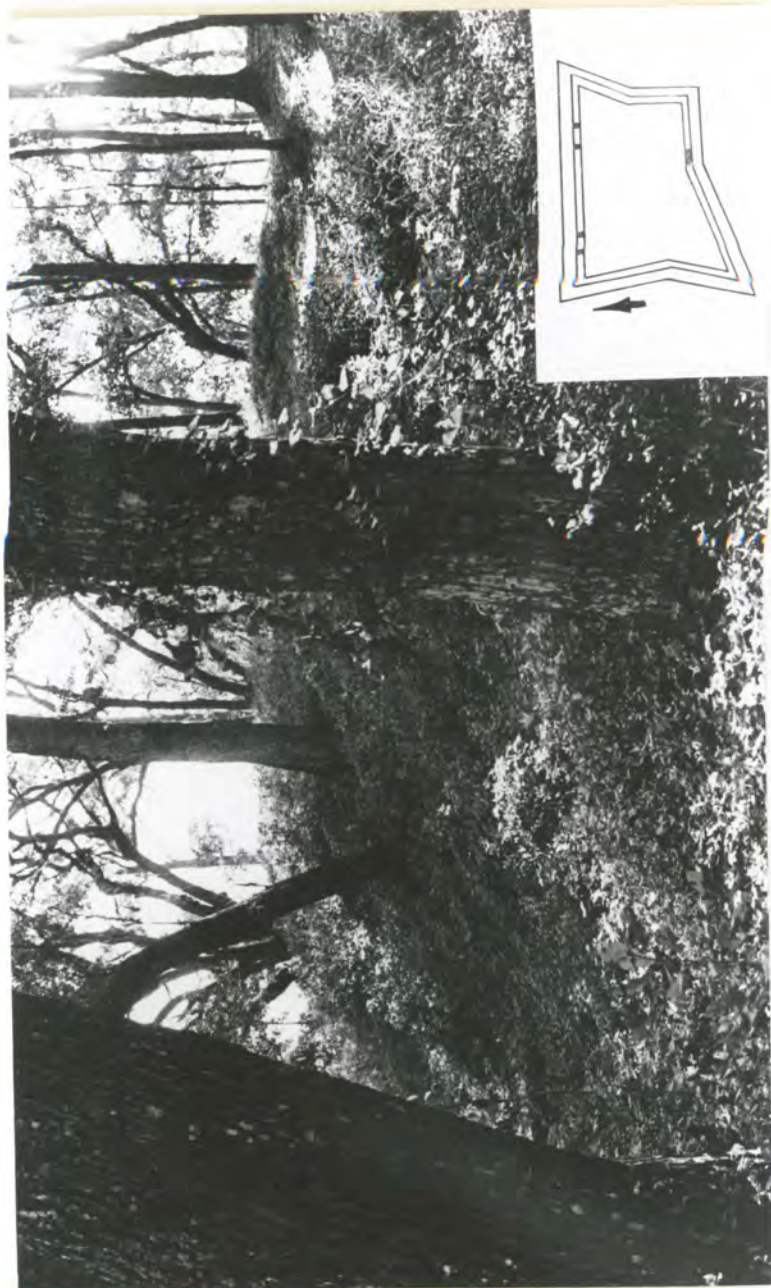


Plate 14

The northeast bastion from midway along the north face

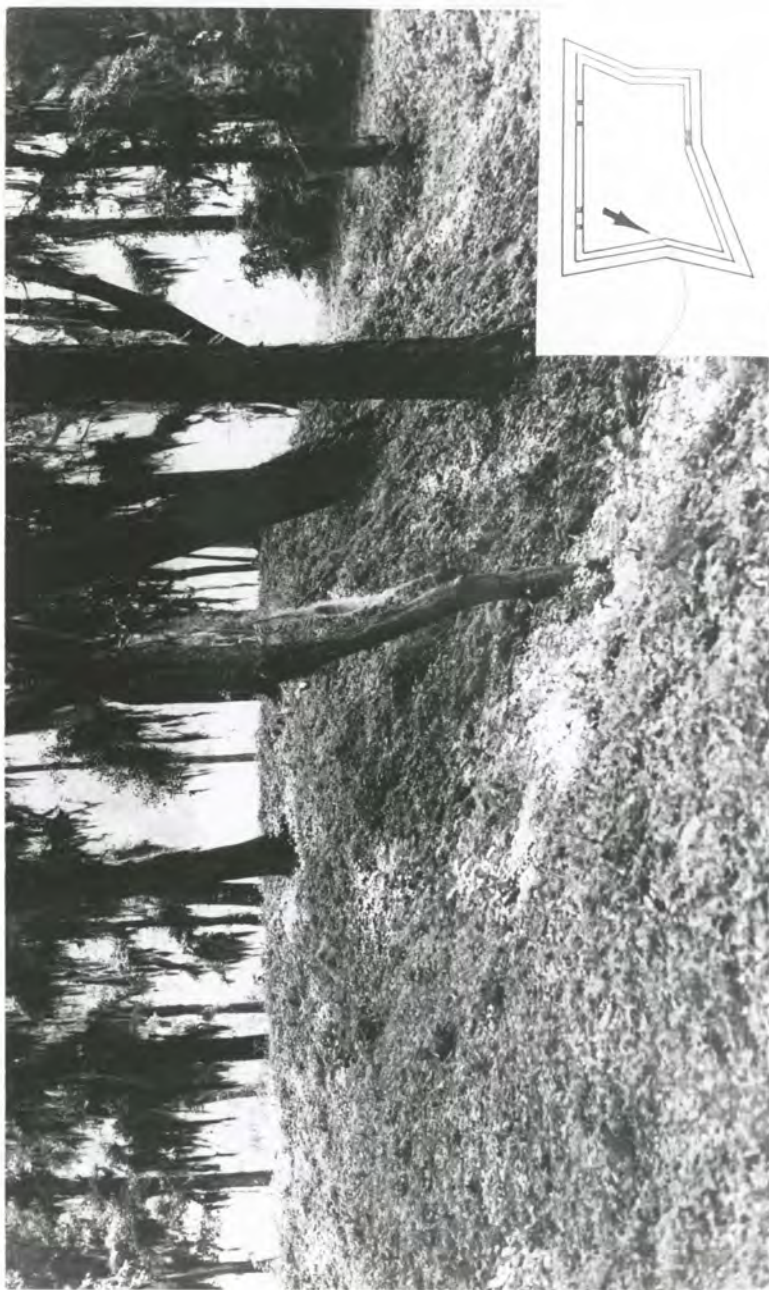


Plate 15

The northwest bastion from midway along the north face



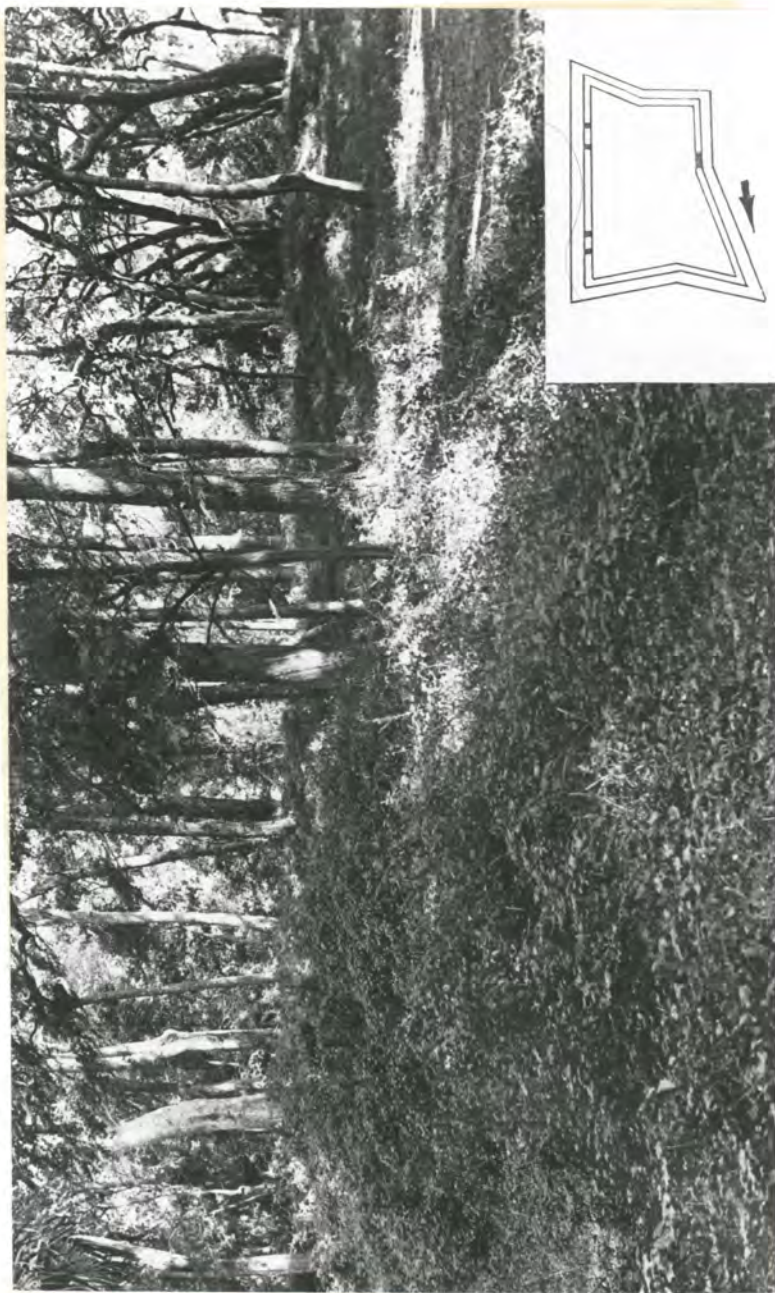


Plate 16

The northwestern bastion from the gate

### CHAPTER III

#### HISTORY OF FORT MORRIS AND SUNBURY

##### Introduction

The town of Sunbury and the fortification at what has been traditionally accepted as the site of the American Revolutionary War fort known as Fort Morris were the result of growth and expansion within the larger entity known as the Midway Colony.

The Midway Colony was settled in 1752 by a group of three hundred and fifty puritans who had left their previous settlement at Dorchester, South Carolina. For several years the Midway Colonists were not associated with a specific town, but could be geographically identified by the Midway Congregational Church which formed the center of the new community ten miles north of the present site of Sunbury.

Sunbury was founded in 1758 as a port for the Midway settlers. Within a few years Sunbury became a commercial rival of Savannah but was almost totally destroyed in the Revolution. All three signers of the Declaration of Independence from Georgia were associated with the Midway sites. Dr. Lyman Hall and Button Gwinnett were residents of the area. Hall's plantation was just north of the Mid-

way Church and Gwinnett's plantation was on St. Catherine's Island. His base of supplies and landing were at Sunbury. George Walton, the other signer from Georgia was held as a prisoner of War at Sunbury following the fall of Savannah in December 1778.<sup>1</sup>

### Colonial Planning for Sunbury

The early English settlements in Georgia including Sunbury, Frederica, Hardwicke, Savannah, and Darien developed according to preconceived plans, all are closely linked with the town plans developed for Georgia by the British Colonial Government. Where these town plans have been preserved, this documentation is probably the most important historical data to be considered in the development of archaeological and historical interpretation.

The importance of town plans at the above mentioned sites is best demonstrated in the origin and development of Frederica, General James Edward Oglethorpe's military settlement on St. Simon's Island and now a site maintained by the National Park Service.

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<sup>1</sup>James W. Holland. "Report to the Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service, Department of the Interior," "Midway, Liberty County, Georgia, 1937," p. 1. Xerox copy on file, Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources, Site Planning Section, Atlanta, Georgia.



While there are substantial differences in Sunbury and Frederica, there are numerous parallels in terms of site selection and general layout that relate to Sunbury. The same reconnaissance that brought General Oglethorpe to St. Simon's Island in January of 1734<sup>4</sup> also brought this founder of the Georgia colony to the bluffs that would one day hold Fort Morris and Sunbury.<sup>2</sup>

The process of site selection for Frederica and its general attributes as described by Albert Manucy could with only minor modifications be directly applied to Sunbury and Fort Morris.

Despite a cold rain which drove him under a great oak tree on that January day of 1734, Oglethorpe saw the advantages of the place for a fortified settlement. The right angle turn in the river channel would put approaching vessels at the mercy of shore batteries. The east bank of the river was fairly high ground with deep water close inshore. A fort at the river would be only a stone's throw from the homes that could be built in a broad clearing nearby--old Indian fields which offered a ready-made town site. The other side of the river was a vast open marsh, impassable for the enemy. On the winding waterway, hidden for the ocean, an infant settlement and its fort would be reasonably safe from detection and attack.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>C.C. Jones, Jr., The Dead Towns of Georgia, Savannah. Morning News Steam Printing House, 1878. IV:141-144, citing Robert Wright, Memoirs of Gen. James Oglethorpe, p. 74, London, 1857.

<sup>3</sup>Albert C. Manucy, "The Fort at Frederica," Notes in Anthropology, Vol. 5, Florida State University, 1962, p. 7.



Frederica and Sunbury are linked at numerous points in their history, but perhaps most significantly in the historical personage of Captain Mark Carr, one of General Oglethorpe's officers. Mark Carr was associated with the Midway colony as early as 1754 when he was chosen as an assembly man for the newly arrived group of Puritan settlers from Dorchester, South Carolina. A royal grant of October, 1752, gave Captain Carr formal possession of the area encompassed by the contemporary site of Fort Morris and Sunbury and it was here that the first fortifications were built.<sup>4</sup> Captain Carr owned a house in the town of Frederica that has been located through the combined efforts of historical and archaeological research but has not been excavated.

Fairbanks noted the integral relationship between Frederica and Sunbury during the early settlement of Georgia.

Now here is a tightly dated settlement where we can see the second stage of the settlement of Georgia. After the first, almost military occupation of Frederica and after the Spanish threat was over, Sunbury is the second generation of Georgia settlement. It badly needs to be exca-

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<sup>4</sup>Holland, op. cit. Citing manuscript records of Midway Church, Vol. 1, 1937. These records are on file at the Midway Museum, Midway, Georgia.

vated. I can remember making a "surface" collection many years ago and noting that a tremendous amount of information could be collected there.<sup>5</sup>

The actual town plan for Sunbury was developed in 1758 following transfer of part of Mark Carr's royal grant to Kenneth Baille, John Elliot, Grey Elliot, James Maxwell, and John Stevens "for the purpose of establishing a town,"<sup>6</sup> on the west bank of the Midway River.

Sunbury's town plan (see Figure 4) resembles the Savannah type pattern more closely than that of Frederica. This is evident in the use of the Savannah type square. . . "which is placed in the grid in such a way as to interrupt the pattern. Main streets dead end opposite the middle of the square either on two opposite or all four sides."<sup>7</sup> These earlier colonial plans became the basic format for urban planning in Milledgeville, Macon and Columbus.<sup>8</sup>

Sunbury was laid out in a rectangular pattern 3,430 feet wide across the east side and 1,180 feet wide across

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<sup>5</sup>Charles F. Fairbanks, "Archaeology and History of Coastal Georgia," a short article in The Conference on the Future of the Marshlands and Sea Islands of Georgia, published by the Ga. Council for the Preservation of Natural Areas, Atlanta, Ga., 1968, p. 44.

<sup>6</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 145.

<sup>7</sup>Joanna Sears and Dr. William Nash, "Planning in (cont)





the north side and 2,230 feet wide on the south. The rectangle was then divided into 496 lots 70 feet wide and 130 feet deep. A block was composed of four lots bordered on three sides by 75-foot wide streets and on the fourth side by a lane 25 feet wide (see Figure 4).

Based on a complete lot ownership list and other data Jones estimates the combined white and black population of Sunbury at the beginning of the Revolutionary War at between eight hundred and a thousand.<sup>9</sup>

At the onset of the Revolution Sunbury was in competition with Savannah for first place in the commercial importance of the colony. The growth of Sunbury is attested by Governor James Wright's letter to Lord Halifax:

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<sup>7</sup>(cont) Georgia Yesterday and Today." Urban Georgia, September 1971, Vol, XXI, No. 9, p. 12.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Jones, op. cit., pp. 170-171.

I judged it necessary for his Majesty's Service that Sunbury - a well settled place, having an exceeding good harbour and inlet from the sea - should be made a Port of Entry: And I have appointed Thomas Carr, Collector, and John Martin, Naval Officer for the same. There are eighty dwelling houses in the place: Three considerable merchant stores for supplying the town and planters in the neighborhood with all kinds of necessary goods; and around it for about fifteen miles is one of the best settled parts of the country.<sup>10</sup>

In his report to the English Secretary of State for America in 1773 concerning the "Condition of the Province of Georgia," Wright listed but two ports in Georgia, Sunbury and Savannah, and during 1772 fifty-six vessels entered and left the port of Sunbury.<sup>11</sup>

#### Sunbury in the Revolution

Governor Wright placed the head of the rebellion in Georgia in St. John's Parrish and commented to the effect that the inhabitants there were under the influence

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 155.

<sup>11</sup>James Wright, "Letters from Governor Sir James Wright to the Earl of Dartmouth and Lord George Germain, Secretaries of State for America from August 24, 1774, to February 16, 1782," (Vol. III of Collections of the Georgia Historical Society, Savannah: Morning News Steam Printing House, 1873), pp. 161-65.

of people who were descendants of Puritans that maintained strong Oliverian or republican principles.

Although Sunbury picked up a number of settlers from the old military establishment at Frederica, some Scotch Highlanders from the Darien area and remnants of other groups the primary cultural component at Sunbury remained the transplanted Dorchester, South Carolina community.

Most historians writing on the subject have concluded that the origin of the Midway colony and its lack of intergration into the general milieu of the population was responsible for its leadership in the Revolution.<sup>12</sup> The majority of Georgians particularly the people of Savannah, had known the Crown primarily through the Trustees and had not suffered like the older colonies under the rule of the Stuarts.

Coulter has defined the situation:

Georgia had been the pet of English philanthropy and of the English Parliament; a million dollars had been expended upon her in addition to all the charity that had gone along with the founding and early development of the colony. Gratitude might well have made Georgia the

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<sup>12</sup>C.C. Jones, Jr., Address Delivered at Midway Meeting House in Liberty County, Georgia on the Second Wednesday in March, 1889, on the Occasion of the Relaying of the Corner Stone of a Monument to be Erected in Honor of the Founders of Midway Church and Congregation. (Augusta, Ga. Chronicle Publishing Co., 1889), pp. 6-7.



last stronghold of British loyalty in America.<sup>13</sup>

The Midway people were different. Their roots were in the older colonies, and before their settlement in Dorchester, South Carolina, their people had settled in Massachusetts in the Puritan migrations. Working from the many volumes of largely unpublished Midway Church records Martin has summarized the early movements of the puritan group that settled the Midway Colony sites.

. . . Among those who were sent to Massachusetts in 1630 by a company of merchants in Dorchester, England, was a little band gathered from the counties of Devon, Dorset, and Somersetshire. They landed at Mattapan, where they laid off their town and named it Dorchester, in honor of the town from which many of them had come. . . In 1695 some sixty years after the village of Dorchester had planted the first church in Connecticut, they received a call to plant another in the far south. . . In response to the call, Rev. Joseph Lord, a graduate of Harvard, with eight others from Dorchester and nearby settlements, constituted a little church and set sail for Carolina. . . They were joined by others from Massachusetts, some settling at Dorchester and some at Beech Hill eight miles distant....<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Merton E. Coulter, A Short History of Georgia. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1933, p. 99.

<sup>14</sup>Josephine B. Martin, Midway, Georgia in History and Legend. Second Edition, Printed by the Ashantilly Press, Darien, Georgia, 1958.

After 56 years in South Carolina the colony again moved. Stacy quotes one of the early church leaders on the primary reason for moving to Georgia:

Our ancestors having a greater regard to a compact settlement took up but small tracts of land, many of which, after their decease, being divided among their children, reduced them to still smaller, in consequence of<sup>15</sup> which our lands were generally worn out.

Their philosophy and material culture though adapted to the southern environment and institutions retained many connections with New England.<sup>16</sup> The most obvious ties with New England were through the Congregational Church. Many of the 18th century religious leaders came directly from New England.

Among some of the more easily recognized ministers were Abiel Holmes, father of the author Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Jedidiah Morse, the geographer and father of S. F. B. Morse, inventor of the telegraph.<sup>17</sup> The rela-

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<sup>15</sup>James Stacy, History of the Midway Congregational Church, Liberty County, Georgia. (Newman, Georgia, second edition, 1903), pp. 2-9.

<sup>16</sup>Jones, op. cit., pp. 5-8.

<sup>17</sup>Jones, op. cit., 1857.



tionship between New England and the Midway district exists not only in religious and literary tradition, but is strongly reflected in the material remains of these old communities. Many of the gravestone designs in the colonial graveyard at Midway have the same designs including the death's head and cherub styles that were common in *New England* between 1720 and 1800.<sup>18</sup>

C. C. Jones, Jr. has summarized the opposing feelings of the Royalists and Patriots in the following statement:

On the altars erected within the Midway District were the fires of resistance by Georgia to the Dominion of England earliest kindled, and Dr. Lyman Hall, of all the dwellers there, by his counsels, exhortations, and determined spirit added stoutest fuel to the flames. Between the immigrants from Dorchester and the distressed Bostonians existed not only the ties of a common parentage, but also sympathies engendered by kindred religious, moral, social, and politican training. It is not difficult to comprehend why the members of this district acknowledged themselves to be Revolutionists. The Puritan element, cherishing and proclaiming intolerance of an established church and disbelief in the divine right of Kings, impatient of restraint, accustomed to independent thought and action, and uninfluenced by associations which encouraged division had nothing in common with the Church of England.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>E. S. Dethlefsen and James Deetz. "Death's Heads, Cherubs, and Willow Trees: Experimental Archaeology in Colonial Cemeteries." *American Antiquity*, Vol. 31, No. 4, 1967.

<sup>19</sup>Jones, *op. cit.*, The Midway Address, p. 6.



Strickland's well documented study of religion in eighteenth century Georgia also emphasizes the leading role played by the Midway people in organizing resistance to British rule.<sup>20</sup>

In 1758, the same year Sunbury was established, Georgia was divided into parrishes. This act of the Royal government was designed to encourage the growth of the Church of England, and the Midway sites were all included in the parrish of St. John. The area occupied by Sunbury and the site of Fort Morris came into this division.

. . .from Sunbury in the district of Midway and Newport from the southern sounds of the parrish of St. Phillip, extending thence southeast to the south branch of Newport, including the islands of St. Catherine and Burmuda, and from the north line of said Samuel Hastings northwest, shall be and forever continue a parrish by the name of "The Parrish of St. John."<sup>21</sup>

Both the Sunbury town plan and the 19th century map (see Figure 4), that relates the town plan to the presumptive site of Fort Morris were included in a lengthy and detailed essay on Sunbury and Fort Morris in C. C.

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<sup>20</sup>Reba Carolyn Strickland, Religion and the State in Georgia in the Eighteenth Century, (New York, New York, Columbia University Press, 1939), pp. 137-186.

<sup>21</sup>Colonial Records of Georgia, XVIII, p. 260.

Jones, Jr.'s The Dead Towns of Georgia.<sup>22</sup> Any history of Fort Morris at Sunbury, Georgia would have to begin with the baseline first put down in 1876 by this basic book length essay of 83 pages. No recent publication has added any knowledge to the basic body of information assembled by Jones. One of the basic questions concerning the history and archaeology of Sunbury is, what can be added to Jones' basic data that will be useful in the site development and interpretation of Fort Morris at Sunbury? Complete treatment of this question will have to await a synthesis of the many documents relevant to the site.

For purposes of this thesis the author has focused solely on the legitimacy of Jones' identification of the existing fortification at Sunbury as being the actual Revolutionary site of Fort Morris.

The larger question concerning the need for basic historical research could easily have been asked in 1945 of Fort Frederica when the National Park Service had acquired that site because Charles C. Jones, Jr. also wrote a detailed chapter in The Dead Towns of Georgia on the town and fort at Frederica. However, the question did

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<sup>22</sup>Jones, The Dead Towns of Georgia.

not have to be asked because a local historian, Margaret *Davis Cates*, had spent many years well after Jones' original work digging out every minute fragment of data available to her concerning Frederica. This data was systematically cataloged, indexed, and available to the archaeologists when they came on the site.<sup>23</sup> Even after Margaret Cates' extensive work, it was not until the Park Service had been at Frederica for some time that librarian Lawrence Worth of Brown University found an original plan of Fort Frederica.<sup>24</sup> This discovery enabled the archaeologists to work directly from authenticated historical plans to the remains of the fort.<sup>25</sup>

At the present time there are no known construction plans for Fort Morris. There were earlier fortifications constructed at Sunbury and based on an analysis of the documentary and archaeological evidence the author concludes that the existing Fort is primarily a Revolutionary Period Construction on the site of an earlier Col-

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<sup>23</sup>Manucy, op. cit., pp. i-iii.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 26.



onial fortification.<sup>26</sup> The Fort was probably revetted during the War of 1812-15 with little if any alteration of the Revolutionary structure. There were no hostile military actions at Sunbury during the War of 1812-15.

Sunbury was garrisoned early in the American Revolution and revetment and/or new fortifications had begun by the summer of 1776.<sup>27</sup> Over the next two years American forces were periodically gathered at Sunbury for punitive expeditions against the British Garrison at St. Augustine, Florida. The summer expedition of 1776 under Major General Charles Lee followed the successful repulsion of the British attempt on Charleston, July 6, 1776. It was felt by the Americans that the Southeastern coast could be secured if the British stronghold in the Old Castillo San Marco could be eliminated. General Lee's forces, including South Carolina, Virginia, and North Carolina troops concentrated at Sunbury but sickness resulted in 14 or 15 deaths per day

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<sup>26</sup>A detailed discussion of the documentary evidence for this identification is given in the following chapter.

<sup>27</sup>Revolutionary Records of Georgia, Vol. I, p. 136.

among the soldiers. The expedition ended when General Lee was ordered northward by Congress.<sup>28</sup>

By Spring of 1777 a second attempt on St. Augustine began. This expedition fell apart largely because of feuding factions among the various commanders including Button Gwinnett and Laclan McIntosh.

In both the 1776 and 1777 attempts on St. Augustine Sunbury served as the troop concentration center and supply depot.

The third expedition against St. Augustine began in the Spring of 1778 following the March 12th attack by British forces on Fort Barrington some forty-five miles southwest of Sunbury on the Altamaha River. This third expedition under Major General Robert Howe also ended in retreat. During this expedition the sick and wounded were sent back to Sunbury.<sup>29</sup>

By the summer of 1778 the British plan for the southern campaign was beginning to take shape. Savannah, the capital of Georgia was the primary target, but diversionary tactics called for the harrassment of the

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<sup>28</sup>William Moultrie, Memoirs of the American Revolution, Vol. I., p. 185.

<sup>29</sup>Collections Georgia Historical Society, Vol. VIII, p. 88. Letter to Captain Thomas Morris dated June 26, 1778 from Joseph Clay.

lower parts of Georgia including Sunbury.

The first military action of the War at Sunbury came in late November 1778. Lt. Colonel L. V. Fuser with 500 men and accompanying artillery sailed from Florida at the same time a land expedition under Lt. Col. Mark Prevost marched towards Midway. These forces were to combine and take Sunbury. Prevost made it to Midway, but retreated to Florida when Fuser's forces failed to arrive on time. Fuser sailed up the Midway River, positioned his vessels and landed troops on Colonel's Island below Sunbury (see Figure 11, p.163). Fuser then surrounded the town and fort and demanded the surrender of the garrison. Fuser's terms were accompanied by a threat to burn Sunbury to the ground. Colonel McIntosh refused the terms and Fuser left when he realized that Prevost had retreated. In December Savannah fell to the forces of Lieutenant Colonel Archibald Campbell who had arrived with several thousand British soldiers from New York. After capturing Savannah, Campbell began his march towards Sunbury and had reached the Ogeechee River when he learned that General Augustine Prevost (Mark Prevost's brother), had concentrated 2,000 men in a combined land and water assault at Sunbury. By January 6, 1778 General Prevost had captured the town. By taking advantage of a low tide on the morning of the 8th, the British were able



to use the marsh Island in front of the fort as a screen for shallow draft boats for landing howitzers and mortars above the town. Prevost then commanded an unconditional surrender of Fort Morris. Major Lane, commanding the Fort refused and Prevost began an intensive bombardment of the fortification. Following this shelling Major Lane asked for terms and surrendered. The British lost one man with three wounded and captured the entire American force with all of its ordinance and stores intact. The American's lost four dead and seven wounded. Prevost renamed the Fort, Fort George and the fortification was not involved in military action again during the Revolution. Towards the end of the 1812-15 War, Fort Morris was reconditioned and named Fort Defense, but the Fort was not involved in any further military action. Following the 1812-15 War, Fort Morris fell into disuse and was abandoned.

While Jones has integrated most of the major documents and data concerning the aborted raid on Fort Morris and St. John's Parrish by the combined Tory and British forces from St. Augustine in late November 1778,<sup>30</sup> and the mili-

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<sup>30</sup>Jones, op. cit., pp. 181-191.

tary action and surrender of the fort in early January, 1779,<sup>31</sup> to the invading British Army from St. Augustine, Jones did not provide conclusive evidence regarding the identity of the existing fortification. However, Jones did provide the basic data from which a more comprehensive evaluation of sources could be made.

As the author concludes in the following Chapter, the identity of Fort Morris with the extant fortifications is entirely consistent with C. C. Jones, Jr.'s assumption that the existing fort is Fort Morris.

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., pp. 191-197.

## CHAPTER IV

### IDENTIFICATION OF THE FORT MORRIS SITE

#### Status of the Problem

It is the position of the author that combined archaeological and historical documentation presented in this thesis constitutes a reasonable proof that C. C. Jones, Jr.'s original identification of the Fort Morris site is correct.<sup>1</sup> It is further asserted by the author that evidence advanced against Jones' identification of the site by more recent critics is largely supportive rather than contradictory to the data offered by Jones, and that a close examination of sources and statements in these recent reports gives conclusive proof that no reasonable case against Jones' identification of the Fort Morris site is available. The author examines this evidence in the following pages and gives additional documentary evidence not previously considered that supports Jones' original identification.

#### The Critics

At the present time there has not been a published book or report on Sunbury that is critical of C. C.

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<sup>1</sup>C. C. Jones, Jr., The Dead Towns of Georgia, P. 179.



Jones, Jr.'s identification of the Revolutionary War site, and other than one short pamphlet that contains little more than material from C. C. Jones, Jr.'s account of Sunbury in The Dead Towns of Georgia,<sup>2</sup> there is only one recent publication concerning the location of Fort Morris. In 1968 the Fort's Committee, Department of Archives and History, State of Georgia, published a short article on Fort Morris.<sup>3</sup> This article follows C. C. Jones, Jr.'s description exclusively, and quotes his History of Georgia to the effect that, "This fort became 'the most important military work constructed by Georgians during the Revolutionary War.' "<sup>4</sup>

The present fortification was accepted by the old State Historical Commission, predecessor of the Preservation Section in the State Department of Natural Resources as the Revolutionary fortification known as Fort Morris and has been placed on the National Register by the

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<sup>2</sup>Paul M. McIlvaine, The Dead Town of Sunbury, Georgia (Hendersonville, N.C.: By the author, Route 3, Box 55, 28739, 1971).

<sup>3</sup>Forts Committee, State of Georgia Department of Archives and History, Fort Morris, Fourteenth of a Series, Georgia Magazine 12 (June-July, 1968): 21-23.

<sup>4</sup>C. C. Jones, Jr., The History of Georgia, cited by Forts Committee, Department of Archives and History, Fort Morris, Fourteenth of a Series, Georgia Magazine 12 (June-July, 1968): 21-23.

National Register Review Board for the State of Georgia.<sup>5</sup>

C. C. Jones, Jr.'s position concerning this site was first investigated in the twentieth century by James W. Holland, National Park Service Historian.

Holland's recommendations to the Historic Sites Survey conducted by the National Park Service in 1937 included the following statements:

There can be little or no doubt that the earthwork today known as Fort Morris is indeed the Revolutionary work of that name. Its location is exactly as described in the early accounts. In 1812-1813 Fort Morris was considered a possible point of attack by the British and so some efforts were made to place it in a defensible condition. Neighboring planters furnished the labor to clean out the ditch, to strengthen the parapet, and to mount such of the guns in fair condition. A few light pieces, in addition were obtained from Savannah. Not a shot was fired from Fort Morris during the War of 1812, and from that time on the earthwork has remained without alteration or repairs. Trees of considerable size now grow on the parapet, on the parade, and in the ditch.<sup>6</sup>

Two short unpublished manuscripts directly critical of Jones' identification have been written by men employed

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<sup>5</sup>Carol Summers and Bill Mitchell, "Fort Morris National Register Inventory--Nomination Form." Submitted May 13, 1971 to the National Register of Historic Places, U. S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

<sup>6</sup>James W. Holland, "Report to the Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Midway, Liberty County, Georgia, 1937," p. 1. Xerox copy on file, Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources, Site Planning Section, Atlanta, Georgia.

by the State of Georgia to investigate the problem of identifying the site that was purchased in 1968 by the State of Georgia as Fort Morris.

The first of these two reports written in 1970 by Steven Baker as a preliminary appraisal of the fortification took the position that the existing earthwork known as Fort Morris was either the product of construction activity during the War of 1812-1815, or was built during the Civil War (see Appendix 1).<sup>7</sup> While Baker does not accept the existing structure as the Revolutionary Fort Morris, he does accept the site of the present Fort Morris as the location of the Revolutionary Fort.

The second report written by Tom Agnew (see Appendix 2) concludes that the site identified as Fort Morris by Jones is the result of construction during the War of 1812-1815.<sup>8</sup> Agnew, unlike Baker, does not accept the site of the present fort as the Revolutionary Fort Morris location.

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<sup>7</sup>Steven Baker, "Fort Morris, a Preliminary Review." Pp. 1-26. Unpublished manuscript, on file, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, State of Georgia, Atlanta, 1970.

<sup>8</sup>Tom Agnew, "A Study of the Fortifications at Fort Morris in Sunbury, Georgia from the Revolutionary War to the War of 1812." (Paper submitted from the Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, January 11, 1974).



Both Agnew<sup>9</sup> and Baker<sup>10</sup> approach the problem of identification from the view that C. C. Jones, Jr. made an "assumption" with his identification of the extent fortification at Sunbury as being the Revolutionary War fort, "Fort Morris," without offering adequate proof for such an "assumption."

C. C. Jones, Jr.'s body of work on Sunbury is only superficially examined by both Baker and Agnew for its content bearing on the question of identification of the Fort Morris site. This is a remarkable dismissal of evidence in that the Sunbury essay is a carefully researched historical work, and at 83 pages is the most comprehensive integration of data concerning Fort Morris and Sunbury in existence. Jones' essay is also the beginning of the literary tradition concerning the identity of Fort Morris.

Baker did not have the time to do an adequate job of research and carefully qualified his report with statements to that effect.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>10</sup>Baker, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

Agnew does not qualify his conclusions regarding Fort Morris but comes to accept the authority of questionable sources as the primary evidence for his conclusions without examining the meaning of these sources relative to many available primary sources of data, including the Revolutionary Records of Georgia.<sup>12</sup> While Agnew disputes Jones' conclusions he fails to examine the evidence Jones offers for his conclusions. Agnew also ignores Baker's report and a first draft of the author's own recent archaeological survey report.<sup>13</sup> Both Baker's report as well as this author's first draft of the 1971 excavations at Fort Morris were available to Agnew prior to the release of his report. The Agnew report as a research document clearly falls into one of the poorer classes of what R. G. Collingwood has described as "Scissors and Paste history."<sup>14</sup>

The relevance of the Agnew report is that it now

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<sup>12</sup>A. D. Candler, (Comp. and Ed.) Revolutionary Records of the State of Georgia. Three Volumes. Atlanta, Franklin Turner Co., 1908, Vol. I, II, III. (Official Records, printed from archives by authority of State Legislature).

<sup>13</sup>G. M. Midgette, First Draft of Fort Morris at Sunbury, Survey and First Excavations, unpublished manuscript, Office of Planning and Research, Department of Natural Resources, State of Georgia, Atlanta, Georgia, 1973.

<sup>14</sup>Robin George Collingwood, The Idea of History, p. 260. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1946.

stands as the primary document of interpretation for the Fort Morris site, and without critical appraisal could become official policy regarding the State of Georgia's interpretation of the historical record.

#### A Brief Analysis of Baker's Report

Following a description of Fort Morris and comments concerning plans for developing the site by the Georgia Historical Commission, Baker gives an account of what is known about the fortifications at Sunbury prior to the Revolution. Most of Baker's references regarding the colonial fortifications are from secondary sources that heavily rely on C. C. Jones, Jr.'s essay on Sunbury.<sup>15</sup>

Using secondary sources that utilize information not even compiled when Jones wrote his essay on Sunbury, including The Colonial Records of Georgia,<sup>16</sup> and The Revolutionary Records of Georgia,<sup>17</sup> Baker frequently (and in the most important instances) comes to the exact conclusions regarding the placement of fortifications at Sunbury (including Fort Morris) that Jones did. This is not too surprising when one reads that the secondary

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<sup>15</sup>C. C. Jones, Jr., The Dead Towns of Georgia.

<sup>16</sup>A. D. Candler, (Comp. and Ed.), Colonial Records of the State of Georgia. 25 Volumes. Atlanta: 1904-1915.

<sup>17</sup>Candler, op. cit.



sources that utilize these more recent compilations support Jones' identification of Fort Morris in its present location.<sup>18</sup> Without the aid of comprehensive archival records, compiled through research projects that brought most of the known colonial and Revolutionary records together in a convenient series of readily accessible volumes, Jones labored to document his case for Sunbury *and Fort Morris with early histories, church records*, and other sources that he carefully and eclectically balanced in reaching his conclusions.

Both Baker<sup>19</sup> and Jones<sup>20</sup> indicate that the present fortification occupies a spot that may have been utilized for a colonial fortification.

To support this contention, Jones cites The Record Book of Midway Church for the following:

. . . "People," continues the journal, "are very much alarmed with the news, and consultations were immediately had about the building and place for a fort, and it was determined that it should be at Captain Mark Carr's, low down, and upon the river near the sound, at about

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<sup>18</sup>Fort's Committee, "Fort Morris," op. cit.

<sup>19</sup>Baker, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>20</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 179.

seven or eight miles distance from the nearest of the settlements of the Society, which accordingly was begun on the 20th of September, 1756..."<sup>21</sup>

For further evidence on this point Jones quotes Stevens' History of Georgia for Colonial Governor Ellis' report in which Ellis states that on his tour of inspection in 1757 that he:

. . . "was pleased to observe that the inhabitants of the Midway District had enclosed their church within a defence, and had erected a battery of eight guns at Sunbury in a position to command the river. . ."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 178. From: The Record Book of Midway Church, Vol. I, entry for Sept. 16th, 1756. From previous quote in George White, Historical Collections of Georgia. New York: Pudney and Russell, 1854, pp. 517-518. The original manuscript records of the Midway Congregational Church. 1754-1854. Eleven volumes and index are in the possession of the Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia. Typewritten transcripts of volumes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 and index can be found at Hodgson Hall, headquarters of the Georgia Historical Society in Savannah. These manuscripts contain birth, marriage, death, and other records of the Midway society. These records are indispensable for understanding the history of the Midway colony, including Sunbury and Fort Morris. One compilation partially covering the Midway records has been published by James Stacey as a History of the Midway Congregational Church, Liberty County, Georgia. (Printed by S. W. Murray, at Newnan, Georgia, 1903).

<sup>22</sup>Jones, op. cit., quoting Stevens' History of Georgia, Volume I, pp. 445, 446. New York: 1847.

In building evidence for the same point that Jones documents through church records and Stevens' History of Georgia as described above, Baker quotes the Georgia Archives' Fort's Committee article on Fort Morris<sup>23</sup> and Holland's 1937 National Park Service report.<sup>24</sup>

Following the conclusion that Fort Morris occupies a colonial site, Baker then raises the possibility that Fort Morris was a revetment of the earlier colonial structure.<sup>25</sup>

Jones gives a statement that amounts to the same consideration:

It may, we presume be safely asserted that the heavy earthwork on Midway River, just south of Sunbury, was laid out and erected about the period of the commencement of the Revolutionary War. If any prior defense there existed, it was so modified and enlarged as completely to lose its identity.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Fort's Committee, op. cit.

<sup>24</sup>Holland, op. cit.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>26</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 179.



From secondary sources Baker quotes minutes from the Council of Safety that indicate an outer fortification system existed at Sunbury:

In June 1776, Colonel Baker was ordered to hire a number of Negroes (sic) to finish in a more proper manner the entrenchments about Sunbury and Colonel McIntosh to reinforce the present detachment now there with as many of the battalion as will make a company.<sup>27</sup>

Instead of using the above quote from the Georgia Magazine which correctly gives the original Council of Safety minutes, Baker uses the quote as merely a "second" variation of what he regards as the correct quote of the Council's minutes from Holland's test:

In June, 1776, a number of Negroes were employed to "finish in a more proper manner the entrenchments about Sunbury." This work included the building of a fort just below the town at the point where the high ground ended and the broad impractical marshes<sup>28</sup> between the main and Colonel's Island began.

In citing Holland as a secondary source of the "original" quote, Baker does not check the original Council of Safety minutes in the Revolutionary Records and in so doing inadvertently adds as Revolutionary period documentation what is solely information from Jones. The

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<sup>27</sup>See A. D. Candler, ed., Revolutionary Records of Georgia, Vol. I, p. 136, as cited by the Fort's Committee in "Fort Morris," Georgia Magazine, 12 (June-July, 1968), and from the Georgia Magazine by Steven Baker, "Fort Morris, A Preliminary Review," p. 5.

<sup>28</sup>Holland, op. cit., p. 18, cited by Baker, p. 4.

last sentence of Holland's "quote" as given above is directly from Jones' original essay. It is Jones, not the Revolutionary Council, that places the Revolutionary fort, ". . . at the point where the high ground ended and the broad impractical marshes between the main and Colonel's Island began."<sup>29</sup> Baker's error resulted from an improper extension of the quotation marks enclosing Holland's quote of the Council of Safety's description of Colonel Baker's orders with that part of Holland's text where Holland offered a referenced opinion from Jones' essay.

In summary of the documentary evidence concerning the transition of the colonial fortification at Sunbury to those of the Revolution, Baker states:

It is possible that any fort already here was again simply strengthened or expanded. It is also possible that the wording of these points will lead to recognition of a major question to which archaeological and further historical research could be oriented. Was another fort built or was an old one simply revetted at this time? Is there an earlier fort located at a different point in Sunbury's defenses than Fort Morris? Perhaps the earlier fort mentioned consists of a simple palisade line surrounding the town itself. Fort Morris was probably only one element in a more elaborate fortification system at Sunbury, although the location mentioned

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<sup>29</sup>Jones, op. cit.



for the building of "a fort" in 1776 is probably the site of the present Fort Morris.<sup>30</sup>

Unfortunately the location that Baker refers to from the 1776 quote is not part of the actual quote from the Revolutionary Records, but as discussed above is part of Holland's text as based on a referenced statement from Jones' earlier essay. Baker asserts that "a more elaborate fortification system" existed at Sunbury, and he even postulates an outer palisade around the town. However, Baker continues to think in terms of one fort replacing another in a linear series of events instead of a fortification system where individual elements could change relative to the total pattern. This pattern established in the colonial period and extending through the twenty year interval from the date of the first fortifications at Sunbury in 1756-1760 to the construction of Fort Morris in 1776 is developed later in the text by this author as an outer defense around the town and a battery below the town, but inside the outer defense line.

While Baker is dependent on secondary sources to support his conclusion regarding Fort Morris, Baker ignores the fact that these sources are in turn dependent on Jones' arguments for the same conclusions. Baker selected

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<sup>30</sup>Baker, op. cit., p. 5.



only the citations from the more recent compilations of colonial and Revolutionary documents in these secondary sources and he failed to closely examine the original arguments offered by Jones in his 1878 essay.

Information in Jones' essay that supports the data cited by Baker from the Colonial and Revolutionary Records includes a resolution by Congress on the 5th of July, 1776 that two artillery companies consisting of fifty men each were to garrison two forts, one at Savannah and one at Sunbury. These forts were to be erected by the state.<sup>31</sup>

Following his acceptance of the contemporary fort site as the probable location of the Revolutionary period Fort Morris, Baker rejects the existing fortification as the original Revolutionary period earthwork. His reasons are:<sup>32</sup>

1. The 1786 map of Josiah Powell
2. Known construction activity during the War of 1812
3. Probable construction activity during the Civil War.

Baker states that other than Jones' mentioning that

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<sup>31</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 179.

<sup>32</sup>Baker, op. cit., p. 15.

the Fort was renamed Fort Defense and revetted during the War of 1812 by the Committee of Safety, ". . . we have no further information concerning it at this time and any work done at the Fort can be expected to be in the nature of basic revetting of the old structure, although we must consider the opposite possibility that an entirely new fort was built."<sup>33</sup>

Baker offers no evidence for construction activity during the Civil War and all of his data for "construction activity" during the War of 1812 is from Jones. The only new, unpublished documentation presented by Baker for his conclusion that, "The present fortification is not the Revolutionary Fort Morris," is what he refers to as the 1786 Powell Map (see Figure 5). Baker describes this map as indicating ". . . 'V' shaped feature pointing towards the river. . ."; this feature, according to Baker, ". . . could indicate an earthen bulwark (described on the map as the 'angle of fort's bulwark') with an open landward side enclosed by a palisade."<sup>34</sup> On the basis of this 1786 map, Baker concludes that the ramparts of the four bastioned, rectangular redoubt presently known as Fort Morris could not be the Revolutionary Fort Morris

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

since it does not conform in its present day appearance to the structure on the 1786 map (see Figure 5). Baker offers no evidence at all for Civil War activity at the site of the present fortification, and bases his entire case for a major modification of the Revolutionary period Fort Morris at the site of the present fortification on the 1786 "Powell Map."

Examination of this map by the author leaves no doubt that Baker made a hasty and erroneous evaluation of what he refers to as the Powell Map (see Figure 5). The 1786 map was not made by Josiah Powell as Baker interprets it. The legend on the map reads:

Persuant to a warrant issued by the Court of Justices of the County of Liberty aforesaid directed Thomas Bacon, Esq., Surveyor of said County, to measure and lay out unto Josiah Powell, Esq. a tract of land on Evans Creek salt marsh in said County, which should contain one hundred acres; \_\_\_\_\_ By the authority in deputation of the said Thomas Bacon have admeasured and laid out the same represented in the above plat.

Sunbury, April 1786  
Patrick Donworth

Certified this 7th of May 1787

Thos. Bacon<sup>35</sup>

On the basis of the Thomas Bacon map or plat drawn

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<sup>35</sup>Thomas Bacon. This map, drawn in 1786 by Thomas Bacon, a surveyor and Revolutionary War soldier in Liberty County, is on permanent file at the Georgia State Archives Bldg. in Atlanta. The map is located in the Liberty County plat file under the name of Josiah Powell.



as a land survey for Josiah Powell, Baker concluded that the appearance of Fort Morris in 1786 is not consistent with the appearance of the present earthwork. This conclusion is solely based on the assumptions that the Bacon Map was a purposefully drawn representation of Fort Morris in the Revolutionary period, and that the map represented the only illustration of Fort Morris in the Revolutionary period. Both assumptions by Baker are incorrect.<sup>36</sup> Bacon marks the bulwark of Fort Morris just as he marks a house at the edge of Sunbury with the intention of tying in known points in a land survey only peripherally involving Fort Morris.

The Bacon Map, taken in the context of other available data to be discussed below, undoubtedly can be interpreted in the literal meaning of Bacon's brief description on the map below the wedge-shaped angle that he drew to illustrate the "angle of fort's bulwark." (see Figure 5).

In the fall of 1972 the author made a careful examination of a map prepared by Archibald Campbell, Lieutenant Colonel, 71st Regiment of the British forces that successfully attacked and occupied Savannah in December of

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<sup>36</sup>Baker, op. cit., pp. 9 & 15.



Figure 5

Thomas Bacon plat or map drawn for Josiah Powell in 1786. The eastern bulwark of Fort Morris indicated by a "V" shaped feature pointing towards the bend in the Midway River, and is described on the map as the "angle of fort's bulwark"





Plate 17

Approximate location of Old Sunbury's southern boundary



1778 (see Figure 6). A very small illustration of Sunbury (about the size of a quarter on the original map), when placed under magnification clearly shows a four-bastioned earthwork type fortification on the Midway River below Sunbury at a point commanding the water approaches to the town.<sup>37</sup> This battery and Sunbury are enclosed by an outer fortification (see Figure 7).

The authenticity and the meaning of this map relative to the location of Fort Morris and the form of the fort during the American Revolution will be discussed in detail following this analysis of the Baker and Agnew reports. For purposes of the present discussion it can be said without qualification that the small illustration of Sunbury and Fort Morris is both authentic and consistent with the present location and form of the existing earthworks.

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<sup>37</sup>Archibald Campbell, Lieut. Col., 71st Reg. Sketch of the Northern Frontiers of Georgia, Extending from the Mouth of the River Savannah to the Town of Augusta. (Engraved by William Faden, geographer to the King at Charing Crofs, London) 1780. Two original copies of this map, one in color, one in black and white, are part of the George Wymberly Jones DeRenne documents housed as part of the University of Georgia Library Manuscript Collections. Reproductions of the Sunbury area in this thesis are made from the originals housed at the University of Georgia.

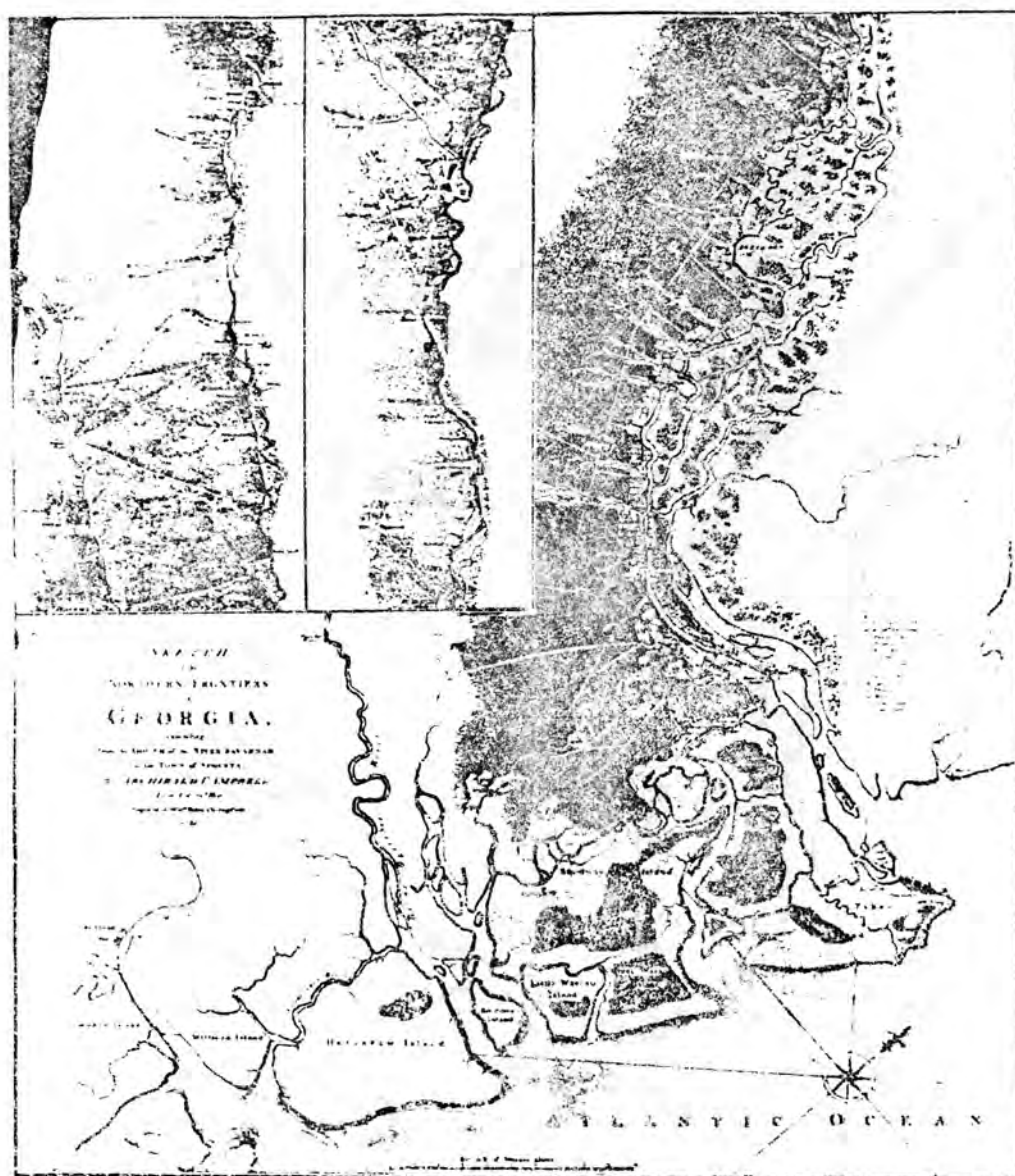


Figure 6

1778 map of the Northern Frontiers of Georgia by Archibald Campbell, Lieutenant Colonel of the 71st Regiment, engraved by William Faden at Charing Crofts, London, 1780

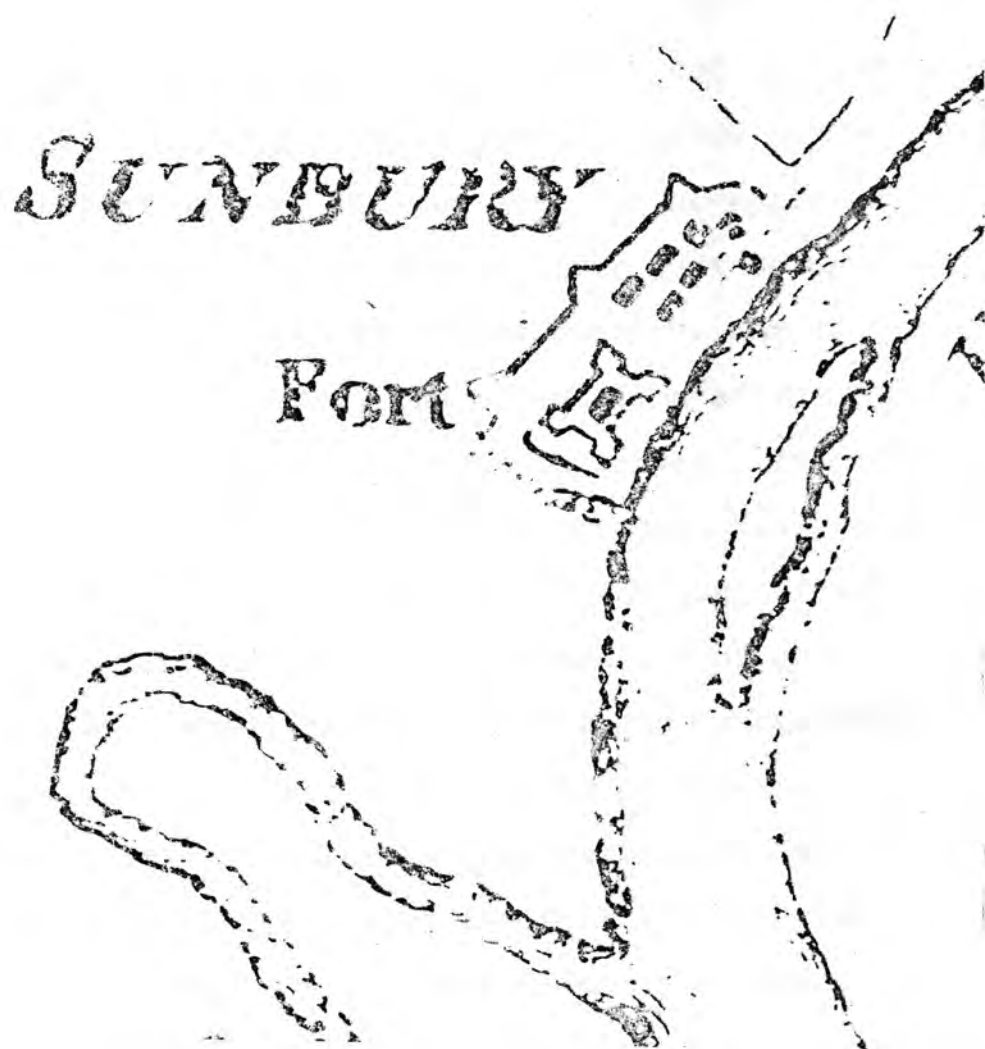


Figure 7

Enlargement of a Sketch of Fort Morris and Sunbury from Lieutenant Colonel Archibald Campbell's 1778 Map of the Northern Frontiers of Georgia, Engraved by William Faden at Charing Crofts, London, 1780.



When the "angle of fort's bulwark" notation on the Bacon Map is compared with the Campbell Map which clearly shows a four bastioned redoubt in the location of Bacon's angle mark, a very good case can be built for the meaning of Bacon's notation. While it is not clear whether Bacon is attempting to indicate the entire fort's orientation or just part of it, the apex of the angle points towards the bend in the Midway River just below Sunbury. Fort Morris was built to defend Sunbury, and as the Campbell Map indicates, the orientation of the fort's bulwark is towards the bend in the river. In order to stay in the channel and not run aground, heavy warships powered by sail had to pass under the guns of the fort. The angle of fire for the concentration of guns on the east parapet based on the existing gun embrasures at the present fortification as discussed by Jones in 1878 and confirmed by this author's observations in 1971 is consistent with the idea that the fort's bulwark was oriented towards the bend in the river so as to enfilade the passage of warships as they were brought under the guns of the fort. This concept of the defensive aspect of Fort Morris would not have been unusual knowledge for a surveyor in 1786.

While this information may or may not have been a part of Bacon's thinking as he drew the plat for Powell,

it is clear that the surveyor's datum mark, a small x for lot number one in front of Lanett's wharf (see Figures 4, 5, and 8) at the southeast corner of Sunbury is in direct alignment across part of the bulwark of Fort Morris and the intervening salt marsh to the far corner of Bacon's plat where Bacon's datum mark, a small x, is found marking a corner of the surveyed plat for Josiah Powell. Bacon was surveying off the corner of an established landmark in Sunbury that was part of the town plan (see Figure 4), across a salt marsh to Josiah Powell's tract of land.

The last high ground before going into the marsh on the far southeastern side of the existing Fort Morris is the southeastern bastion of the fort, and this bastion is pointing directly into the bend of the river where the cannon fire of the fort was concentrated. Bacon also used a wedge shaped angle similar to the angle marking the fort to emphasize the location of a live oak tree marking one corner of Powell's plat (see Figure 5).

While the Bacon map does not indicate the form of Fort Morris, it does establish the Fort's location. For Thomas Bacon, "the Fort" was in the precise location that the existing earthworks occupy. Thomas Bacon also knew first hand about the defenses of Sunbury during the Revolution since he served as a rifleman in a local defense unit at Sunbury.



Figure 8

Portion of the 1786 Bacon map demonstrating survey points at Lot number 1 on the south end of Sunbury and at the south bastion of Fort Morris



Figure 9

Magnified portion of the Stuart-Debrahm map, published in 1780. The area magnified is the immediate Sunbury area



Minutes of the Council of Safety, dated January 8th, 1776 state:

"Mr. Baker, from Saint John's Parrish, presented to the board a return and election of officers to command a company of riflemen, and recommend John Baker, Esq., as captain, Mr. John Bacon senior, as First Lieutenant, Mr. William Baker senior, as Second Lieutenant, and Mr. Thomas Bacon as Third Lieutenant of same. Ordered that commissions be made out for the above gentlemen accordingly.<sup>38</sup>

This rifle company is identified in the Council minutes as the St. John's Riflemen, after St. John's Parrish.<sup>39</sup> St. John's Parrish became Liberty County following the 1777 Constitutional assembly in Savannah. The Bacon family name is mentioned several times in Jones' list of lot owners at Sunbury,<sup>40</sup> and a certificate of service was issued to Thomas Bacon as a refugee soldier by Col. John Baker, on the 4th of April, 1785.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Revolutionary Records of Georgia, Vol. I, p. 91. Minutes Council of Safety, January 8th, 1776.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>40</sup>Jones, op. cit., pp. 159-168.

<sup>41</sup>Lucian Lamar Knight. Georgia's Roster of the Revolution, p. 32. (Compiled under authority of the Legislature) Index Printing Company, Atlanta: 1920.

A third map can be added to the Campbell and Bacon maps for locational proof of the Revolutionary period Fort Morris.<sup>42</sup> Magnification of the John Stuart-William Debrahm map of South Carolina and a part of Georgia published in London in 1780 illustrates a fort at the southeastern edge of Sunbury (see Figures 9 and 10). The illustrations of all fortifications and towns in this map are stylized as small squares. The towns and forts in Georgia also have a second thin line running concentricly around the primary square. This second, outer square, based on Debrahm's defensive works for Savannah and other Georgia towns, is probably a representation of an outer defense line composed of stockades and/or parapets.<sup>43</sup>

The second portion of Baker's objections to accepting the form of the existing earthworks is based on what he simply refers to as known construction activity at

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<sup>42</sup>William Debrahm-John Stewart map of South Carolina and a part of Georgia. Engraved by William Faden at Charing Crofts, London, 1780. The section of this map that is illustrated shows only a portion of the area contained in the original. A photo copy of the entire map is on the wall of Surveyor General's office at the Georgia State Archives building in Atlanta.

<sup>43</sup>William Gerard Debrahm. Debrahm's Report of the General Survey In The Southern District of North America, Louis De Vorsey, Jr., ed. (Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1971) p. 153-154.







Sunbury during the War of 1812-15. This statement is inconsistent with his earlier statements concerning the revetment of the structure after the Revolution:

. . .Any work done at the fort can be expected to be in the nature of basic revetting of the structure, although we must consider the opposite possibility that an entirely new fort was built. . .<sup>44</sup>

There is also more information available for the 1812-15 period in Jones' essay than Baker has indicated. As Jones clearly states, some alterations of the fortification occurred incident to refitting the structure during the War of 1812-15:

The fort, however, was again placed in tolerable condition, the planters furnishing the labor requisite for cleaning out the ditch, strengthening the parapet, and mounting such guns as there remained and were deemed trustworthy.<sup>45</sup>

A local "Committee of Safety" for Liberty County assured General Pinkney, who had seen service at Sunbury during the Revolution, that it would assume responsibility for repairing and garrisoning the fortification. Fort Morris was then renamed "Fort Defense" by the Committee

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<sup>44</sup>Baker, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>45</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 218.

of Safety.<sup>46</sup>

Numerous details concerning the 1812-1815 period that are corroborated in other sources and are discussed in the following pages are mentioned by Jones. These include the participation of students at the Sunbury academy in the defense of the town, the local manufacture of gun carriages for the fort by Jonathan Goulding of Taylor's Creek, the organization of local defense groups, as well as the fact that the Old Revolutionary Fort Morris was repaired for service in the War of 1812-15.<sup>47</sup>

The least tenable of Baker's three reasons for not accepting the present earthworks as a Revolutionary War fortification is his general belief that Fort Morris would have been occupied and rebuilt during the Civil War.

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 220. There was an earlier post-Revolutionary Fort named "Fort Defense" at Doctortown on the south side of the Altamaha opposite Liberty County at an important river crossing leading into the Midway settlements. This post was established in 1794 to guard Liberty County from Indian attacks. Additional data is available in the affidavit of Richard Roddenberry, June 19, 1796. Ms. in State Archives, Atlanta.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., pp. 218-220.

Liberty County suffered a considerable amount of damage from Federal raiders during Sherman's March to the Sea, but the area below the Ogeechee River fort at Genesis Point (Fort McAllister) was in the backwash of the war.<sup>48</sup>

Sunbury had all but vanished in 1860 and there is no available 19th century evidence to suggest anything but very limited Confederate activity at Sunbury.<sup>49</sup>

Twenty years or more before C. C. Jones, Jr. visited Fort Morris at Sunbury in the early 1870's and eleven years prior to the Civil War, George White recorded in his Statistics of the State of Georgia that, "The remains of the old fort, from which Colonel McIntosh sent to the British commands the gallant reply, 'Come and take it,' are still to be seen. . .Sunbury is now a deserted village, inhabited by not more than six or eight families."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Haskel Monroe. "Men Without Law: Federal Building in Liberty County, Georgia," The Georgia Historical Quarterly, Vol. XLIV, pp. 157-158 (see Appendix 7).

<sup>49</sup>Ben S. Burton. Letter to Gordon M. Midgette, dated August 2, 1971, at Leesburg, Florida (see Appendix 3).

<sup>50</sup>George White. Statistics of the State of Georgia, (Savannah: W. Thorne Williams, 1849), p. 372.



The archaeological evidence for Civil War activity at Fort Morris is nonexistent, and based on an inventory of several thousand artifacts excavated within and outside the existing fortification there wasn't any activity at the fort during the Civil War. For a complete description of these artifacts, see Chapter Six.

The most important documentary evidence regarding the question of Civil War activity at Fort Morris consists of Jones' personal observations at the site a few years after the war. Jones states that several of the old guns in the fort were removed to Fort Bartow at Savannah, and Riceboro in Liberty County for use during the War Between the States. At the time of his visit, two iron cannons were seen lying half buried in the soil of the parade with a third in an old field between the town and fort.<sup>51</sup> He states: "Near the middle of the curtain may be seen traces of a sally port or gateway, fifteen feet wide. Such is the appearance of this abandoned work as ascertained by recent survey."<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Jones, op. cit., pp. 182-183.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 182.

Also:

Without trade, destitute of communications, and visited more and more each session with fevers, Sunbury, for nearly thirty years, has ceased to exist save in name. Its squares, lots, streets, and lanes have been converted into a corn field. Even the bricks of the ancient chimneys have been carted away. No sails whiten the blue waters of Midway river save those of a miserable little craft employed by its owner in conveying terrapins to Savannah. The old cemetery is so overgrown with trees and brambles that the graves of the dead can scarcely be located after the most diligent search. Fort Morris is enveloped in a wild growth of cedars and myrtle. Academy, churches, market, billiard room, wharves, store-houses, residences, all gone; only the bold Bermuda covered bluff and the beautiful river with the green island slumbering in its embrace to remind us of this lost town. A stranger pausing here would find no trace of the past once full of life and importance, but now existent only in the skeleton memories which redeem place and name from that oblivion which sooner or later is the common lot of all things human.<sup>53</sup>

Unlike Baker, who offers no documentation at all for possible Civil War activity at Fort Morris, Jones brought some additional qualifications to the job of writing a history of Fort Morris and Sunbury that would make him a very believable authority on any possible Civil War activity at Fort Morris. C. C. Jones, Jr. was a Confederate veteran who authored intensive studies of the Civil War in Georgia. One essay carefully compares the effects of various types of bombardments as they affect

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 221.

masonry and earthen fortifications on the Georgia coast.<sup>54</sup>

Jones had the additional advantage of knowing the area before, during, and after the Civil War as a native of Liberty County where Sunbury is located.<sup>55</sup>

It would be hard to imagine a more awkward position for a historian who was a Confederate veteran and former resident to be in than to address his own people, also Confederate veterans and their families at a public re-dedication ceremony in the county where Sunbury is located and for that historian to incorrectly identify a local Civil War fort as a Revolutionary earthwork. If the site Jones identifies<sup>56</sup> as Fort Morris had been built as a Confederate earthwork at Sunbury, C. C. Jones, Jr. would have memorialized it in one of his many essays and public speeches on the "War Between the States."

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<sup>54</sup>Charles C. Jones, Jr. Military Lessons Inculcated on the Coast of Georgia During the Confederate War, (Augusta, Ga., Chronicle Printing Establishment, 1883).

<sup>55</sup>James Stacy. History of the Midway Congregational Church, Liberty County, Georgia, (Newnan, Georgia, S. W. Murray, Printer) 1899, pp. 131-132.

<sup>56</sup>C. C. Jones, Jr.



### Brief Analysis of the Agnew Report

The Agnew report (see Appendix 2) is an attempt to refute Jones' identification of the Revolutionary Period Fort Morris with the existing Fort at Sunbury through an evaluation of selected statements from military records and correspondence from the 18th and 19th centuries.

Agnew bases his primary conclusion that the existing fortification is not Fort Morris on the following points:

1. Three pieces of correspondence related to surveys of the Georgia coast by U. S. Army engineers concerning coastal defenses of Georgia during the period 1808 to 1815. On the basis of this correspondence Agnew concludes that the existing fortification was built between the fall of 1814 and late February of 1815. These three pieces of correspondence are:

- a. Alexander Macomb, 1 November, 1808, letter to the Secretary of War (see Appendix 2, p. 11).
- b. Captain S. McRee, Savannah, Georgia, August 12th, 1812, letter to Col. Swift (see Appendix 2, pp. 11-12).
- c. Lieut. Gadsen, Charleston, S.C., June 1, 1815, letter to Col. Swift, (see Appendix 2, p. 12-13).

2. Agnew contends that a fort in the location occupied

by the present fort may not have been necessary during the Revolution because gally boats were available to stave off the British Navy and protect the town. Agnew offers no documentary evidence for the exclusive defense of Sunbury by American gallies.

3. Agnew combines selected testimony from the court martial trial of General Robert Howe, Commander of the American Forces in Georgia during the Battle for Savannah in December 1778 with a selection from a letter by the British General, Augustine Provost describing how his forces took Sunbury in early January 1779 to prove that Fort Morris was too large a fort, (if it existed), to be identified with the fortification in existence today (see Appendix 2, p. 4-5, for Howe testimony, and p. 5-6 for Augustine Provost's letter).

Agnew's Use of U. S. Military Correspondence for 1808-1815

Agnew's rejection of the existing fortifications as the site of Fort Morris is largely dependent on a letter written from a Lieut. Gadsen of the U. S. Engineers to General Swift concerning the conditions of certain fortifications in South Carolina and Georgia. The letter is

dated June 1, 1815 at Charleston, S.C.,<sup>57</sup> nearly six months after the Treaty of Ghent ending the war. Since Agnew's conclusions regarding Fort Morris are built around this correspondence, Agnew's interpretation of what he regards as conclusive proof for rejecting the existing fort as a Revolutionary earthwork and the critical portion of the letter concerning the fort are given below:

The most "damning" evidence concerning the construction date of the present "Fort Morris", and that which indicates that the site may not have been a Revolutionary War fortification, is revealed in the engineering reports concerning coastal fortifications prior to, during, and after the War of 1812. Two of the reports, Macomb's (1808) and McRee's (1812) do not mention any fortification existing near Sunbury. Finally, Lt. Gadsen, on reporting on conditions of certain fortifications in South Carolina and Georgia in 1815, states:

....By the voluntary labor of the neighboring planters, a work has been commenced the last fall and very nearly completed on the return of peace. It stands on a commanding position enfilading the channel surrounded on two sides by a marsh *in the third by a ravine, and approachable by a land force on the rear only.* I would recommend that it be completed and its profile strengthened by widening and deepening the ditch and forming with earth a high glacis.

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<sup>57</sup>Lieut. Gadsen. June 1, 1815, Charleston, S.C., letter to General Swift, (Photocopy in Historic Preservation Section files, Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources), quoted in Tom Agnew, "A Study of the Fortifications at Fort Morris in Sunbury, Georgia." This correspondence is fully quoted in Agnew's report (see Appendix 2, p. 12).



Its figure is irregular, (an attempt at a star fort) and though not approved of, yet as the fort is so near being completed any additional strength gained by an alteration of its form, would hardly warrant the consequent increase of expense. . .

Lt. Gadsen's report reveals that the inhabitants of the Sunbury area built a small fort in the fall of 1814. Gadsen's description, location and form indicate that the present "Fort Morris was constructed during the War of 1812.

From the evidence pertaining to "Fort Morris" that we have, I have drawn the conclusion that "our" site is not a Revolutionary war site.<sup>58</sup>

The primary weight of the Agnew conclusion as quoted above rests on a literal interpretation of Lieut. James Gadsen's reported statement, ". . .that a work has been commenced the last fall and very nearly completed on the returns of peace. . ."<sup>59</sup>

The most obvious consideration regarding Lieut. Gadsen's statement is whether "new" work had been "commenced" at an "old" fortification. Gadsen's letter is dated June 1, 1815, at Charleston, South Carolina. He states that "a work has been commenced the last fall and very nearly completed on the return of peace."<sup>60</sup> The U. S. and British Commissioners signed the peace treaty at Ghent on December 24, 1814, and the "return of peace" was made in Georgia sometime in late February 1815.

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<sup>58</sup> Agnew, op. cit.

<sup>59</sup> Lieut. Gadsen. Letter, June 1, 1815, to General Swift, op. cit.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

Several facts in Gadsen's report allow the author to make the assumption that Gadsen was not present at the time the work was "commenced." These facts are:

1. Gadsen does not specify the date that the work was "commenced" in any other than a very general way which does not even specify the month.

2. The work was not approved by the U. S. Corps of Engineers.

3. Gadsen did not report the existence of the fort until June 1, 1815, more than four months after the war had finally ended.

4. Gadsen, according to his description, would have built the fort in another way.

Gadsen's description of the location and form of the fort do agree with the location and form of the present fortification. However, Gadsen's description of the location and form are also congruent with the "star fort" illustrated on the Campbell map of 1778 (see Figures 6 and 7), and the location is identical to that indicated by the Bacon survey plat of 1786 (see Figure 5) as well as the Stuart-Debrahm map of 1781 (see Figure 6). In addition to the fact that Gadsen was not even there to see what commenced, his June 1st, 1815 report, like the earlier report from Captain W. McRee to Swift, dated Savannah, August 16, 1812, may well have been secondhand

information based on a casual conversation:

. . .I have had some conversations (and the subject of your letter) with Mr. Elliot of Sunbury a gentleman of information and representative of that place in the State Legislature. He informs me, -- the inhabitants are erecting two batteries and have two mines and some other pieces of smaller caliber either mounted or (moving) -- but no ammunition. . .<sup>61</sup>

According to an entry in the "Weekly Register" detailing "Major Swift's assignment in Georgia and South Carolina, the object of the survey that was done was to survey existing fortifications:

Major Swift, of the United States Engineers, has received orders from the war department to visit the fortifications in Georgia, South Carolina and Virginia, to direct proper repairs and alterations, and to order supplies of all necessary ordinance and stores for war, to repair to Washington, and report on his proceedings.<sup>62</sup>

Major Swift, whose assignment in Georgia, South Carolina and Virginia began in 1812, did not find out about fortifications at Sunbury until six months after

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<sup>61</sup>Captain W. McRee, 12th August, 1812, Savannah, Georgia, letter to Major Swift. Cited by Agnew, op. cit., pp. 11-12 (see Appendix 2).

<sup>62</sup>The Weekly Register, Saturday, April 25, 1812, Vol. II, No. 34, Baltimore, Md., p. 131, (Printed and published by H. Niles, Walter Street, near the Merchants' Coffee-House). Bound volumes of this paper are available at Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia.



the war was over in 1815. No work that would alter the form of the fort was recommended by Lieut. Gadsen in June 1815.

. . .yet as the fort is so near being completed any additional strength gained by an alteration of its form would hardly warrant the consequent increase of expense."<sup>63</sup>

C. C. Jones, Jr.'s statement is explicit in terms of what happened at the "old" fortification during the 1812-1815 period:

Although by resolutions adopted on the 18th of November, 1812, and the 12th of November, 1813, the Legislature provided for stationing troops in the counties of Bryan, Liberty, McIntosh, Glynn, and Camden, for the protection of the sea-coast of Georgia, it does not appear that any permanent detail was made for Sunbury. The fort, however, was again placed in tolerable condition, the planters furnishing the labor requisite for cleaning out the ditch, strengthening the parapet, and mounting such guns as there remained and were deemed trustworthy. A few light pieces were obtained from Savannah and added to the armament. Such gun carriages as were manufactured in the county were made by Jonathan Goulding, of Taylor's Creek. Not a shot, however, was fired from the fort during the War of 1812-1815.<sup>64</sup>

Jones does not document the information contained in the above quote. However, Steven Baker did obtain a copy of an unsigned typescript concerning the refitting of Fort Morris during the 1812-1815 war with England.

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<sup>63</sup>Gadsen, op. cit.

<sup>64</sup>Jones, op. cit., The Dead Towns of Georgia, p. 218.

This material quoted from below and included as Appendix 4 to this thesis<sup>65</sup> is totally supportive of C. C. Jones' information concerning the 1812-1815 refitting of the "old" Revolutionary fortification known as Fort *Morris*:

One day after the barges had left and the town left without any protection, a schooner was noticed approaching the village pursued by a sloop. The citizens were again thrown into consternation, and the school dismissed. The old Customhouse boat Trickum was launched and John Webb with some others went to see what was the matter. Both vessels had grounded within a few hundred yards of each other. It proved that the schooner had mistaken the sloop for a British barge and she was making for port. They were both trading vessels.

The citizens or rather the planters of the county were called upon to send a certain portion of their male slaves to work upon the old fort and put it in thorough repair. Several of the old cannons were scribed up and mounted on new stocks. I remember well the carriages on which they were to be placed passing my father's plantation. They were built by Jonathan Goulding on Taylor's Creek. Before the fort was finished a company was sent on from Point

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<sup>65</sup>Author unknown, "Reminiscences of the Past." This typescript copy is probably from the Midway records. This item along with several old newspaper clippings were obtained by Steven Baker in Liberty County in 1970 and subsequently were made available to the author. Most were dated in the 1870's. A search in the files at the Midway museum in Midway, and the Liberty County Courthouse at Hinesville should establish the author and date (see Appendix 4). Also see author's footnote 79.



Peter near St. Mary's to occupy it. They came round in two vessels and there being a Swedish brig in port at the time taking in cotton it gave the old place quite a commercial appearance.

On landing of the company at Carter's Warf the school boys were all there and perfectly delighted. Captain Warley had the company formed in line with ten drummers and fifers ahead, when they struck up

Don't you hear what your Captain say,  
Strike your tent and march away.

This is the way the school boys interpreted it. They then marched to an old yellow house near the fort and pitched their tents around it.

The smallpox broke out at the barracks soon after the arrival of the company and the old drummer Hutchinson and several others died with it. There was a general vaccination among the citizens at this time, myself among the number.

During the war the old village would be enlivened occasionally by the volunteer companies of the county. Among them the old troop, two infantry companies and sometimes by the militia of the county.

There was no period of the war but what Sunbury was garrisoned by troops. Towards the close of it state troops were sent to it.<sup>66</sup>

On September 17th, 1875, Dr. James Holmes, who practiced medicine in Darien, Georgia was educated at Yale and was born and raised in Sunbury, published his recollections of the 1812-1815 war in the Darien Timber Gazette under the pseudonym of "Dr. Bullie's Notes"<sup>67</sup> (see Appendix 5).

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

<sup>67</sup>Dr. James Holmes. "Dr. Bullies' Notes." Darien Timber Gazette. September 17, 1875 (see Appendix 5).



The following extract supports both C. C. Jones, Jr.'s account as well as the unidentified Midway Record typescript of conditions in Sunbury during the 1812-1815 period:

. . .An extraordinary duel which took place in the quiet little village of Sunbury, Liberty County, towards the close of the War of 1812, and also the consternation and confusion of the people on approach of a fleet of gunboats.

During the embargo our Government sent out a fleet of barges to patrol the inland navigation between Charleston and St. Mary's, and six of them had headquarters at Sunbury, it was commanded by Commodore C. F. Grandenson, and it was the arrival of their vessels that disturbed the people of the village, there was a regiment of militia at the fort, and the Colonel charged up and down the bay, taking a bird's eye view of the supposed enemy, giving orders, and sending his aides full tilt here *and there, hurrying off the women and children*, and two of them ran against each other in turning a corner, both unhorsed and one much injured, all the fighting men were ordered to the front; the school boys went up into the third story of the academy. . .soon, however, the foremost barge being within gun shot of the fort, rounded to, and ran up the stars and stripes and came to anchor. This movement was followed by all the others. The flag was saluted at the fort by a volley from a dozen guns of large caliber, that shook the houses to their foundation, the windows in the academy were shattered and fell with a crash; the boys thinking the house was coming down, rushed downstairs and out, tumbling over each other in their flight. One poor fellow had his arm broken, and this with the injury to the Colonel's aide were the only accidents of the day.

When the real character of the fleet was known, the inhabitants returned to the village, and the officers received every attention. . . .<sup>68</sup>

The closeness in similarity between the information contained in "Dr. Bullie's Notes" and the unidentified script from the Midway Records obtained by Baker indicates that Dr. Holmes may have been responsible for both.

In support of Gasden's report of June, 1815, Agnew states that neither of the two earlier reports of Alex Macomb's, dated November 1st, 1808, or Captain W. McRee, dated Savannah, August 16th, 1812, mention pre-existing earthworks at Sunbury.<sup>69</sup>

Fort Morris is today unrecognizable in the summer-time at a distance of even 75 yards due to the dense growth of trees and brush. Jones noted this in his visits to the site: ". . . Completely overgrown by cedars, myrtles, and vines, its presence would not be suspected, even at a short remove, by those unacquainted with the locality."<sup>70</sup>

Alex Macomb's letter dated Sunbury, 1808, states that his inspection of the town and vicinity did not locate

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<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>Agnew, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>70</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 182.

". . .any one position that was advantageous from the battery proposed. . ."71

Macomb's recommendations were for mobile carriage guns that could be moved according to the situation.<sup>72</sup> Macomb in his failure to realize the defensive advantages of a battery on the point where the river just below the south end of Sunbury curves out to the sound between Ossabaw and St. Catherine's Island failed to understand what most military planners including General Robert Howe in 1776 and Gadsen in 1815 did recognize. Sunbury's best defense from naval assault and/or armed invasion from the sea was in keeping enemy ships from approaching Sunbury, and the best place to check enemy ships was in the bend of the river below the town. Howe is explicit on the point:

Charleston, S.C., Sept. 20, 1776

. . .I think Sunbury a place so important that it ought by all means to be maintained, in view

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<sup>71</sup>Alexander Macomb, 1 November, 1808, letter to the Secretary of War. Included on p. 11 of the Agnew Report (see Appendix 2). This letter is a permanent item in the Buell Collection of Historical Documents concerning records of the Corps of Engineers from 1801-19 and can be located in the National Archives Microfilm Publications as microcopy #417, Roll I, #184.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid.



of a good bar, from which ships may reach the town in an hour, opening a passage into every part of your country, with a fine harbor before it, a situation for troops both comfortable and secure, and in the neighborhood of many islands abounding in stock; it cannot but become an object to the enemy, should they ever attack you at all; for I persuade myself that they could station themselves at no place so beneficial to them, or injurious to you. All this militates strongly against suffering them to take possession of it, which by a battery built upon a point near the town that commands the passage up the river, and by some works thrown up in town may, I am persuaded, be easily effected. . .<sup>73</sup>

All or most of Macomb's survey was apparently done from a boat as indicated in Captain McRee's letter of 1812:

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<sup>73</sup>General Robert Howe, Charleston, South Carolina, September 20th, 1776. Letter to Button Gwinnett, Governor of Georgia. The first reference to this letter was found in an unsigned manuscript collections, Athens, Georgia. In the manuscript reference was made to records deposited with the Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta. The author at the suggestion of the unknown author of the Sunbury manuscript searched the Jenkins photostat file on Button Gwinnett deposited with the State Archives, and found this letter among the hundreds of items assembled by Charles Francis Jenkins, when he researched his biography of Gwinnett. The Jenkins biography is entitled Button Gwinnett: Signer of the Declaration of Independence. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1926. Edition limited to 1001 copies.

I recollect a final hammock or island between the town and bar which Col. Macomb and myself examined in 1808 and found to have an excellent command of the channel which is here very narrow -- but is a site for an open battery -- the objection against it is conclusive. It has only a water communication with the mainland and is quite beyond the reach of either protection or support.

For maritime defense -- when (----) will act out their use. I am decidedly in favor of the use of using artillery on traveling carriages to be protected earth (----) at the different proper points of action; and I am acquainted with no sites uniting advantages, better (situated) to insure success to this description of defenses than Sunbury. . . .  
(signed) W. McRee<sup>74</sup>

If a defense of Sunbury had been exclusively carried out according to Macomb and McRee's recommendations, only traveling carriage guns would have been used. These would have been placed on the bluff at opposite ends of the town at Sunbury and not on the point commanding the river some 1000 feet south of the town. Neither McRee nor Macomb mentions the point of land below the town as a defensible position, but in the McRee correspondence written four years after the Macomb-McRee visit to Sunbury in 1808 (McRee's information for the 1812 letter is based on secondhand information, not a personal visit), McRee makes a special point of describing an alternative place, i.e., an island,

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<sup>74</sup>McRee, op. cit.



for a battery that he and Macomb had visited four years before. This site, some seven miles below Sunbury, is rejected by McRee because it is not connected with the mainland. Had Macomb and McRee visited the Fort Morris site, they would have found most of the defensive advantages that made the island site attractive while the island's disadvantages would not have been a factor:

The town is open to the sea, (---which is) about seven miles distant, it is the healthiest spot in its vicinity and is the resort of the neighboring planters during the sickly months-- It is situated on a sand bluff about 20 feet higher than the water -- of earth batteries may be erected in abundance and (hopefully) cheap. If fixed an permanent works might be built, two at least are necessary one at (south) end of the town; as a vessel that would succeed in approaching would be at liberty to lay secure from the fire of any single battery.<sup>75</sup>

Neither the Macomb nor the McRee letters offers any support to the notion that Fort Morris did not exist prior to the fall of 1814, other than the fact that they fail to mention it. There is good circumstantial evidence in these two pieces of correspondence that neither Macomb nor McRee ever set foot on the Fort Morris site. These two men may well have done nothing more than ascend and descend the Midway river in 1808 stopping long

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<sup>75</sup>Ibid.



enough in Sunbury for Macomb to post his letter where it would have been picked up by stage and carried on to its destination.<sup>76</sup> For that matter, Macomb may have handed his letter to someone in a boat ascending the Midway to Sunbury while he and McRee, who had been at the "final island" before passing the bar, recrossed the bar and headed up or down the coast.<sup>77</sup>

Although the area was not inspected in the 1971 survey, there is a strong possibility that the "final hammock or island between the town and bar," is the same site noted for cedar hammock by Coulter:

Tabby fortifications for Sunbury, in Georgia, were mentioned in a report of the committee on fortifications in the "Journal of the House of Assembly of Nov. 11, 1762." It stated "that at a Point called Cedar Hammock, about eight miles below Sunbury there is a House Twenty feet in Length and Twelve feet in width. There are also upon the same point some Remains of a Battery of Tabby Work which Mr. Adam Bosomworth had agreed with the Commissioners of fortifications to build but before the same could be finished it was Overwhelmed and washed away by the Sea a strong North East Wind setting the Sea in to a very great Height."<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup>n. Sunbury was a postal station on the U. S. mail overland route in 1808.

<sup>77</sup>McRee, op. cit.

<sup>78</sup>Candler, ed., Colonial Records, Vol. XIII, p. 723. Cited by Morton Coulter, Georgia's Disputed Ruins (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1937), p. 70.

In summary of the Macomb, McRee and Gasden letters, the following points are made:

1. There is not a description of the point below Sunbury in the Macomb and McRee correspondence.
2. There is and would have been a section of marsh between the existing site and the river (see Figure 3) that may well have discouraged Macomb and McRee from landing their craft. The fort, according to all available accounts, was probably overgrown in 1808 just as it was in 1878 and the combination of poor visibility as described by Jones combined with the intervening marsh would have been enough to both discourage a landing and to keep McRee and Macomb from noticing the earlier fortification. In addition there was a very destructive hurricane in 1804 at Sunbury and this may have contributed logs, brush and other debris that may have accumulated against the bluff in the bend of the

river and further reduced visibility from a boat.<sup>79</sup> The possible circumstances surrounding the failure of Macomb and McRee to visit the point below the town where Fort Morris is located could be expanded almost indefinitely. The reason may have been as simple as an overriding fear of snake bite or an increased need to satisfy a man's thirst as the docks of Sunbury came into view when their boat rounded the bend in the river.

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<sup>79</sup> Initialed but unsigned typescript in Collections of the Midway Museum, Midway, Georgia, entitled "1824, An Account of the Hurricane of the above year in and Around Sunbury," by J.S. The author of this document states that he was born three months after the "Big Hurricane," that occurred on the 8th day of September, 1804. The Midway Church Records, compiled by Stacy, record but one birth that relates to the initials J.S. for the year 1804. The first name is not given. This entry reads "Child--to John and Amarintha Stevens, December." (see Stacy, Midway Church Records, p. 213, Vol. I. This hurricane account is included by the author as Appendix 6. Possibly the unsigned typescript cited by the author as "Reminiscences of the Past," an important source of the data concerning the refitting of the "Old Fort" during the 1812-15 War was also written by J. Stevens. The descriptive language is similar in both typescripts and the observer of the events described in "Reminiscences of the Past" indicates in the typescript that he was a child in the period 1812-15. The child would have been about ten years old at the time.



3. According to Jones, the guns in Fort Morris were not mounted like field pieces on traveling carriages during the Revolution, but were mounted "on barbette, without transverses."<sup>80</sup> This meant that the guns were mounted on a platform protected by earth in a fashion that would have allowed them to be fired over a parapet. Seven gun embrasures were still visible when Jones visited the site in the 1870's.<sup>82</sup> These embrasures, as described in Chapter II of this thesis, were still visible in 1971. Jones' information, based on his observations at the site, are supported by the distinct division between two types of guns described for Sunbury by General Howe's Adjutant General just prior to the fall of Fort Morris in January of 1779.

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<sup>80</sup>Jones, op. cit., p

<sup>81</sup>Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language. S. V. "barbette."

<sup>82</sup>Jones, op. cit., p.

"The Commanding Officer of artillery at Sunbury will immediately have the Cannon in the Fort and the Field Pieces put in proper order for service."<sup>83</sup>

A gun battery with guns mounted "en barbette" would have required a heavy parapet such as exists at the present site.

4. Gadsen's description of the 1814 fort is in agreement with both the form and the location of the 1778 Fort Morris site illustrated on the Campbell map.

5. Gadsen was not present when the work was "commenced" at Fort Morris. He is therefore not an eye-witness to the commencement of a new fortification. This leaves Agnew's most "damning" evidence resting on a purely literal interpretation of Gadsen's reported use of the word "commenced." There is nothing implicit within Gadsen's statement that would require the reader to believe that a "new" work had been commenced. He simply states that "a work has been commenced."

6. The 1812 McRee correspondence was not based on anything more than the earlier 1808 trip to the Sunbury area by McRee and Macomb and a casual conversation with a legislator from Sunbury in 1812. There is no evidence at all that Macomb and McRee visited the point some 1000 feet below Sunbury where Fort Morris is located.

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<sup>83</sup>John Grimke. "Order Book of John Grimke," The South Carolina Historical Magazine, Vol. XIV, p. 47.

7. Prior to 1814 the point below the town where Fort Morris is currently located was well known for its defensive potential. The 1776 Howe correspondence confirms that it was appreciated in the Revolution, and Gadsen certainly appreciated the defensive position of the fort in 1815. Against this obvious military potential for the location of the present Fort Morris there is the fact that Macomb and McRee were looking for such a place in 1808 by boat and could not find any alternatives but the bluffs in front of Sunbury.

8. Agnew does not refer to the information that Jones provides in his Sunbury essay concerning events at Sunbury during the 1812-15 war. Nor does Agnew examine this information in terms of other supporting sources, including the Powell map, and the Stuart-Debrahm map that support Jones' account.

9. As described in Chapter Six of this thesis all artifacts found in the fort during the 1971 excavation dated to Colonial and Revolutionary periods. The absence of 1812-15 material confirms Jones' reports of a lack of activity at the site in the 1812-15 period.

10. Agnew does not refer to the results of the 1971 excavation at Fort Morris.



11. The best documentary evidence available consists of three Revolutionary period maps. These maps are conclusive proof when taken with the other evidence presented by Jones, Gadsen and the author that an old fortification was simply revetted.

#### Agnew's Galley Argument

Agnew states in his conclusion that:

"Fort Morris" today has been classified as a coastal fortification. Its primary function by location would have been to protect Sunbury from attack by sea, not from land. During the Revolution, Sunbury had several gallies stationed near for defense from naval attack. The fort may not have been necessary during the Revolution.<sup>84</sup>

The co-existence of the fort and the gallies in the final and conclusive attack on Fort Morris in January 1779 is indisputably proven by the fact that the gallies at Sunbury took refuge "under" the guns of the battery. Logically for the gallies to be "under" the guns of the battery, the fort had to be in an elevated situation next to the river. This information is contained in a letter from Major General Moultrie to Colonel Pinckney written in early January of 1779. He states:

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<sup>84</sup>Agnew, op. cit., p. 15.

I fear we have lost Sunbury and the two gallies that took shelter under the battery, last Thursday or Friday as we heard a very heavy cannonade from that quarter. The officer commanding had about 120 continentals and some inhabitants within the fort, refused to evacuate the post; notwithstanding his receiving position orders for that purpose he, Don Quixote-like, thought he was strong enough to withstand the whole force the British had in Georgia, for which, I think, he deserved to be hanged.<sup>85</sup>

Hugh McCall, who was a Revolutionary soldier in Georgia and who gathered much of the original data that has since been lost concerning Georgia's role in the Revolution, is generally accepted as the foremost authority on Georgia's military activities in the Revolution. McCall published the first history of Georgia in 1811, and it is in this account that the earliest and most complete description of what happened at Sunbury in January 1779 is given.<sup>86</sup> The following account supports both the existence of Fort Morris and the gallies that took part in the action, and forms the basic body of data for

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<sup>85</sup>William Moultrie. Memoirs of the American Revolution So Far As It Related to the States of North and South Carolina and Georgia. Vol. I. (New York, printed by David Longworth, for the author). 1802. Reprinted by the New York Times and Arno Press, 1968, p. 259.

<sup>86</sup>Hugh McCall. The History of Georgia Containing Brief Sketches of the Most Remarkable Events up to the Present Day. Savannah: Seymour and Williams, 1811-16. 2 vols. (Reprinted, Atlanta, 1909, 1 vol.).

C. C. Jones, Jr.'s account.<sup>87</sup>

On the first notice of the arrival of the transports (conveying Colonel Campbell's command), off the coast of Georgia, General Provost (then in Florida) marched; and embarked in boats, two thousand men, consisting of artillery, infantry, loyalists, and Indians. On the 6th of January, (1779) that part of his army which moved by water was landed on Colonel's island, seven miles south of Sunbury, about ten o'clock in the morning; and Provost with the light infantry, marched and took possession of the town early on the ensuing day. Two American gallies and armed sloop cannonaded the enemy, but with little effect. The following day the main body of the enemy arrived. Every exertion was made to prevent the landing of the cannon and mortars near the town, by the fire from the gallies and the fort. On the night 8th they took advantage of the low tide to pass behind a marsh island opposite to the fort, with a few of their boats containing cannon, howitzers, and mortars, and landed them above the town and placed them on batteries previously prepared.<sup>88</sup>

Jones, in his treatment of McCall's description quoted above, notes that the marsh island that became a screen for the British boats at low tide, "divides Midway river into two channels known respectively as the front and back rivers."<sup>89</sup> McCall notes that the fort was opposite

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<sup>87</sup>Hugh McCall. History of Georgia, Vol. II, p. 177. Quoted in Jones, The Dead Towns of Georgia, pp. 195-196.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., (quoted in Jones, The Dead Towns of Georgia).

<sup>89</sup>Jones, op. cit.



the marsh island.<sup>90</sup> The present Fort Morris site is in the exact location described by Hugh McCall in 1811 some four years before Lieut. Gadsen made his report.<sup>91</sup> McCall's description of the location and Jones' 1878 map<sup>92</sup> are in agreement with the location of Fort Morris on the Campbell map which shows the fort opposite the marsh island (see Figures 3, 6, and 7).

#### Agnew's Small Fort-Large Fort Argument

General Robert Howe was in command of the Georgia forces when Savannah fell to the British in December, 1778. Sunbury fell in early January, 1779, and Howe was subsequently accused of an injudicious use of the forces at his disposal resulting the capture of a large portion of the troops and equipment under his command at Savannah and Sunbury. Largely based on the following selections from Howe's court martial testimony and British General Augustine Provost's account of the action at Sunbury, Agnew came to the conclusion that the existing fort at Sunbury was too small to be identified as Fort Morris.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup>McCall, op. cit., p. 195.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., Gadsen letter, June 1, 1815.

<sup>92</sup>Jones, op. cit.

<sup>93</sup>Agnew, op. cit.

. . .I have confessed that I ordered the garrison at Sunbury to evacuate the fort, and I will add that I was so anxious to have it done, that my first order was written with a pencil, on horse-back, in the field, and on retreat. Fearful that this order might miscarry, and still anxious for the fate of the garrison, upon a halt we made about eight miles from the town, I, in another letter more explicit in its contents, repeated the order for evacuation, and directed, that if the stores could not be removed they should be destroyed, and the cannon spiked. This letter, and another to the same purpose not an hour afterwards, were dispatched by officers. Some, if not all, were received, but the major who commanded there delayed obeying the order until he heard from me again, in consequence of which he and his party fell into the enemy's hands a few days afterwards. How this order, had it been wrong in itself, since it was not obeyed, could contribute to sacrifice the capital and the State, let those who framed the charge explain. I think it appears plain that nothing very erroneous in my conduct has happened, When, notwithstanding a strong desire to have me censured, charges so futile and ill-grounded are exhibited against me. It would have been horrid in me to have suffered a garrison to have remained in a work too extensive for five times the number of men, ill-constructed, unfinished, without casemates, and without the least probability of relieving it. Had I done so, and been arraigned for that, I should have stood in this presence with very different sensations than now I do; nor would I so justly incurred the censure of my own heart to please the executive authority of the whole world, though every individual which composed it had been a Colonel Commandant of Militia. Major Lane, who commanded the fort, had recently been in it second in command, when an attack upon it by the enemy had been gallantly repulsed. The Magistrates and citizens of the town, hoping to defend it again, solicited, implored, and beset him to remain in it. Combined with these, he was in the bloom of youth, and in the hey-day of blood and spirits - an enthusiastic ardour for fame, which it is better for an officer sometimes to be misled by than never to feel, and which, tho' it may now and then induce excess, it is at worst by the excess of a good quality. All these prevailed upon him to delay an execution of his orders, and he had his punishment in his fault. The



crossing Savannah river very early after the retreat I have also confessed. Some of the reasons that operated upon me must be my defense; half of them, I pledge myself will be a sufficient justification. . .<sup>94</sup>

Agnew combines Howe's statement concerning fortification with some of the details from Provost's description of the defeat of the American garrison at Fort Morris.

Savannah 19th, January 1779

Sir

The many difficulties attending the progress of his Majesty's Troops from Florida such as the impracticability of the Roads, the deficiency in point of Boats and craft to convey the Troops and Artillery, the total want of Provisions have not prevented our progress to this place, these difficulties were surmounted with Patience and Chearfulness.

On the 7th Instant the Troops that came by Water landed seven miles from Sunbury, just at the very time when the parties of Horse and Rangers had arrived to the neighbourhood of that Town, Lt. Col. Provost who had marched that night, with the loss of one man only expected the Surrounding of the place and did not quit his station notwithstanding the fire of two galleys an armed Schooner and the Fort, until the rest of the Troops arrived; the Artillery could not come the same way the Troops did, as it was necessary to march under cover of the night close under the Fort, the Artillery therefore was sent round to New Port River and with great

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<sup>94</sup> Major General Robert Howe. Testimony from "The Trial of Major General Howe, Dec., 1781," Collections of the New York Historical Society for the Year 1779, Vol. XII (New York: printed for the New York Historical Society, 1880), pp. 298-299, quoted by Tom Agnew in "A Study of the Fortifications at Fort Morris in Sunbury, Georgia From the Revolutionary War to the War of 1812." (Unpublished paper distributed by Ga. Dept. of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Section) Jan. 11, 1974, pp. 4-5.



difficulties and (8) Inch howitzer and two Ryals, were brought on the 9th and begun to fire the next morning; before evening the same day the Fort was obliged to surrender to discretion being then only a hundred forty yards from the Body of the place; their intended retreat on board their Galleys being prevented, we had possession of the gate and entered the Fort next morning, twenty one pieces of Artillery with stores of Provisions two pair of Colours, and two hundred & twelve Prisoners including the officers fell into our hands; the Galleys had made Their escape but thinking from some preparations on board of some vessels that we had taken and a number of boats that they saw manned, that we intended to attack them, they set fire to them and made their escape to sea - the Crews are since brought Prisoners into Savannah having been and by an armed vessel.

Our want of any kind of assistance from the Naval department prevented us from taking them and made us loose four or five days in Sunbury as we were obliged for the security of our Boats to send them a great ways around and had no horses or Carts till a few days after to bring the stores and baggage.

The Troops marched to this place and reached it on the 17th and as soon as they can possibly be provided with a few necessities of which they stand in the utmost need - I shall endeavor to improve the advantages his Majesty's Troops have hither to obtained - for the particulars of Lt. Col. Campbell's success of I beg leave to refer your Excellency to his own account of the same as well as the disposition he had made for the security of the Posts formed on Savannah River previous to my arrival; the enemy having since collected about 500 men in Burk's County I have already given orders to intercept them and sent a party of horse well acquainted with that part of Georgia to endeavor to surprise them.

Major General Lincoln is encamped in force on the Carolina side of Savannah River at Purisburgh, under Protection of which two Galleys are stationed and prevent navigation of the river - from the numbers already collected there and those said to be going to their assistance, every Possible advantage might be expected from an attack on the Coast, particularly if the inhabitants of the Frontiers evince by joining us the loyalty

and zeal which they profess for government.

I transmit<sup>95</sup>

Agnew's interpretation of these two documents is as follows:

Was the original "Fort Morris" a larger work than is prevalent now? General Robert Howe describes the fort at Sunbury as "a work too extensive for five times the number of men, ill-constructed, unfinished, without casemates, and without the least probability of relieving it." The present "Fort Morris" site would be crowded if it had 200 men, much less 1,000 men. Lt. Col. Provost stated the following relating to the capture of Sunbury: "We had possession of the gate and entered the Fort next morning, twenty one pieces of Artillery with stores of Provisions two pair of Colours, and two hundred and twelve Prisoners." If Provost captured the entrance of the present "Fort Morris," he would not have waited until morning to take the remainder of the fort, he would have captured the entire fort.<sup>96</sup>

Following the argument quoted above, Agnew makes the only reference to the Campbell map (no other maps are referenced in Agnew's report) that is made in his report. He states: "There is a strong probability that there may have been a palisade around Sunbury when it capitu-

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<sup>95</sup>General Augustine Provost. Letter to Sir Henry Clinton, General and Commander-in-Chief of all his Majesty's Troops in North America, dated January 19, 1779. From microcopy in the Carlton Papers, South Carolina Archives, Columbia, S.C., quoted by Agnew, "Study of Fortifications," pp. 5-7.

<sup>96</sup>Agnew, op. cit., p. 14.



lated to the British. (Refer to Campbell's map following the "Conclusion.")<sup>97</sup>

If Agnew is willing to accept the "strong probability" of an outer palisade as reported by the author to Agnew's division of the State Government concerning the importance of the outer fortifications indicated on the Campbell map,<sup>98</sup> then he should also be willing to consider the equally strong probability of an existing "star fort" on the inside of the outer fortification since it is also depicted on this same map. Agnew totally ignores the fact that this four bastioned redoubt, or "star fort," that closely resembles Gadsen's description of the Fort Morris site in 1815<sup>99</sup> exists on the 1778 Campbell map in

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<sup>97</sup>Ibid., pp. 14-15.

<sup>98</sup>Interdepartmental Correspondence from Gordon Midgett, Staff Archaeologist, Georgia Historical Commission to Mary Jewett, Director, March 26, 1973. This letter reported the author's discovery of the small illustration on Lieut. Col. Campbell's 1778 map of Sunbury. The primary content of this correspondence concerns the necessity for taking the outer palisade or entrenchments about the town into consideration when the State of Georgia is planning future land acquisitions at Sunbury. The same information was forwarded by letter in 1973 by the author to Mr. Roy Wood, land acquisitions, Heritage Trust Program, Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

<sup>99</sup>Gadsen, op. cit.



the same location that Hugh McCall describes it in his 1811 description of the battle,<sup>100</sup> and in the identical location noted on the Powell map as well as the Stewart-Debrahm map. Howe's reference quoted above to ". . . a work too extensive for five times the number of men, ill-constructed, unfinished, without casemates, and without the least probability of relieving it. . . ."<sup>101</sup> most likely refers to the outer defense at Sunbury as depicted on the Campbell map.

On December the 8th, 1778, less than a month before Sunbury was attacked by Provost, Howe wrote the following to General Moultrie:

Sunbury, Dec. 8th, 1778

Dear Sir,

It is impossible for me to give an account of the confused, perplexed way in which I found matters in this state upon my arrival; nor has it been in my power to get them, as yet in a better train. I am sorry to inform you, that this town is not defensible for half an hour, should it be attacked the least formidably; and its present safety is entirely owing to the spirited conduct of the troops in the fort, and the want of enterprise in the enemy, who most certainly might have possessed it in a very short time, and with little loss, though the garrison had made (which I doubt not they would have done)

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<sup>100</sup>McCall, op. cit.

<sup>101</sup>Howe, op. cit. Court martial testimony.

the most spirited resistance; the enemy undoubtedly are at St. Simon's, where they are repairing the fort. . .<sup>102</sup>

Howe makes a definite distinction in the above letter between the defense of the town and the safety of the town which he attributes "solely" to the men in the fort.<sup>103</sup>

This basic dual pattern of defense and military works at Sunbury was requested by none other than General Robert Howe in a letter to Button Gwinnett, Governor of Georgia, dated September 20th, 1776.<sup>104</sup>

The only "point near the Town that commands the passage up the river" is the current site of Fort Morris as illustrated on the Campbell map.<sup>105</sup>

The Sunbury defense plan detailed for Sunbury by General Howe in his letter to the Governor of Georgia, September 20th, 1776, was obviously based on what Howe

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<sup>102</sup>Major General Robert Howe. Letter to General William Moultrie, dated "Sunbury, Dec. 8th, 1778." In Vol. I, Moultrie, Memoirs of the American Revolution, op. cit., p. 247.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid.

<sup>104</sup>Howe, op. cit., letter to Button Gwinnett, Sept. 20th, 1776.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid.

already knew about existing defenses at Sunbury. A battery recommended for the town of Sunbury by Howe in September of 1776 had apparently already been planned because a request was made to and granted by the Georgia Council of Safety to Benjamin Andrew for that purpose, July 30th, 1776:

". . .Mr. Andrew requested for an order of one hundred pounds, in part of an account for erecting a battery in the Town of Sunbury, which was granted."<sup>106</sup>

It should be emphasized that General Howe probably knew Button Gwinnett lived on St. Catherine's and did business at Sunbury. His plan for Sunbury probably reflects not only the knowledge he had personally gained while he was in Sunbury, but what he felt Gwinnett as Governor of Georgia and a local resident of the Sunbury area would accept as a reasonable plan of defense.<sup>107</sup>

Plans for a fort at Sunbury were already beyond the planning stage several months before Howe wrote to Gwinnett, September 20th, 1776. Orders were given to Captain Hardy on May 23rd, 1776, "to employ men and boats

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<sup>106</sup>Collections of the Georgia Historical Society, Vol. V., Part 1, "Proceedings of the Georgia Council of Safety," p. 169.

<sup>107</sup>op. cit., Howe letter to Gwinnett, Sept. 20th, 1776.



and to draught as many of the Militia as may be necessary in order to assist them in bringing the cannon, etc., from Frederica."<sup>108</sup>

Entrenchments about Sunbury are mentioned as being partially complete in June, 1776:

. . .Ordered, that orders do issue to Col. Baker to hire a number of Negroes to finish in a more proper manner the entrenchments about Sunbury. That Col. McIntosh do reinforce the present detachment now there with as many of the battalion as will make a company.<sup>109</sup>

The Georgia Council of Safety meeting on July 5th, 1776, resolved the following:

July 5, 1776

. . .Whereas, the delegates of the said colony of Georgia have represented to said committee that it will be necessary that two forts be erected in said colony, the one at Savannah and the other at Sunbury.

Resolved that two companies of artillery be raised, consisting of 50 men each, officers included, for the purpose of garrisoning such forts in case they shall be erected at the expense of said colony. . .<sup>110</sup>

And on March 25th, 1778 orders were issued by the Georgia Executive Council to complete the fortifications at Sunbury:

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<sup>108</sup>Revolutionary Records of Georgia, Vol. I, p. 125, May 23rd, 1776.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid., p. 196.

Ordered, That the persons appointed by resolve of Convention dated the Eleventh day of December one thousand Seven hundred and Seventy Six be required with the utmost expedition to complete the Battery and other public works in Sunbury pursuant to the directions of the said resolve.<sup>111</sup>

Agnew's contention that Provost's possession of the gate is proof that Provost did not attack the present Fort Morris site is based on the assumption that Provost had but one fortification to deal with in his reduction of Sunbury: ". . .We had possession of the gate and entered the Fort next morning. . ."<sup>112</sup>, ". . .If Provost captured the entrance of the present 'Fort Morris,' he would not have waited until morning to take the remainder of the fort, he would have captured the entire fort. . ."<sup>113</sup>

Based on the existence of an outer stockade, and/or parapets around Sunbury, Provost's comments concerning a one night delay between taking "the gate" and "the Fort" balance out leaving no necessity for confusing the outer works with the present fort. Good evidence exists

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<sup>111</sup>Revolutionary Records of Georgia, Vol. II, p. 65; entry for March 25, 1778.

<sup>112</sup>Provost letter to Clinton, quoted by Agnew, op. cit., p.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid.

that parapets did exist in the outer defense system at Sunbury in 1760:

The representatives of the parrish to Saint John report according to order that they had examined into the state and condition of the fortification within that parrish and found that to render the fort at Sunbury defensible there are two half-bastions wanting, that the other three already begun are not yet finished, that there are wanting ten carriage guns with carriages and a sufficient quantity of ammunition. That they are of opinion that to put the said fort in a proper state of defense, the expense will not amount to less than one hundred and fifty pounds.<sup>114</sup>

Curiously enough, the five bastions described for the Sunbury Fort in 1760 correspond in number with the five bastions depicted for the outer defense on the Campbell map in 1778.<sup>115</sup> This correspondence combined with the evidence presented above and below strongly indicates that the outer defense system built in the early colonial period at Sunbury was not abandoned by 1776, but was probably revetted during the Revolution. That outer entrenchments existed prior to 1776 and were improved during the Revolution is proven by the previously mentioned order to Col. Baker: ". . . Ordered, that orders do issue to Col. Baker to hire a number of Negroes to finish in a more

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<sup>114</sup>Colonial Records of Georgia, Vol. 8, entry of Nov. 20th, 1760, p. 452.

<sup>115</sup>Campbell map, op. cit., see Figure



proper manner the entrenchments about Sunbury. . ."<sup>116</sup>

Examination of the Campbell map as Agnew acknowledges<sup>117</sup> clearly illustrates what appears to be a bastioned stockade-earthwork surrounding both Fort Morris and Sunbury.<sup>118</sup> Two bastions on the southern end of the works are indicated by a series of evenly spaced dots with the exception of what may be a small "half bastion" between the two larger bastions, while the third bastion from the south end appears to have three of the dots connected near the apex of the angle. From this point the outer work is depicted as a solid line with two additional full bastions and a "gate" or opening near the road on the north side of town (see Figure 7). The Campbell map could well represent a combination of wooden stockade on the south end of the fortification with a more substantial earthwork with or without a stockade in the middle and on the northern end.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>116</sup>Revolutionary Records of Georgia, Vol. I, p. 136.

<sup>117</sup>Agnew, op. cit., p.

<sup>118</sup>Campbell map, op. cit. See Figure

<sup>119</sup>Ibid.

Road intersections were one of the most frequently fortified positions as detailed in the description of redoubt locations in General Moultrie's memoirs,<sup>120</sup> as well as in the diary of Lieutenant Colonel Archibald Campbell, the commanding officer of the attack on Savannah in December, 1778.<sup>121</sup> The previously prepared batteries that McCall states Provost used to set up his guns<sup>122</sup> would very likely have been located near the gate to the town that Provost states<sup>123</sup> that he had possession of and from which point he mounted his bombardment of Fort Morris.<sup>124</sup> Logically, one would expect the town gate or gates to face the roads coming into Sunbury, and on the Campbell map the roads from Savannah, and the Ogeechee ferry crossing converge on the north end of Sunbury.<sup>125</sup>

Perhaps even more conclusively this same pattern of roads can be seen in the very detailed map by William

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<sup>120</sup>Moultrie, Memoirs of the American Revolution, op. cit., pp. 335-337.

<sup>121</sup>Lieut. Col. Archibald Campbell, op. cit., Journal of the Georgia Expedition.

<sup>122</sup>McCall, op. cit., p. 195-196.

<sup>123</sup>Provost letter to Clinton, op. cit.

<sup>124</sup>McCall, op. cit., p. 195-196.

<sup>125</sup>Campbell map, op. cit., see Figure 6.

Debrahm, Esq., the Surveyor General of the South District of North America, and John Stuart, Esq., the British Superintendent of Indian Affairs.<sup>126</sup>

The location of Fort Morris south of the town is indicated by the fact that the cannon, howitzers, and mortars, were placed on batteries "previously prepared," at the north end of the town.<sup>127</sup>

. . . Every exertion was made to prevent the landing of the cannon and mortars near the town by the fire from the gallies and the fort. On the night of the 8th, they took advantage of the low tide to pass between a marsh island, opposite to the fort, with a few of their boats containing cannon, howitzers, and mortars and landed them above the town on batteries previously prepared. On the morning of the 9th, Provost summoned the fort to surrender unconditionally accompanied by a statement of his force, and the weight of his metal.<sup>128</sup>

Provost's account of the action is almost identical to the account given by the Revolutionary soldier-historian, Hugh McCall.<sup>129</sup> Unfortunately, the area near the northern perimeter of the town from which the British bombarded the fort has not been surveyed and is in danger of being destroyed by construction, if this has not already occurred.

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<sup>126</sup>Debrahm-Stuart map, op. cit. See Figure 9.

<sup>127</sup>McCall, op. cit., p. 195-196.

<sup>128</sup>Ibid., p. 195-196.

<sup>129</sup>Provost letter to Clinton, op. cit.



The location of Fort Morris relative to the town of Sunbury is specifically indicated in the exchange of communications between Col. L. V. Fuser of the Royal 60th Regiment, and Col. John McIntosh, Commander at Fort Morris at the time of the unsuccessful British attack on Sunbury and Fort Morris in November, 1778:

Sir,

You cannot be ignorant that four armies are in motion to reduce this Province. One is already under the guns of your fort, and may be joined, when I think proper, by Colonel Provost who is now at the Midway meeting house. The resistance you can, or intend to make, will only bring destruction upon this country. On the contrary, if you will deliver me the fort which you command, lay down your arms and remain neuter until the fate of America is determined, you shall, as well as all of the inhabitants of this parrish, remain in peaceable possession of your property. Your answer, which I expect in an hour's time, will determine the fate of this country, whether it is to be laid in ashes, or remain as above proposed.

I am Sir,

Your most obedient,

L. V. Fuser

Colonel 60th Regiment and Commander of his Majesty's Troops in Georgia, on his Majesty's Service.

P.S.

Since this letter was closed, some of your people have been firing scattering shot about the line. I am to inform you, that if a stop is not put to such irregular proceedings, I shall burn a house for every shot so fired.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>130</sup>Col. L.V. Fuser. Battlefield communication from Col. L.V. Fuser of the Royal 60th Reg. to Col. John McIntosh, Commander at Fort Morris, Nov., 1778. Cited in C. C. Jones, Dead Towns of Georgia, pp. 189-190.

The reply from Col. McIntosh was as follows:

Fort Morris, Nov. 25, 1778.

Sir,

We acknowledge we are not ignorant that your army is in motion to endeavour to reduce this State. We believe it entirely chimerical that Col. Provost is at the Meeting House; but should it be so, we are in no degree apprehensive of danger from a junction of his army with yours. We have no property compared with the object we contend for that we value a rush: -- and would rather perish in a vigorous defense than accept of your proposals. We Sir, are fighting the battles of America, and therefore disdain to remain neutral till its fate is determined. As to surrendering the fort, receive this loconic reply: COME AND TAKE IT. Major Lane, whom I send with this letter, is directed to satisfy you with respect to the irregular, loose firing mentioned on the back of your letter.

I have the honor to be Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

John McIntosh,  
Colonel of Continental  
Troops.<sup>131</sup>

In the discussion of this reply from Col. McIntosh, Jones, citing White's Historical Collections of Georgia, states:

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<sup>131</sup>Col. John McIntosh, reply to Col. L.V. Fuser, November, 1778. Cited in Jones, Dead Towns of Georgia, p. 191.

In delivering this reply Major Lane informed Colonel Fuser that the irregular firing of which he complained was maintained to prevent the English troops from entering and plundering Sunbury. With regard to the threat that a house should be burned for every shot fired, Major Lane stated that if Col. Fuser sanctioned a course so inhuman, and so totally at variance with the rules of civilized warfare, he would assure him that Colonel McIntosh, so far from being intimidated by the menace, would apply the torch at his end of the town, whenever Colonel Fuser fired the town on his side, "and let the flames meet in mutual conflagration."<sup>132</sup>

From the exchange of information during the British attack in November, 1778, it is clear that the British and American forces were on opposite sides of the town, since this is the only way each commander could fire his end of the town as indicated in the exchange between the officers and their intermediaries. A more detailed account of the dual nature of the defenses at Sunbury will be discussed within a comparative framework that considers the construction of other Revolutionary forts in Georgia and South Carolina following this analysis of the Agnew report.

While Agnew's small fort-large fort argument for not accepting the existing fortification as Fort Morris is clearly based on a false synthesis of descriptive data taken from the larger context of events at Sunbury, i.e.,

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<sup>132</sup>Jones, op. cit., (as above), p. 191.



the Howe court martial, and the Provost account of the January 1779 action, Agnew ignores specific primary data that disproves his assumption that Fort Morris was a larger construction than the small existing redoubt on the point below Sunbury. Although Agnew includes the following letter from Major General Benjamin Lincoln, who assumed Howe's command following the fall of Sunbury, he ignores the fact that Lincoln specifically states that Fort Morris was a small fort:

. . .The enemy from St. Augustine lately made an excursion into the heart of Georgia. They demanded the Surrender of a Small fort at Sunbury, but (supplied) with the spirited answer given their summons they left that neighborhood and on the approach of some of our troops retreated and recrossed the Altamaha, carrying with them a number of Negroes, cattle and other valuable articles, but much less than was at first represented. Whether they left that State or no is uncertain. I expect every moment a more particular account. . .<sup>133</sup>

John Couper, who represented Glynn County in the Constitutional Convention of 1777, also described the Fort at Sunbury as a small fortification:

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<sup>133</sup>General Benjamin Lincoln, Charleston, S.C., Dec. 10th, 1778. Letter to Henry Laurens, President of the Continental Congress, papers of the Continental Congress, 1776-1784, op. cit., roll 177, item no. 158. As cited in Agnew, "A Study of the Fortifications at Fort Morris," pp. 3-4.

In 1778, a part of the garrison under General Provost marched by land to join a force from New York to attack Savannah. Rory accompanied them, and attacked himself particularly to the light infantry company (14th Battalion, 60th Regiment) commanded by Captain Murray. In their advance, a part of them beleaguered a small fort at Sunbury commanded by Captain (afterwards General) John McIntosh.<sup>134</sup>

While Agnew ignores the direct testimony of General Lincoln, one of his primary sources concerning the size of the fort,<sup>135</sup> he does state in his evaluation of the Gadsen correspondence that Gadsen described a "small" fort in his 1812 report to Col. Swift. Nowhere in the Gadsen correspondence does Gadsen describe the fort as small.<sup>136</sup>

In summary of the author's evidence against Agnew's contention that Fort Morris was too large a fortification to be identified with the present fort, the following points are made:

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<sup>134</sup>George White. Historical Collections of Georgia, (New York, Padney and Russell, Publishers, No. 79 John Street) 1854, p. 472.

<sup>135</sup>Benjamin Lincoln's letter to Henry Laurens, Dec. 10th, 1778. Cited by Agnew, op. cit., pp. 3-4.

<sup>136</sup>Lieut. Gadsen, letter, June 1, 1815, to General Swift, cited by Agnew, Ibid., p. 15.

1. While Agnew acknowledges that an outer palisade or fortification existed at Sunbury based on the Campbell map, he ignores the very important fact that a "star fort" closely resembling the present fortification as well as Gadsen's 1815 description exists inside the outer palisade or fortification on the Campbell map.
2. Agnew's argument for a larger fortification based on Prevost's delay of one night in taking the fort and the town does not take into account a dual fortification or defense system at Sunbury.
3. Agnew's interpretation of the Howe testimony does not consider the problem of a dual fortification system at Sunbury.
4. Agnew does not consider the Revolutionary soldier Hugh McCall's description of the Fort Morris location "opposite the marsh island"<sup>137</sup> relative to the existing Fort's location opposite the marsh island, or the fact that this correspondence between the location of the marsh island and the Fort extends to the map published by C. C. Jones, Jr. in 1878 and to the Campbell map of 1778. The Debrahm-Stewart map and the Thomas Bacon map also place Fort Morris opposite the marsh island.

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<sup>137</sup>Hugh McCall, op. cit., pp. 195-196.



5. Agnew ignores the logistics of both the November 1778 and the January 1779 British attacks on Sunbury and Fort Morris. In both instances British forces attempting to take Fort Morris first took control of the town from the north. This fact corresponds with the placement of the Fort on the south side of Sunbury in all three Revolutionary period maps of Sunbury and Fort Morris.

6. Agnew ignores specific, primary Revolutionary period sources that unequivocally describe Fort Morris as a small fortification.

#### Concluding Evaluation of the Agnew Report

In evaluating the Agnew Report based on the above analysis, the author concludes that Agnew's arguments against the identification of the existing fort with the Revolutionary period Fort Morris are based on some of the more tenuous documentation available concerning the fort, that the internal logic of the arguments offered by Mr. Agnew are often inconsistent with the data presented in his report and that primary data available in terms of both historical documentation and archaeological results have been omitted.

### The Location of Fort Morris

The primary element in the defense of Sunbury during the American Revolution was a small earthwork type fortification 1000 feet south of the town on a point of land that was naturally secured from attack by marshland on three sides. This point of land had the important advantage of allowing cannon fire to enfilade approaching warships in the channel of the Midway river below Sunbury. This fort, known as Fort Morris for its first commander,<sup>138</sup> is the same fortification described by C. C. Jones, Jr. in 1878.<sup>139</sup>

There is a convincing body of evidence consisting of Revolutionary period maps, military correspondence, and other reports indicating the existence of an outer defense perimeter enclosing both Fort Morris and Sunbury. The most important evidence placing Fort Morris in the location of the present fort and also indicating the outer defense perimeter enclosing town and fort is the Campbell map.<sup>140</sup> The Campbell map, in addition to con-

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<sup>138</sup>C. C. Jones, Jr., op. cit.

<sup>139</sup>Ibid.

<sup>140</sup>Campbell map, op. cit.

forming to the precise location of the present fort, conforms to the form of the existing fort. There is also a precise correlation between the period of greatest military activity at the fort during the Revolution and the origin of the map as a "picture" of the military situation. Examination of known land marks shown on the Campbell map including the marsh island opposite the fort in the Midway river are in close agreement with both the existing geography as well as the Revolutionary period geography of Sunbury and vicinity as shown in and/or inferred from many other documents.

The test of the Campbell map as the "best" documentary evidence available concerning the location and form of Fort Morris rests not only with its fundamental agreement with the existing fort's form and geographical setting, but with the more complex correspondence between the Campbell map and the evolutionary development of the fortification system at Sunbury during both the Colonial and Revolutionary periods.

In the following discussion of Fort Morris' location, the author first examines the authenticity of the Campbell map in terms of its origin as a battle plan and its graphic illustration of the fortifications at Sunbury during the successful British attack on Savannah in December 1778 and the subsequent British attack at Sunbury



in early January 1779.

Following a statement of the author's position concerning the fortifications at Sunbury during Colonial and Revolutionary periods, the author examines the evidence for linking Colonial and Revolutionary patterns of fortification at Sunbury.

In conclusion, the evidence relating to the location of Fort Morris is discussed in a summary of sources.

#### Authenticity of the Campbell Map

The Campbell map is undoubtedly a British Army field map that was later published to emphasize the victory of the British at Savannah in December of 1778. The King's printer carefully notes on the map that the document was drawn by Archibald Campbell, Lieut. Col. of the 71st Regiment and is dated on the day of the battle of Savannah, December 28, 1778.<sup>141</sup>

In the Campbell diary the commander himself states that there were no available charts or maps of Georgia available to the entire British Army in New York and

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<sup>141</sup>Ibid.

that this was a task he corrected himself.<sup>142</sup> This map was later dispatched to New York.<sup>143</sup>

Following the crushing defeat of General Howe's army at Savannah, December 28, 1778, Lieut. Col. Campbell, after securing the fort at Savannah, prepared to march against Sunbury:

When Lieut. Col. Campbell had secured his prize by garrisoning the fort at Savannah, and by other measures for defense, he prepared to march against Sunbury, the only post of any consequence now left to the Americans near the Georgia Seaboard. ...While arranging for his departure southward, Campbell received intelligence that the garison at Sunbury had surrendered to General Prevost. That officer had left St. Augustine with about two thousand man (including Indians) and several pieces of artillery, on the day when Campbell reached Tybee Island.

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<sup>142</sup>Sir Archibald Campbell, Lieut. Col., His Majesty's 71st Regiment, Journal of an Expedition Against the Rebels of Georgia in North America Under the Orders of Sir Archibald Campbell, Esq., Lieut. Col., 1778. P. 5. This unpublished manuscript is on file at the Georgia State Library, Atlanta, Georgia. All rights to quote are reserved prior to publication of the manuscript by Colin Campbell, a direct descendent of Sir Archibald Campbell. Rights to the manuscript are specifically detailed in a letter with the manuscript from John L. Campbell, dated 3/1/57 at Isle of Canna, Scotland.

<sup>143</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

One division took a land route, the other proceeded in armed boats. They reached the vicinity of Sunbury on the sixth of January, and proceeded to attack the fort.<sup>144</sup>

The Lossing account quoted is precisely accurate when compared with Campbell's own Journal.<sup>145</sup> Prior to sending off his map and account of the battle of Savannah to his superiors in New York, Campbell conferred with Prevost numerous times concerning not only his charts, but the disposition of troops at the various positions where garrisons were to be placed.<sup>146</sup> This includes Sunbury.<sup>147</sup> When General Prevost came into Savannah, Lieut. Col. Campbell gave up his temporary commanding authority to this officer, although Lieut. Col. Campbell felt discriminated against by Prevost and notes in his Journal that Prevost kept important evaluations of his

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<sup>144</sup>Benson J. Lossing, The Pictorial Fieldbook of the Revolution by Pen and Pencil, of the History, Biography, Scenery, Relics, and Traditions of the War For Independence. Vol. II., pp. 732-733, (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, Franklin Square, 1852).

<sup>145</sup>Campbell, Journal of the Georgia Expedition, op. cit.

<sup>146</sup>Ibid., pp. 67, 71, and 120.

<sup>147</sup>Ibid., p. 123.



performance as well as recommendations for a promotion to Brigadier General by Sir Henry Clinton from becoming known among the other officers.<sup>148</sup>

As the senior officer in charge of reducing Sunbury it is reasonable to assume that Col. Campbell had adequate resources at his disposal to draw up an accurate field map. After the reduction of Sunbury, and before the map was sent to New York, Campbell may also have had additional information added to his own map by either Prevost or one of his officers. It does not seem likely that Prevost who did review Campbell's map and other documents<sup>149</sup> would have approved an inaccurate drawing of a post that he had recently attacked and compelled to surrender.

Further proof of the Campbell map's accuracy can be obtained by comparing a map drawn by Col. Moncrief, of the British Army, at the siege of Savannah, Oct. 9, 1779.<sup>150</sup> Col. Moncrief was with Campbell Dec. 28th, 1778 when Savannah was first taken by the British.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>148</sup>Ibid., pp. 67, 141.

<sup>149</sup>Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>150</sup>Lossing, Pictorial Fieldbook of the Revolution, op. cit.

<sup>151</sup>Campbell, Journal of the Georgia Expedition, op. cit., p. 118.

The Moncrief plan for the fortifications at Savannah could be overlain by Lieut. Col. Campbell's map of the fortifications at Savannah on which the very small sketch of the Sunbury defenses is located.<sup>152</sup>

Lossing obtained the Moncrief map from the early British history of the Revolution by Stedman:<sup>153</sup>

This map is copied from one in Stedman's History, under the direction of Col. Moncrief. Neither the French nor Americans made any drawings, and hence we are unable to give the positions of the various parts of the combined armies in detail.<sup>154</sup>

That Lieut. Col. Campbell's map was drawn during his campaign of December 1778, there should be no doubt, and based on the following extract from correspondence unmentioned in any previous treatment of Sunbury in the Revolution there can be no doubt that it received widespread attention throughout the high command structure of the British army in North America:

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<sup>152</sup>Campbell map.

<sup>153</sup>Charles Stedman. The History of the Origin, Progress, and Termination of the American War, 2 vols., J. Murray, publisher. London, 1794.

<sup>154</sup>Lossing, op. cit., p. 736.

. . . I presume the News of the fortunate successes, which have lately attended His Majesty's Arms in the West Indies, and in the province of Georgia, will be received in England long before this Letter can arrive there, but as there is a Possibility of the Contrary, and as the Events are important, I take the Liberty of sending Your Lordship Copy's of the Grenada Gazette's, relative to the Operations at St. Lucie, and a Gazette publish'd here with a Relation of the Progress of the Troops under the Orders of Major Gen. Prevost & Lieut. Col. Campbell. As also Copys of the Returns sent to me, from Capt. Fairlamb & Lieut. Wilson, of the Artillery & Stores, taken at Savannah and at Sunbury Fort; and of the Detachment of Artillery now serving with those Corp's of the Army, I likewise do myself the Honor to send your Lordship a Sketch taken from Col. Campbell's Plan of the Ground and Disposition of the British and Rebel Troops on the Day of the Action.<sup>155</sup>

Victory over combined French and American armies in the Southern sector of North America came on the heels of crushing defeats for the British in the north, so it is not surprising that the British published the campaign or field map that had been widely circulated in the British Army.

In summary of the facts concerning the Campbell map and its reliability as an accurate field map of the military situation at Savannah and Sunbury in December 1778 and January 1779, the author stresses the following points:

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<sup>155</sup>Letter to Lord Viscount Townshend from Major General James Pattison, dated New York, Feb. 6, 1779. Cited in The Official Letters of Major General James Pattison, Vol. VIII, pp. 8-9, Collections of the New York Historical Society, 1875, New York.



1. There were no accurate British field maps of Georgia available in New York prior to the 1778-79 campaign.
2. Lieut. Col. Archibald Campbell made a specific personal effort during the Georgia Campaign to correct this deficiency as detailed in his personal diary.
3. Sunbury was a military objective of Lieut. Col. Archibald Campbell whose forces were marching from Savannah to Sunbury at the same time that Sunbury was being reduced by General Augustine Prevost.
4. General Prevost, whose forces reduced Sunbury, reviewed Campbell's charts and reports at Savannah following the fall of Sunbury and before the documents were dispatched to New York.
5. Maj. General Pattison received Campbell's map from Campbell's January 1779 Savannah dispatch and sent a sketch of it to Lord Viscount Townshend in England.
6. The Campbell map was printed by the King's printer in 1780 and widely distributed.
7. Col. Moncrief, a British military engineer, also made a map of the Savannah defenses. This map, known as the Moncrief map, agrees in detail with the portion of Campbell's map detailing the defensive works at Savannah.
8. There is not a single known work, published or unpublished, that has ever criticized the authenticity or accuracy of the Campbell map.

Fortification Patterns at Sunbury to and During the  
Revolution

It is the position of this author that the fortifications encountered by General Prevost at Sunbury in early January 1779, while no doubt constructed mainly during the Revolution, were but the latest installment in a fortification pattern that emerged in the twenty year Colonial period between the first attempts at constructing fortifications at Sunbury in September 1756,<sup>156</sup> and the pattern of defense recommended by General Howe in September 1776 following the July 6th British bombardment at the Sullivan's Island fortifications in Charleston Harbor.<sup>157</sup> The Campbell map, as a "picture" of the Fort Morris site leaves little doubt concerning the actual appearance of the fortifications at Sunbury during the battle of Savannah on the 28th of December, 1778. According to the Campbell map Fort Morris

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<sup>156</sup>James Stacy, History of the Midway Congregational Church, Liberty County, Georgia. (Printed by S. W. Murray, at Newnan, Georgia) 1903, p.

<sup>157</sup>General Robert Howe, Charleston, S.C. Sept. 20th, 1776. Letter to Button Gwinnett, Governor of Georgia.

was located on a small peninsula opposite the bend in the river just below the town.<sup>158</sup> The marsh island separating the back and front sections of the Midway River is opposite the fort as discussed by McCall.<sup>159</sup>

#### Colonial Fortifications at Sunbury

William Gerard Debrahm, the well-known 18th century military engineer whose 1780 map (see Figures 9 and 10) illustrates a fort at the southeastern edge of Sunbury in the present location of Fort Morris, had just returned from Fort Loudon in the Cherokee Country when the new Colonial Governor of Georgia, Henry Ellis, Esq., arrived in Savannah in February 1757 to assume his duties. War had broken out with the Creek Indians and Ellis desired advice from Debrahm on the fortifications needed to protect the coastal settlements. At Governor Ellis' request, Debrahm subsequently designed a fortification system for Savannah that became a working model for Governor Ellis' fortification program at Savannah and the other coastal settlements in Georgia. The Savannah forti-

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<sup>158</sup>Campbell map (see Figures 6 and 7).

<sup>159</sup>McCall, op. cit., pp. 195-196.



fication is described in Debrahm's journal:<sup>160</sup>

When the Author in 1757 returned from Fort Loudon to Savannah, it happened that Henry Ellis, Esq., arrived at the same time to take the Reins of Government in His hands vide, in the Month of February, soon after an Indian War broke out with the Creeks; Governor Ellis assembled the Peoples Representatives to prepare and take such Measures as would most effectually protect a young Province; he also desired the Author's Advice concerning Fortifications, and the necessary Defense of the City, who proposed with a well palisaded Entrenchment to envelope the City, so as to make it a Receptacle and Shelter for all the Planters, their Families, Slaves, Etc. . . .The Author's Advice met with general Approbation, and he laid two Poligons with three Bastions on the south side, and with two ending with a demi Bastion. He joined the Stream. The Soil of Savannah being a meer Sand, to make this keep in a breast work, the Author was obliged to have the outside Talus faced with Pine Saplings set in the Ground, and inclined their Tops in form with the Talus of the Scarp, the Governor improved this Entrenchment with adding wooden Tours Bastion-negs (a) To each Bastion, one of which was placed in the Angle of each Gorge to serve as Cavaliere's couverte's, with strong Platforms to range and command the Country. He altered also the two demi Bastions into small wooden Citadels, each with four Bastions.<sup>161</sup>

DeVorsey interprets Debrahm's report as quoted above to mean that ". . .Ellis accepted Debrahm's advice con-

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<sup>160</sup>William Gerard Debrahm. Debrahm's Report of the General Survey In The Southern District of North America, Louis DeVorsey, Jr., ed. (Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1971) pp. 153, 154.

<sup>161</sup>Ibid.

cerning the desirability of encompassing the entire town within a defensive wall. . . ."162

Debrahm reported in August of 1757, ". . . that he was over seeing the 'fortifying of this whole town', rather than the little fort which he had mentioned earlier."163

DeVorsey concludes that:

Debrahm played a significant role in helping Ellis to protect the Georgia settlements with a system of fortifications which the governor described as rendering the colony "more respectable in the eyes of the Indians than we were." Ellis wrote also that the defense had "served to abate considerably the apprehension of our own people..."164

In May, 1757, Governor Ellis wrote that:

. . . I proceeded to Midway, where I found the Inhabitants had enclosed their church. . . . and erected a battery of eight guns at Sunbury, in a very proper situation for defending the River...165

The battery observed by Ellis in May 1757 is undoubtedly the fortification begun prior to his administration in 1756:

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162 Ibid., p. 26.

163 Ibid.

164 Ibid.

165 British Public Records Office, bundle C05/654, London, England. Copies in the Georgia Department of Archives, Atlanta, Georgia.



September 16, 1756. A letter came to us from the Honorable Jonathan Brian, Esq., one of his majesties Council for this Colony, on account of some Creek Indians being slain by some persons from the Northward who had settled themselves pretty high up on Great Hogeechee River, in quarrel about some creatures, which the Indians had taken from them; that the Indians were very much irritated declared they must have blood for blood, and that all means used to pacify them, seemed to no purpose, and advising us with all expedition to build a Fort for our safety, we hear that Savannah and in the Northern parts of the Colony, people are very much alarmed by this news, which affected us in the same manner; and consultations were immediately had about the building, and place for a Fort, and it was determined by a majority that it should be at Capt. Mark Carr's, low down and upon the River, near the sound, at about seven or eight miles distance from the nearest of the settlements of this Society; which was accordingly begun on the 20th of Sept. 1756.<sup>166</sup>

The site at Capt. Mark Carr's that consisted of an eight gun battery "low down and upon the river" is the documentation that Jones<sup>167</sup> and Baker<sup>168</sup> rely upon to indicate that a previous Colonial fortification existed and was possibly revetted at the Fort Morris site during the Revolution. Mark Carr's settlement became the town of Sunbury.

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<sup>166</sup>James Stacy, Midway Church History, 1903, p.

<sup>167</sup>C. C. Jones, Jr., op. cit., p. 179.

<sup>168</sup>Baker, op. cit., p. 5.



A second element in the fortification system at Sunbury resulted after Ellis' May visit to Sunbury and is directly related to Gov. Ellis' desire to fortify the coastal settlements with a system of fortifications that Debrahm assisted Ellis in designing.<sup>169</sup> Gov. Ellis wrote the Lord Commissioners of the Board of Trade and Plantations on September 20, 1757 that: ". . . Four or five Forts of Earth and Wood are built and building in different districts."<sup>170</sup> On October 22, 1757, Ellis wrote the Commissioners that:

. . . The Southern part of this Province is thicker settled, better improved than near Savannah, particularly on the River Midway where a Town called Sunbury is building. The Inhabitants thereabouts have entreated me to move your Lordships that it may be made a Port of Entry.<sup>171</sup>

On August 25, 1760, Ellis wrote the Commissioners that: ". . . A very good log fort is built at Sunbury; another is constructing at Barrington, two are building

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<sup>169</sup>Debrahm, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>170</sup>British Public Records Office, bundle C05/654, London, England. Document dated August 1st, 1757. Copy in the Georgia Dept. of Archives, Atlanta, Georgia.

<sup>171</sup>British Public Records Office, bundle C05/654, London, England. Document dated October 22, 1757. Copy in the Georgia Dept. of Archives, Atlanta, Georgia.

on the River Ogeechee. . .<sup>172</sup>

Although Ellis indicated that the Sunbury fort was completed in August, 1760, the local parrish representatives reported the need for additional work in November 1760. The following description of bastions, demi bastions and the need for 10 carriage guns suggests a much different type of fortification than that indicated by the "battery," "low down on the river."

The representatives of the parrish of Saint John report according to order that they had examined into the state and condition of the fortification within that parrish and found that to render the fort at Sunbury defensible there are two-half bastions wanting, that the other three already begun are not yet finished, that there are wanting 10 carriage guns with carriages and a sufficient quantity of ammunition. That they are of opinion that to put the said fort in a proper state of defense, the expense will not amount to less than one hundred and fifty pounds.<sup>173</sup>

The outer defense system indicated on the Campbell map as a five bastioned combination stockade and earthwork corresponds to the number of bastions built and/or planned for in 1760 by representatives of St. John's par-

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<sup>172</sup>Colonial Records of Georgia, Vol. XXVIII, part I-B, p. 458. W.P.A. typescripts bound and available at the Ga. Dept. of Archives, Atlanta, Georgia.

<sup>173</sup>Colonial Records of Georgia, Vol. VIII, p. 452.

rich as described above (see Figures 6 and 7).

By November 1762 part of the "very good log fort" had fallen down: ". . . That part of the stockade fort built at Sunbury at the time of the late Indian alarm is fallen down. . . ." <sup>174</sup>

The dual system of fortification is indicated in Gov. Wright's letter to the Lord Commissioners on Feb. 20th, 1762: "I have one entitled an act for erecting a fort and battery on Midway River and the other entitled an act for raising and granting to this majesty Lb. 440 for erecting a fort and battery at Cockspur and Lb. 100 for erecting a lookout or battery on Midway. . . ." <sup>175</sup>

Log type fortifications, especially those using "pine saplings" <sup>176</sup> to maintain the form of the breastworks, would need to be constantly repaired due to the high rate of deterioration and rotting expected in semi-tropical environments. The need for continual repairs and additional work at the fortifications resulted in sporadic

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<sup>174</sup> Colonial Records of Georgia, Vol. 13, p. 723, Journal of the Common House, Nov. 11, 1762. Report of Mr. Joseph Gilbar from the Committee appointed to inspect the State of fortifications in the Parrish of Saint John.

<sup>175</sup> Colonial Records of Georgia, Vol. , Sir James Wright to the Lord Commissioner, Feb. 20, 1762.

<sup>176</sup> Debrahm, op. cit., p. 154.



requests for more money. These requests, if taken alone and out of sequence, would appear to indicate new fortifications. More often than not revetments and repairs were needed as was probably the case in the following grant of funds: "For Francis Arthur and Co. for material for Sunbury Fort a sum not exceeding 50 10 10. Estimate of the Necessary charges of Government - Journal of the Commons House, Feb. 25, 1763."<sup>177</sup>

Francis Arthur, according to Jones' listing of Sunbury lot owners, was in possession of lots 5, 7, 17, 47, 142, 151, 357, and 437 in Sunbury.<sup>178</sup>

Once the supporting saplings rotted out, a sand filled parapet would lose its form and probably become indistinguishable within a few years from the surrounding terrain. Almost the entire Sunbury area is composed of sand, and the technique described for sand filled "forms" would have been as useful or necessary for most of the Sunbury area as it was in Savannah.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>177</sup>Colonial Records of Georgia, Vol. XIV, p. 39.

<sup>178</sup>C. C. Jones, Jr., op. cit., pp. 159-169.

<sup>179</sup>Debrahm, op. cit., p. 154.

If the five bastioned log fort at Sunbury was built according to Debrahm's construction techniques for the outer fortification at Savannah, it would have consisted of entrenchments and a sand parapet supported with logs and saplings set into the entrenchments and sloped against the packed sand of the parapet.<sup>180</sup> This type of construction probably explains the forts of "earth and wood"<sup>181</sup> as well as the configuration of bastions and half bastions described for Sunbury in 1760.<sup>182</sup>

In an emergency such as the Creek War that prompted the Sunbury fortifications, a partially constructed outer fort of the Debrahm type might include fully finished sections including parapet and entrenchment with the supporting stockade as well as temporary sections of stockade without the fully constructed parapet or entrenchment. Ambitious fortification schemes of this type may never have been fully completed lacking a bastion in one place, supporting logs in another, etc.

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<sup>180</sup>Ibid.

<sup>181</sup>British Public Records Office, bundle C05/654, London, England. Document dated Oct. 22, 1757. Copy in the Georgia Department of Archives, Atlanta, Georgia.

<sup>182</sup>Colonial Records of Georgia, Vol. VIII, p. 452.

In summary of the documentary evidence for a fortification system prior to the Revolution at Sunbury that included both an inner and outer defense, the following points are emphasized:

1. There are separate listings for a battery "low down on the water" and a bastioned log fort at Sunbury within the first five years of Sunbury's existence.
2. The water battery had been built or begun in 1756 prior to Ellis' administration. The location of this fortification is probably the same site that is now occupied by Fort Morris.
3. Following construction of the battery at Sunbury by the Midway people in 1756 at a position that was low down on the water and in a very proper situation for defending the river, Debrahm began his service as fortifications advisor to Governor Ellis. During this period the "earth and wood" fort with bastions and half bastions was being built at Sunbury.
4. Debrahm's Savannah plan (partially based on the Frederica fortification system), and the Frederica fortification system are very similar, consisting in each case of a small fort or water battery in a position to defend the river approaches to the town in question and a second outer entrenchment and/or palisade surrounding both the town and the water battery.



The similarity of Sunbury's geography to that of Savannah and Frederica as well as the role played by Debrahm as fortifications advisor to Governor Ellis strongly suggests that the Sunbury fortifications would have been similar to the Savannah plan.

5. There is a very close correspondence between the 1760 report on the number of bastions and half bastions planned for the earth and wood fortification at Sunbury and the outer fortification illustrated for Sunbury on the Campbell map.

#### Revolutionary Fortifications at Sunbury

The unfinished state of the outer Colonial works at Sunbury and their probable continuity with the Revolutionary fortification system is indicated in the following order from the Council of Safety to Col. Baker in 1776:

. . . Ordered, that orders do issue to Col. Baker to hire a number of Negroes to finish in a more proper manner the entrenchments (sic) about Sunbury. That Col. McIntosh do reinforce the present detachment now there with as many of the battalion as will make a company.<sup>183</sup>

The above orders are the first instructions known to exist concerning preparation of the fortifications at Sunbury in anticipation of British hostilities.

A separate fortification which probably is the legal

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<sup>183</sup>Revolutionary Records of Georgia, Vol. I, p. 136.

origin of the Revolutionary period Fort Morris was requested for Sunbury in Congress on July 5th, 1776. The fact that an artillery company of 50 men is requested in the following order indicates a fortification that was primarily planned (as Fort Morris was) to function as a battery.

. . .Whereas, the delegates of the said colony of Georgia have represented to said committee that it will be necessary that two forts be erected in said colony, the one at Savannah and the other at Sunbury.

Resolved that two companies of artillery be raised, consisting of 50 men each, officers included, for the purpose of garrisoning such forts in case they shall be erected at the expense of said colony. . .<sup>184</sup>

A dual pattern of fortification is recommended in General Robert Howe's September 20th, 1776 letter to Gov. Button Gwinnett concerning the defenses of Sunbury:

. . .All this militates strongly against suffering them to take possession of it, which by a battery built upon a point near the town that commands the passage up the river, and by some works thrown up in town may, I am persuaded, be easily effected. . ."<sup>185</sup>

Howe may well have had the existing defenses of Sunbury in mind when he made the above proposal. Revetment of older, delapidated structures using newer or

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<sup>184</sup>Ibid., p. 196.

<sup>185</sup>General Robert Howe, Charleston, S.C., Sept. 20th, 1776. Letter to Button Gwinnett of Ga. N. See footnote 73 in the author's previous discussion of this correspondence.

better methods of fortification probably obscured the earlier works.

At least partial construction or revetment of defensive lines<sup>186</sup> outside Sunbury and the main "Battery" is indicated by the existence of a dual pattern of soldier's duties in the town and in the fort by April 21st, 1777, as established by the following order from General Samuel Elbert dated 21st April, 1777:<sup>187</sup>

General Orders, by S.E.

Headquarters, Sunbury, 21st April, 1777

Parole Georgia.

Of the Guard that mounts today a Subaltern with a Sergt., Corporal and thirteen rank and file are to be sent to the battery to remain there till relieved tomorrow morning; the officer will inquire of Captain Morris what his duty there will be which he is to attend strictly to, the main guard will likewise detach a Sergt. and six men to take post on the Savannah Road in some of the buildings without the lines; their duty will be in the day to stop any soldiers going out of town without a pass, and after tattoo beat to stop any persons who have not the countersign-at this time all the sentries are to do the same-officer of the day Capt. Moore, who is to go the grand rounds at what hour in the night he pleases between tattoo and revallie beat-the officer of the main guard

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<sup>186</sup>Defensive "lines" were fortifications consisting of entrenchments and embankments. Works of this type were frequently strengthened according to the immediate situations. General Mountrie states in his Memoirs of the American Revolution (Vol. II, p. 85), that during the siege of Charleston in April, 1780 sand bags were used to build up the lines.

<sup>187</sup>Lachlan McIntosh, "Papers of Lachlan McIntosh," Collections of the Georgia Historical Society. Vol. XII, p. 65.



at twelve o'clock; the main guard is to send a patrol of a Sergt. and six men at different hours to see that there be no unlawful assemblies or rioting-the countersign will be given at retreat beating to the officer of the main guard who is to send it sealed up to the officers of the different guards. Col. Elbert insists on it that the officers pay due respect to those orders and that they go through the regular forms of relieving guard, going and receiving rounds and patrols, and ca.

After Orders.

21st April, 1777

The Court-Martial of which Capt. Moore was president is approved and dissolved their sentence of Corporal punishment on, Thomas Hodge to be inflicted this afternoon on the parade.<sup>188</sup>

In General Moultrie's correspondence concerning the fall of Fort Morris in January, 1779, the terms fort and battery are used interchangeably.<sup>189</sup> General Moultrie's memoirs also frequently refer to the enclosed earthwork fortifications at Sullivan's Island, Charleston, South Carolina as the "Battery".<sup>190</sup>

The dual pattern of soldier's duties in town and fort is also outlined in the following order dated December 5th, 1777.

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<sup>188</sup> In Elbert's April, 1777 order cited above, Captain Morris, from whom Fort Morris was named, is specifically associated with the "Battery."

<sup>189</sup> Moultrie, Memoirs of the American Revolution, Vol. I., op. cit., p. 259.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., pp. 139-140.

# Orders to Captain Defau of the Artillery

Headquarters, Savannah, 5th Dec., 1777  
 You are to proceed immediately to the town of Sunbury in this state, where are a corps of Continental Artillery posted, which you are constantly to be employed in teaching the perfect use of artillery, particularly in the field. Both officers and men are hereby strictly ordered to attend you for the above purpose, at such times, and in such places as you may direct; and the commanding officer of the troops in that place, on you showing him these orders will furnish men to do the necessary duty in town & fort so that there will be nothing to prevent Capt. Morris, with his company from being perfected in the business for which they were raised. Such pieces of artillery, as you approve of, have mounted on field carriages; and for this purpose, you are empowered to employ the necessary workmen, and procure materials. Your drafts on me, for every necessary expense, accompanying the vouchers, will be duly honored. I am sir,

Your most obedt. Servt,  
 (signed) S. Elbert, Col. Comm.<sup>191</sup>

On March 13, 1778, three months after Captain Defau was ordered to Sunbury, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Brown of the Florida Rangers attacked and carried Fort Barrington (renamed Fort Howe by the Americans following Brown's attack). This fort on the Altamaha about forty five miles to the southwest of Sunbury, was the primary American listening post maintained for detecting movements of British and Tory troops on the south-

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<sup>191</sup>Samual Elbert, "Order Book," Collections of the Georgia Historical Society, Vol. V, Part II, p. 76.

ern frontier of the state. The action, described in the following unpublished communication from Brown to the Royal Governor of Florida, signaled the beginning of intensive British activity in Georgia that resulted in the series of invasions and assaults at Sunbury in the late fall of 1778 and early January, 1779:

Lieut. Col. Thomas Brown of the Rangers to his Excellency Governor Tonym, dated at Altamaha, March 13, 1778.

Sir:

Last night I passed the River Altamaha with the hundred Rangers and ten Indians indiscovered (sic) by the rebels three miles below Fort Barrington.

With the utmost difficulty we preserved our ammunition dry, as we were under a necessity of swimming a quarter of a mile after transversing a number of swamps entirely covered with water.

At the break of day we entered the fort with the loss of only one man killed; and wounded, amongst the latter are Lieutenants Drew, Scott, and Williams.

Two pieces of artillery with two swivels fell into our hands.

The loss of the rebels is two killed and four wounded with three prisoners.

The officers of the Rangers acquitted themselves with extra ordinary spirit particularly Mr. Johnston, who first mounted the entrenchments.

I have sent two detachments of the Rangers to South Carolina upon service, and three into Georgia.

I shall employ the party under my command in hunting cattle upon the south side of the Altamaha and as Fort Barrington was a great obstruction to our foraging, as that difficulty is now removed, I flatter myself the garrison, and province, will better be supplied with cattle.

Thos. Browne

I take the liberty of commending the Indians who accompanied me to your Excellency's attentions, as their conduct is deserving of the most favorable



notice. Sekaligia, Stimpoy, Inatalilchie, and the Pumpkin King's nephews were of this party.<sup>192</sup>

Following Browne's attack, Fort Barrington was re-occupied by American forces and partially rebuilt.<sup>193</sup> The following description by General Robert Howe's adjutant, John Grimke at Fort Howe in May, 1778 details a pattern of defense consisting of outer "lines" and an inner stockade: "Neither the lines nor the Stockade are finished; the former are too extensive to be defended by the small number of men we have here, and the stockade too small for those who defend the lines to retire into."<sup>194</sup>

As previously discussed, Howe's criticisms of the Sunbury fortifications as too extensive to defend were probably based on the outer works or "lines" and not on the small battery or redoubt known as Fort Morris.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>192</sup>Lieut. Col. Thomas Browne letter to Royal Governor Tonyn of Florida, dated at the Altamaha River, March 13, 1778. This letter is part of the Sir Guy Carleton Papers, S.C. Archives, Columbia, S.C., Document No. 1014.

<sup>193</sup>John Grimke. "Journal of the Campaign to the Southward May 9th to July 14, 1778," The South Carolina Historical Magazine, Vol. XII, p. 61.

<sup>194</sup>Ibid.

<sup>195</sup>For a detailed discussion of this matter, see pp. above.

The attack on Fort Barrington<sup>196</sup> resulted in orders being given to the Executive Council of Georgia on March 24th, 1778 to strengthen the defenses at Sunbury. In the second of these orders a dual pattern of fortification is indicated by the separation in wording between the "battery" and "other public works" in Sunbury:

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<sup>196</sup>The author did a brief reconnaissance at Fort Barrington in January, 1972, and prepared the original draft of the National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form for the site. During a summary of this reconnaissance at the Georgia Historical Commission quarterly meeting in Columbus, Georgia, April, 1972, Dr. Lewis Larson stated, based on his own reconnaissance at Fort Barrington, that there were no remaining breastworks at the site due to erosion. However, it is the author's opinion that several hundred feet of these works including two bastions are still intact. Sand dunes at the site have drifted against and obscured most of the entrenchments and works. A road cut clearly shows the stratigraphy of impacted breastworks. This data was summarized and included in the final draft of the Fort Barrington Site, National Register Form, 1972. The form was submitted to the National Park Service in Washington, D.C. by Bill Mitchell, Jr., former Director of the Georgia Historic Sites Survey, State of Georgia, Atlanta, Georgia. A copy of this form is in file in the Preservation Section of the Department of Natural Resources, State of Georgia, Atlanta, Georgia.

. . .ORDERED, That the persons appointed by resolve of convention dated the 11th day of December, 1776 be ordered that the said gally do afterwards remain stationed in the inlet for the defense of Sunbury Bar until otherwise ordered.<sup>197</sup>

. . .ORDERED, That the persons appointed by resolve of Convention dated the eleventh day of December, one thousand seven hundred and seventy six be required with the utmost expedition to complete the battery and other public works in Sunbury pursuant to the directions of the said resolve.<sup>198</sup>

In August, 1778 a Col. Graves at Sunbury requested money from the Executive Council for: ". . .the fort, Barracks, and other works in Sunbury."<sup>199</sup> While it is not stated in the request whether the money is for repairs or expansion of the existing works specified in the March 24th orders cited above, the very wording of Graves' request suggests that there were two basic groups of military works, the Fort as distinguished from Barracks and other works in Sunbury.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>197</sup>Revolutionary Records of Georgia, Vol. II, p. 65; entry for March 24, 1778.

<sup>198</sup>Ibid., March 25th, p. 65.

<sup>199</sup>Revolutionary Records of Georgia, Vol. II, pp. 90-91. Compiled by Allen D. Candler in 3 volumes. (Atlanta: Franklin-Turner), 1908.

<sup>200</sup>Ibid.



It was a usual form of activity for garrisons to rebuild, repair, and expand fortifications during periods of war. Moultrie gives detailed accounts of the day to day progress on fortifications being built by his troops in Charleston and at Sullivan's Island during the July 6, 1776 attack and the 1780 British siege.<sup>201</sup> From the documentary evidence cited above, it is obvious that the troops at Sunbury were involved in additional construction and repair of fortifications following the first major British raid at Fort Barrington in March, 1778.

Earlier documentation for construction of fortifications, including Col. Baker's orders in 1776 to improve the "entrenchments about Sunbury,"<sup>202</sup> and the orders to Captain Defau from General Elbert on December 5th, 1777 concerning the duties of men in "town and Fort"<sup>203</sup> are conclusive evidence for the existence of a fort and entrenchments "about" Sunbury prior to the British raid at Fort Barrington in March, 1778. The orders to Col.

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<sup>201</sup>Moultrie, Memoirs of the American Revolution, Vol. I, pp. 139-177, and Vol. II, pp. 71-91.

<sup>202</sup>Revolutionary Records of Georgia, Vol. I, p. 136.

<sup>203</sup>Collections of the Georgia Historical Society, Vol. V, Part II, p. 76.

Baker concerning the use of slave labor are also in basic agreement with Jones' statement concerning the construction of Fort Morris:

The names of those who were specially charged with the construction of this fort have not been perpetuated, but it lives in tradition that the planters of Bermuda island and of the Midway District, and the citizens of Sunbury contributed mainly to its erection. It was built chiefly by slave labor, and was armed with such cannon as could be procured on the spot, or obtained elsewhere.<sup>204</sup>

Bermuda Island, the probable source of many of the slaves that worked on the Sunbury fortifications including Fort Morris<sup>205</sup> is now known as Colonel's Island (Compare Figures 9 and 11).

C. C. Jones, Jr. states that Fort Morris was named in compliment to Captain Morris, who commanded the first company of Continental Artillery to be posted in the fort. Although Jones does not support the origin of the fort's name with documentation, the orders to Captain Defau indicate Captain Morris was present at Fort Morris very early in the Revolution.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>204</sup>C. C. Jones, Jr., Dead Towns of Georgia, p. 180.

<sup>205</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 180.

<sup>206</sup>Revolutionary Records of Georgia, Vol. I, p. 136.

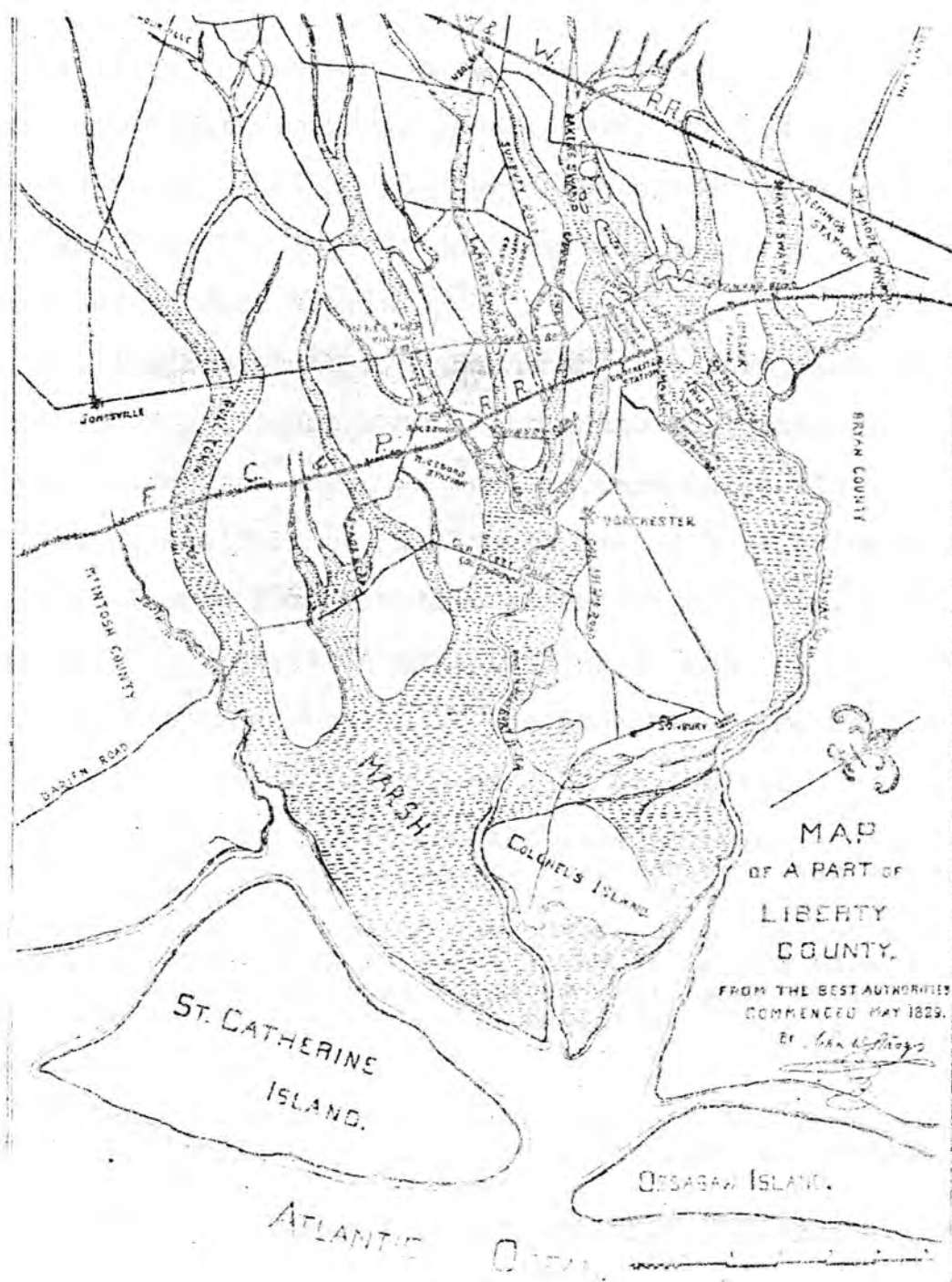


Figure 11

1829 John W. Stacy map of the Sunbury-Midway area.  
From History and Records of Midway Church by James  
Stacy. First printed in 1903 at Newman, Georgia



Based on correspondence between General Howe<sup>207</sup> and Button Gwinnett from September, 1776, the Sullivan's Island fortifications in Charleston harbor offer some insight into the type of construction that may have been employed at Fort Morris.

William Debrahm's 1757 Savannah type fortification techniques utilizing sand embankments supported by wooden forms and known as merlons were successfully employed at the fort on Sullivan's Island in Charleston harbor, (named Fort Moultrie after the July 6th, 1776 battle).<sup>208</sup> Moultrie explains the importance of sand filled form construction to the defense of the Sullivan's Island fortification on July 6th, 1776:

. . .at this time it was the general opinion, especially among the sailors, that two frigates would be a sufficient force to knock the town about our ears: notwithstanding our number of batteries with heavy cannon; but in a few weeks (28 June) experience taught us, that frigates could make no impression upon our palmetto batteries.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>207</sup>General Robert Howe, Charleston, S.C., Sept. 20th, 1776. Letter to Button Gwinnett, Governor of Georgia.

<sup>208</sup>Moultrie, Memoirs of the American Revolution, Vol. I., pp. 158-173.

<sup>209</sup>Ibid., pp. 139-140.

. . .The Thunder bomb had the beds of her mortar soon disabled; she threw her shells in a very good direction; most of them fell within the fort, but we had a Morass in the middle, that swallowed them up instantly and those that fell in the sand in and about the fort, were immediately buried, <sup>so</sup> that very few of them bursted amongst us. . .<sup>210</sup>

. . .they could not make any impression on our fort, built of palmetto logs and filled in with earth. . .<sup>211</sup>

. . .a few days after the action we picked up, in and about the fort, 1200 shot of different calibers that was fired at us, and a great number of 13 inch shells. . .<sup>212</sup>

General Robert Howe, in his letter to Button Gwinnett from Charleston, dated September 20, 1776, recommends palmetto logs for the defense of Sunbury.

. . .A great number of Palmetto logs as long as possible will be wanted, of which you can hardly have too many, and they ought immediately to be procured, but shall not attempt to particularize the variety of materials or the number of hands that will be requisite. . .<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>210</sup>Ibid., p. 175.

<sup>211</sup>Ibid., p. 177.

<sup>212</sup>Ibid., p. 181.

<sup>213</sup>Howe letter to Gwinnett, September 20th, 1776.

It is a reasonable assumption to think that the construction materials recommended for the fortifications at Sunbury and other points in Georgia in the September 20th, 1776 letter from Charleston was based on Howe's personal knowledge of the way palmetto logs filled in with sand were able to withstand the attack of the British Navy on Sullivan's Island, Charleston Harbor, on July 6th, 1776, three months before Howe wrote Gwinnett.<sup>214</sup>

The use of palmetto logs in fortifications as recommended by General Howe was apparently a well established practice in coastal Georgia, and Jones, citing Sir James Wright, the Royal Governor of Georgia, as his source, refers to Fort George at the mouth of the Savannah as being faced with palmetto logs: ". . . Fort George on Cockspur Island, which was built in 1762 of mud walls faced with palmetto logs. . ."<sup>215</sup>

During the 1971 excavation evidence was not sought for confirmation of Debrahm's form filling or merlon type technique of fortification, but future excavation may reveal that the existing embankments were "fill" in-

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<sup>214</sup>Ibid.

<sup>215</sup>Jones, op. cit., p. 180, quoting Wright in: Collections of the Georgia Historical Society, Vol. V, Part 1, "Proceedings of the Georgia Council of Safety," p. 169.



side a timbered merlon type construction of palmetto logs.

The irregularity of the fort's southern embankment suggests at first that the person or persons laying out the fort were not trained engineers. While this is a distinct possibility, it can also be said that whoever designed the fort very cleverly used the landscape in his plan of defense. Perhaps because of economic considerations the design of the fort was "irregular" or shorter on the south side precisely because of the large protective marsh area to the south of the fort. The irregularity of the design may also have resulted from piece-meal type construction with the water battery being constructed first and the west and south embankments added at a later date (see Figure 12).

The unusually good preservation of Fort Morris as compared with the apparent non-existence of fortifications in the outer defense system of Sunbury as indicated on the Campbell map is probably due to the following factors:

1. The sand embankments at Fort Morris includes organic midden and shell from prehistoric shell heaps that were partially destroyed in the construction and revetment of colonial and/or Revolutionary period fortifications. The organic soils and shell would have helped the embankments retain plasticity better than the sandier soils outside

the immediate Fort Morris site. Structurally this type of fill would retain its form without wooden supports.

2. The outer defense system surrounding the town was several times more extensive in length than Fort Morris and would have required continual upkeep. These works fell into disuse and as the timbers rotted away the sand-filled parapets (where they existed) were probably eroded by agriculture, wind, water, and traffic in and out of Sunbury.

3. Fort Morris was in an out-of-the-way area below the town and less subject to everyday wear and tear while the outer works obstructed the free movement of animals and people moving in and out of town.

4. Fort Morris, unlike the outer works, was reveted during the War of 1812-15.

5. Fort Morris was designed as a water battery for the purpose of defending the river approaches to Sunbury. Consequently, the embankments were probably much more substantially constructed than these surrounding the town.

In summary, of the evidence supporting a continuity between the Colonial and Revolutionary patterns of fortification at Sunbury, the following points are emphasized:

1. Orders for entrenchments to be improved about Sunbury were in existence prior to Congressional approval in July 1776 for a "new" fort to be garrisoned by an artillery company at Sunbury.
2. General Robert Howe recommended a dual fortification system at Sunbury from Charleston, South Carolina in September, 1776. This proposal included a fort in the position occupied by the existing fort. Howe also recommended the use of palmetto logs which suggests that he was impressed by the Sullivan's Island fortifications.
3. By April, 1777 there were separate duties for soldiers outside the lines at Sunbury and at the "Battery."
4. By April, 1778 inner and outer defensive works that included an unmanageable outer line and a cramped inner stockade were in use at Fort Howe to the south of Sunbury. Fort Howe and Fort Morris were contemporary structures, and there is a close resemblance between Grimke's complaints about Fort Howe and General Howe's complaints about Fort Morris at his court martial.
5. Executive orders for March 24th, 1778 describe at least two sets of works at Sunbury and the need to complete them as quickly as possible.



6. As previously discussed,<sup>216</sup> the logistics of both the November, 1778 and the January, 1779 British attacks on Sunbury and Fort Morris, including General Prevost's one night delay at "the gate" in the final attack, supports the idea of a fortification pattern that included an outer "line" of defense and the small "battery" known as Fort Morris.
7. There is a probable correspondence between the 1760 report on the five bastioned fort that was being built at Sunbury and the outer fortification illustrated for Sunbury on the 1778 Campbell map.
8. Debrahm's fortification concepts probably influenced both the Colonial and Revolutionary fortifications at Sunbury.
9. The Campbell map, illustrating an outer and inner fortification, is compatible with both the Colonial and Revolutionary period documentation for the site.
10. The Debrahm-Stewart map of 1780 and the Thomas Bacon map of 1786 place a fortification in the location occupied by Fort Morris on the 1778 Campbell map.

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<sup>216</sup>For detailed discussion of this matter, see pp. above.

11. More than 2500 Colonial and Revolutionary period artifacts were excavated from the parade at Fort Morris in 1971. No 19th century artifacts were found in these excavations.

12. The placement of Fort Morris on the 1778 Campbell map, the 1780 Debrahm-Stewart map and the 1780 Thomas Bacon map is consistent in each case with the description by Revolutionary soldier and historian Hugh McCall of the location of the Fort opposite the marsh island. This ideal defensive position of the fort enabled a defense of both the front and back river approaches to Sunbury. These geographic circumstances concerning the defense of Sunbury between the Colonial and Revolutionary periods did not change, and it is entirely probable that the Colonial fortification built low down on the water and in a very proper position for defending the river at Sunbury is on the same site occupied by Fort Morris.

#### The Location of Fort Morris; A Summary of Sources

The following chronological chart is a summary of the evidence relevant to identifying the existing fortification at Sunbury with Fort Morris, the primary fortification at Sunbury during the Revolution.

## Chart 1

A Chronological Summary of Documentary Evidence  
for the Location of Fort Morris

September

1756 A Colonial fort is built at Sunbury. The location of this fort is consistent with the site location of the existing fort.

February

1757 Debrahm becomes fortifications advisor to Henry Ellis, Governor of Georgia.

September

1757 Ellis reports that new fortifications of earth and wood are being built.

August

1760 Ellis reports a good log fort at Sunbury.

November

1760 Local representatives report the partial completion of a 5 bastioned fort. This description is very similar to the picture of the outer fortification at Sunbury on the 1778 Campbell map.

November

1762 Part of the log fort at Sunbury fell down.

February

1762 Gov. Wright reports an act to erect two fortifications at Sunbury, one of which is described as a battery.

February

1763 Francis Arthur is granted funds for a fort at Sunbury.

June

1776 Council of Safety orders Col. Baker to complete previously existing entrenchments about Sunbury.

July 5,

1776 Congress reports that a fort is to be built and garrisoned by a company of artillery at Sunbury.



- July 6,  
1776 Sullivan's Island fortification in Charleston harbor is bombarded by the British Navy.
- July 30,  
1776 A Mr. Andrew requests money on an existing account for a battery in Sunbury.
- September 20,  
1776 General Robert Howe at Charleston recommends fortification materials for Sunbury that strongly suggests a Debrahm-type fortification similar to the fort on Sullivan's island. Howe also recommends a dual fortification pattern at Sunbury and specifies the location of a fort in the present location of Fort Morris.
- April  
1777 A dual pattern of soldiers duties is outlined for town and fort by Samuel Elbert at Sunbury.
- December  
1777 A dual pattern of soldier's duties is outlined for town and fort by Samuel Elbert at Sunbury.
- March 12,  
1778 Col. Brown of the Florida Rangers attacks Fort Barrington on the Altamaha River signaling the beginning of intensive conflict in Georgia.
- March 24,  
1778 Executive Council of Georgia orders the completion of the "battery" and other public works in Sunbury.
- November  
1778 Fort Morris is besieged by forces from St. Augustine. Logistics of the siege suggest that Fort Morris was located in its present location south of Sunbury.
- December  
1778 General Lincoln describes the British Siege of a small fort at Sunbury.

December

1778 Savannah is captured by Lieut. Col. Archibald Campbell.

December

1778 Campbell prepares a map of Georgia that includes a sketch of the fortifications at Sunbury.

January

1779 Fort Morris is captured by General Prevost and renamed Fort George. The logistics of the battle including a bombardment from the north end of Sunbury suggests the location of Fort Morris at the site of the existing fort. A dual pattern of fortification is indicated by Prevost's delay "at the gate" for one night before taking control of the garrison.

1780 Campbell's map is published in England. This map locates Fort Morris at the existing fort opposite the marsh island as described by Hugh McCall. The form of the existing fort agrees with Campbell's map, and a dual pattern of fortification including an outer stockade that closely resembles the 1760 Colonial fort of "earth and wood" at Sunbury is indicated.

1780 The Debrahm-Stewart map is published in England. A Fort is located at the site of the present fortification below the town of Sunbury.

1786 Thomas Bacon locates a fortification on the site of the present fortification in a land survey south of Sunbury.

1814 Hugh McCall writes his first volume on the Revolution in Georgia. His description of the Sunbury action in January, 1779 places Fort Morris in the location of the present fort and is consistent with the three known 18th century maps that locate Fort Morris on the site of the existing fort.

1815 Gadsen describes a revetment of a fortification in the location of the existing fort. The form of the fort according to this description is consistent with the "picture" of Fort Morris detailed in the Campbell map.

- 1849 George White describes the ruins of a fort at Sunbury.
- 1854 White publishes a letter by John Couper, representative of Glenn County in the 1777 Constitutional Convention. Couper described the fort at Sunbury that was besieged in November 1778 as a small fort.
- 1876 Samuel Fleming at C. C. Jones, Jr.'s request surveys the Fort at Sunbury.
- 1875 Dr. James Holmes publishes an account of events at Sunbury that supports a description of the revetment of Fort Morris in the War of 1812-15 by an unknown author.
- 1878 C. C. Jones, Jr. publishes his essay on Sunbury in The Dead Towns of Georgia.
- 1971 More than 2500 Colonial and Revolutionary period artifacts are excavated inside Fort Morris. No 19th century material is found.



## CHAPTER V

### ARCHAEOLOGY

#### Methods of Excavation

For both mapping and excavation purposes a grid system oriented with the cardinal directions was established with the Fort located northeast of the grid axes. The directional orientation of the site itself as indicated by the eastern parapet, (opposite the gate, see Figure 12) is  $6^{\circ} 25'$  East of North. Grid control was established at Station A at North 300' East 300', (see Figure 12).

In order to facilitate level readings in the excavation units the 0.0' datum was placed at the +8.0' contour of the readings established in the topographic mapping system (Figure 12). This system placed the 0.0' level just above the highest part of the parapet and thereby allowed all parts of the site to be referred to at some elevation below the datum. For purposes of contour mapping a separate 0.0' datum was established on the parade such that all readings on the parapet were above the 0.0' point. For example, Station "L" in the bottom right hand corner of the topographic map in Figure 12 at N 100.00' E 87.42' is 2.59' below datum according

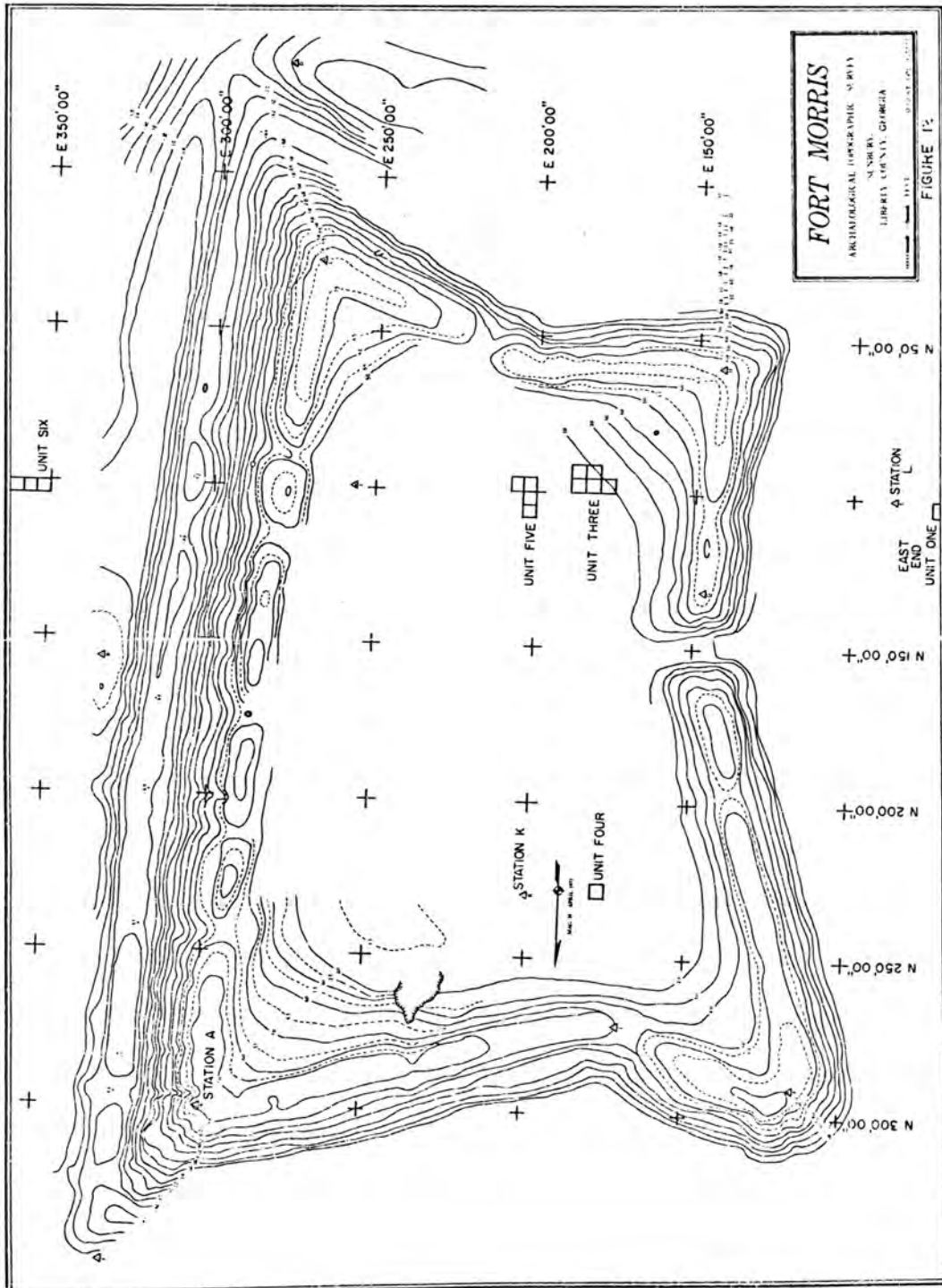


FIGURE 12

to the mapping system of contour intervals in Figure 12. But, for purposes of controlling the vertical measurements in the excavation, point "L" on the map is 10.59' below datum.

Three excavation units outside the fort and three excavation units within the fort were located according to this grid. The standard system of five-by-five foot squares was used in all units with the exception of Excavation Unit Two, which is outside the fort. This small unit was dug perpendicular to a depression that was thought to be an old road trace to the fort. No evidence of a road was forthcoming, although significant evidence regarding the prehistoric occupations in the fort area was obtained. Due to unit two's distance from the fort it does not appear in Figure 12.

With only two minor exceptions where obviously sterile overburden was being removed, all excavated soils were screened. A  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch hardware cloth mounted in portable hand screens of the "rocker" type was used throughout the excavation.

Both arbitrary and natural levels were used according to circumstances within each unit (see following discussion of excavation units). After closing the excavation in the late fall of 1971, a small amount of vandalism occurred at the site, resulting in some of the



balk areas in unit three of the excavation being dug out. There were also some difficulties arising from transportation of excavated artifacts from the field, and the provenience on approximately 3% of the excavated materials was lost. Since all significant items were recorded and described in the field at the time of excavation it is not felt that this loss has significantly altered conclusions based on the 1971 field season.

### Soils

A soil survey was conducted in 1973 by the U.S.D.A., Soil Conservation Service, Hinesville, Georgia, in cooperation with the Coastal Soil and Water Conservation District.<sup>1</sup> The Survey was made by walking over the site and taking soil samples with a six foot auger.<sup>2</sup> The entire Fort area on the bluff was described by the U.S.D.A. as consisting of Lakeland Fine Sand.<sup>3</sup> The only parts of the 1971 season excavation that were dug in areas not defined by the U.S.D.A. as Lakeland Fine Sand were the western end of unit I and all of unit II,

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<sup>1</sup>U.S.D.A., Soil Conservation Service, Inventory and Evaluation for Fort Morris Historic Area, Liberty County, Georgia. Done in cooperation with the Coastal Soil and Water Conservation District, 1973. P. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

both of which were outside the western embankments of the fortifications. All of unit II and the western end of unit I were within the soil zone defined by the U.S.D.A. as Chipley fine sand.

The U.S.D.A. definition of Lakeland and Chipley fine sands are as follows:

Chipley fine sand, moderately well drained

This is a moderately well drained soil that has a fine sand texture down to at least 70 inches. Typically, the surface layer, about 10 inches thick, is very dark grey overlying a light yellowish brown layer. Gray mottles begin at about 30 inches below the surface and increase in size and number with depth. The soil has rapid permeability and a seasonal high water table that rises to within 30 inches of the surface.<sup>4</sup>

Lakeland fine sand

This is a well drained soil that occurs on the Bluff adjacent to the marshland. The texture is fine sand down to at least 70 inches. The surface layer is very dark grayish brown in color and is about 10 inches thick. This overlies a yellowish brown fine sand layer. Light gray mottles begin at about 40 inches below the surface and increase in size and number with depth. The depth to the seasonal high water table is about 40 inches. The permeability is rapid.<sup>5</sup>

The soils in the fort area, though sandy, were generally compact enough to provide stable profiles in the

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

relatively shallow depths of the various excavation units.

Features as a general rule were difficult to distinguish within these sandy soils. This was largely due to several factors; leaching of humus and oyster shells, the oxidation of frequently occurring iron objects, as well as the vegetative and faunal disturbances associated with a rich semi-tropical environment conducive to plant and animal growth.

Man-made disturbances adding to the problem of defining features in the area include the probable demolition of any structures left standing at the time of the British excavation and the disturbance of prehistoric midden when the Fort was first constructed.

### Summary of Excavation Units

#### Unit One

##### Location and Objectives

Unit one is an east-west oriented trench measuring 50 feet by 5 feet and located at N 100' E 30', (see Figure 12). This was the first large unit of the 1971 season and was designed to accomplish three goals. Normally, seacoast fortifications during the colonial period in South Carolina and Georgia included a log palisade outside the moat. A typical description of a coastal earthwork fort has been given in Iver's Colonial Forts of



### South Carolina, 1670-1775:

The defensive works of an earthwork fort consisted of a dry moat, an earthen wall with a bastion or half bastion at each corner, and a log palisade planted outside the moat, in the moat, or atop the earthen wall. Those works were designed to protect the garrison from cannon fire and to prevent an attacking force from gaining entrance into the fort. The bastions protruded beyond the walls allowing the defenders to fire in an arc of 270 degrees or more raking the walls to either side. The Forts' outlines were either rectangular or triangular.<sup>6</sup>

The first objective in planning Unit I was to test for an outer palisade; the second was to provide an area outside the more sensitive features of the fort for training the less experienced members of the field crew in basic excavation techniques; and, three, to gain a better perspective of the stratigraphy in the bluff area on which the fort is located before moving any of the crew inside the fort.

### General Stratigraphy, Features, and Artifacts

Four clearly distinguishable soil zones were observed to be continuous throughout the unit (see Figures 13 - 23) Zone A. This was a light tan sand and represented the lowest zone encountered throughout the unit.

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<sup>6</sup>Larry E. Ivers. Colonial Forts of South Carolina, 1670-1775. Tricentennial Booklet Number Three, published by the University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, S.C. P. 24.

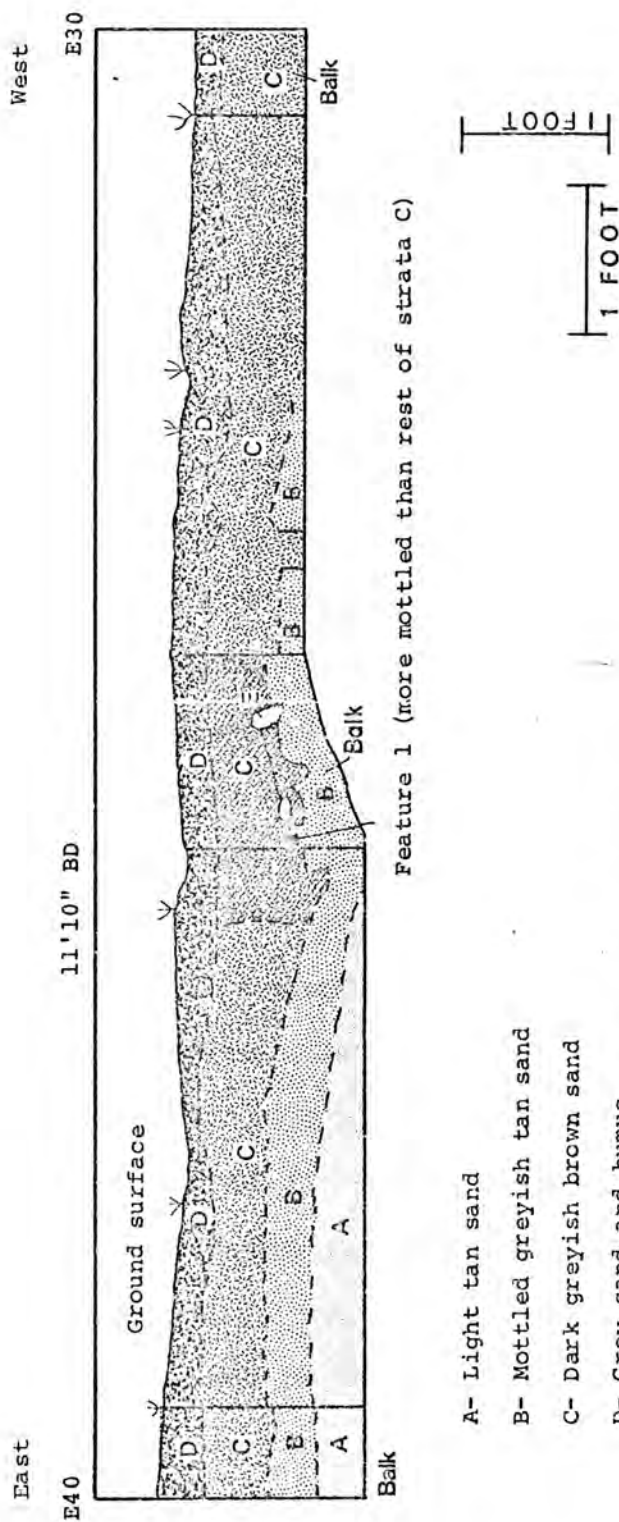


Figure 13

UNIT ONE

N100 E30 & 35  
South Profile

Feature 6 as discussed in detail below, (see Figure 22) penetrated zone A into a cream colored sand at 14'5" below datum.

As a general rule Zone A was largely sterile except for occasional occurrences of Fibre tempered sherds and shell. The light tan sand represented by Zone A was found to exist throughout the site and with the underlying cream colored sand probably represents the original Holocene deposits at the site.

Zone B. Mottled light greyish tan sand overlying Zone A. This zone contained occasional fibre tempered sherds with a few coastal Lamar and Colonial artifacts. The Colonial artifacts may have been intrusive. This level also contained numerous stains from the leaching of shell deposits in Zone C.

Zone C. Dark greyish brown sand overlying Zone B. This zone contained scattered shell throughout with numerous occurrences of coastal Lamar pottery. Most of the Colonial artifacts recovered from Unit I were in this zone as were all of the recognizable features. Coastal Lamar and Colonial occupations were mixed within the zone.

Zone D. Grey sand and humus. Generally this zone was lighter than the underlying C horizon. The upper three inches of this zone is identified as modern humus. Activity of roots and burrowing animals resulted in this level



containing some material from all of the occupations.

#### Feature 1

Feature 1, as shown in Figures 13-15, began to appear at 12'0" B.D. or at the intersection of zones C and D (see Figure 13). The feature consisted primarily of an area of darker soil than that surrounding it and contained several coastal Lamar sherds and oyster shells. When troweled out, feature one proved to be a roughly basin-shaped pit sloping downward in a northwesterly direction to more or less a point at 12'10" B.D. The pit was filled with about 50% oyster shell and about 50% dark brown midden. There were six small sherds of plain Lamaroid type pottery and five small brick fragments at the top of the pit area, and three small grid tempered sherds were found in the pit fill about five inches below the surface of the pit.

Immediately below Feature 1 shell fragments became smaller and more dispersed. This more dispersed scattering of shell produced a fibre-tempered sherd.

#### Features 2 and 4

Located in the eastern end of N 100'E 45' and the western end of N 100' E 50', these two features upon excavation proved to be interrelated. Feature two was plainly visible in the south profiles of N 100' E45' and N 100' E50' (see Figures 16 and 17). Feature two became

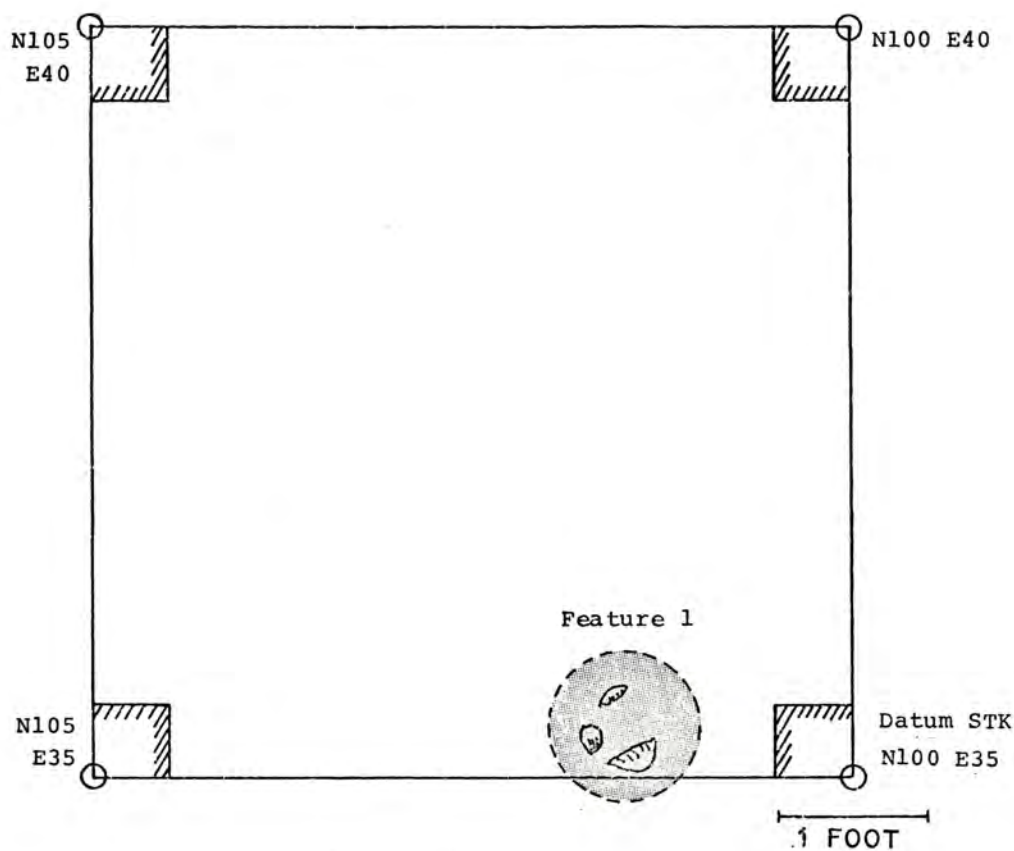
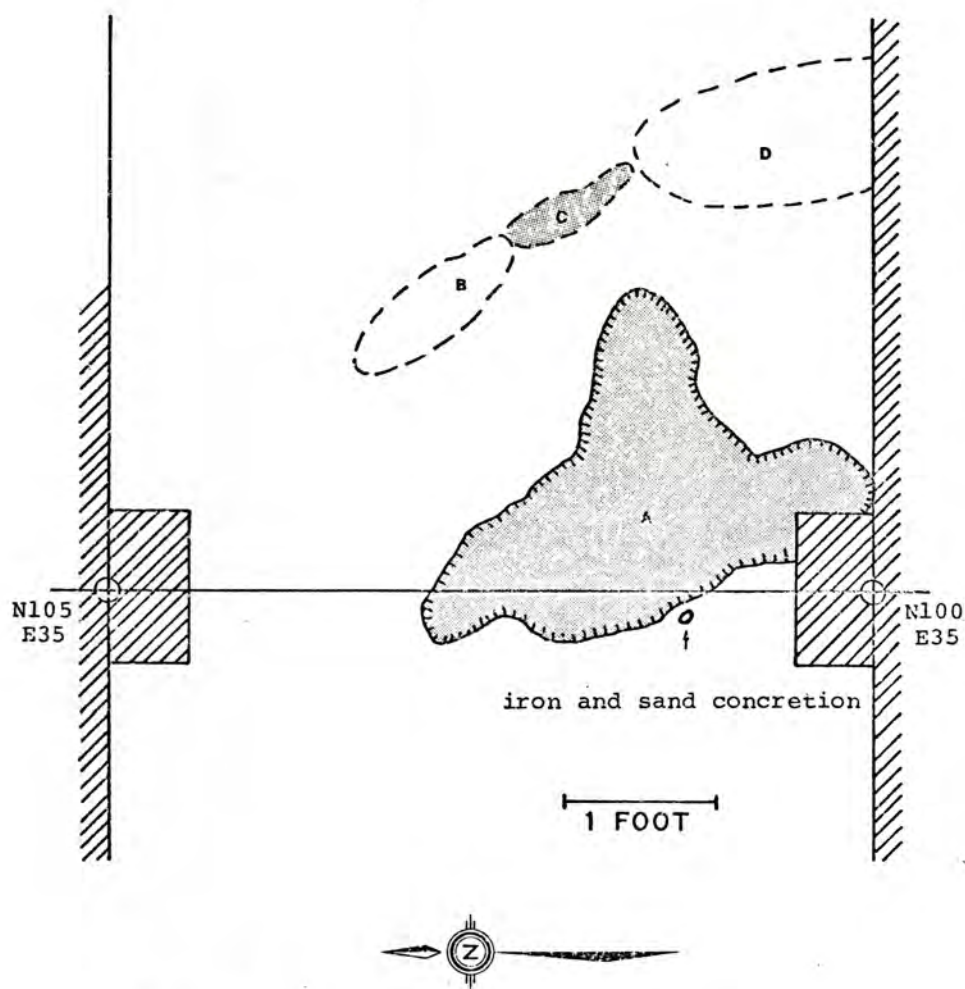


Figure 14

UNIT ONE

N100 E35

Feature 1 at 12'0" BD

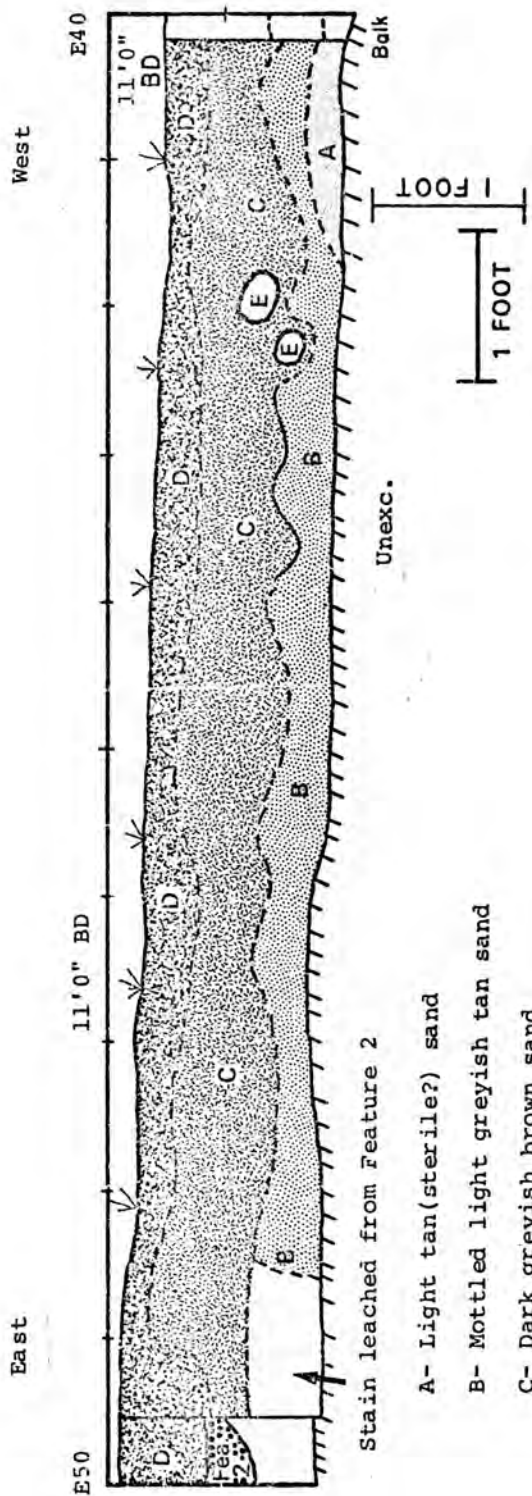


- A- Feature One
- B- Shell at 12' 5"
- C- Charcoal at 12' 5"
- D- Pile of shells at 12' 0"

Figure 15

UNIT ONE  
Feature 1- at 12' 3"  
below datum





- A- Light tan(sterile?) sand
- B- Mottled light greyish tan sand
- C- Dark greyish brown sand
- D- Grey sand and humus
- E- Light tan sand (indicates disturbance)

Figure 16  
UNIT ONE  
N100 E40&45  
SOUTH WALL

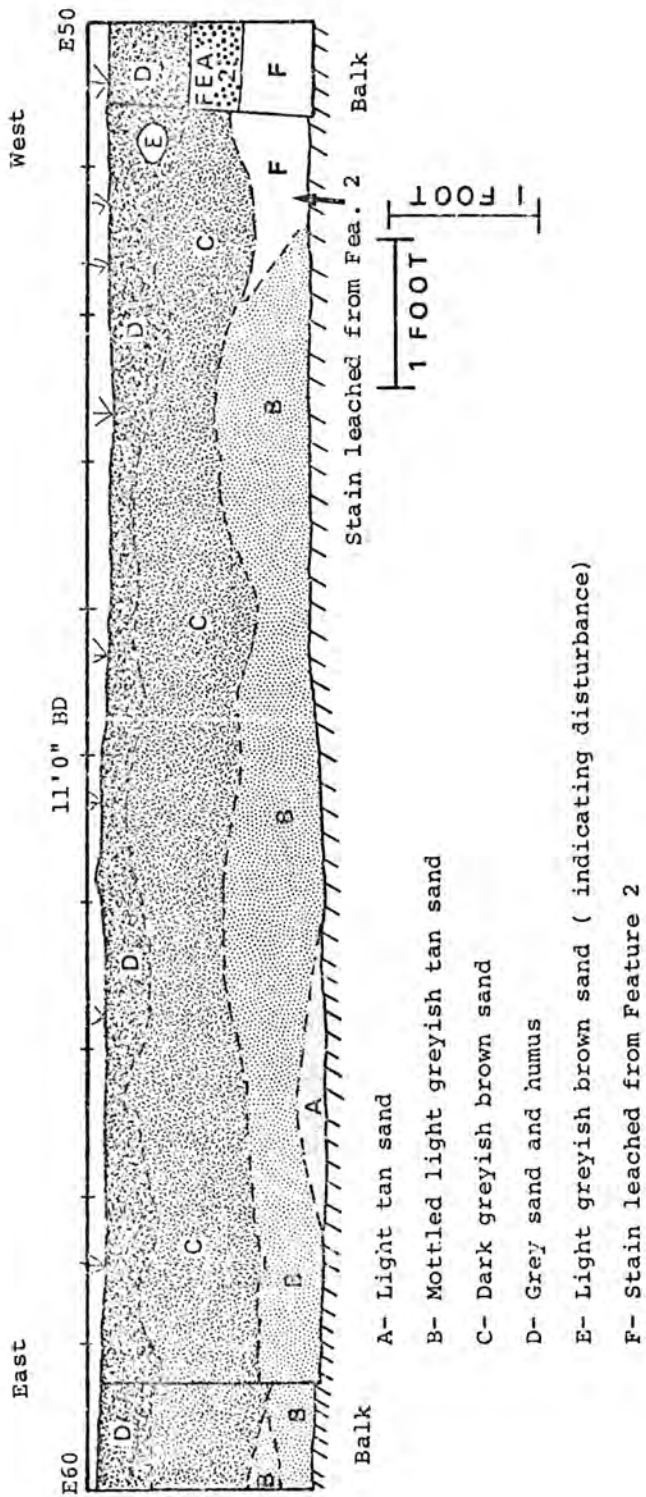


Figure 17

UNIT ONE  
N100 E50&55  
SOUTH WALL

visible with removal of the top few inches of humus and grey sand. Feature 4 proved to be a brown stain that became visible in the area surrounding Feature 2, (see Figure 18). Feature 4 was visible from one side of the trench to the other but did not show up in the profiles. While Feature 2 was largely shell it also contained a very dark almost black soil that sharply contrasted with the brown stain represented as Feature 4.

Following removal of the shell a dark grey stain appeared beneath Figure 2 that extended from 11'11" to 12'10" B.D. It was the author's impression that Feature 2 was probably a pile of shell and midden rather than a pit because of the charcoal like stain beneath the shell. This stain suggested that the shell pile had been "roasted" from a surface originating in Zone B. The dark grey stain did not produce any recoverable carbon samples but did give the appearance of a completely leached out mass of charcoal. There were many small pieces of shell above the concentration of larger oyster shells in Feature 2 in Zone D as well as some fresh bark indicating possible disturbances.

The cultural affiliation of Features 2 and 4 can not be established with certainty. Fragments of colonial brick as well as coastal Lamar sherds occurred in Feature 2. It is the author's interpretation that Feature 2 is aboriginal



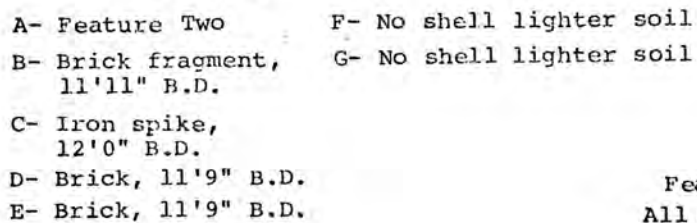


Figure 18

## UNIT ONE

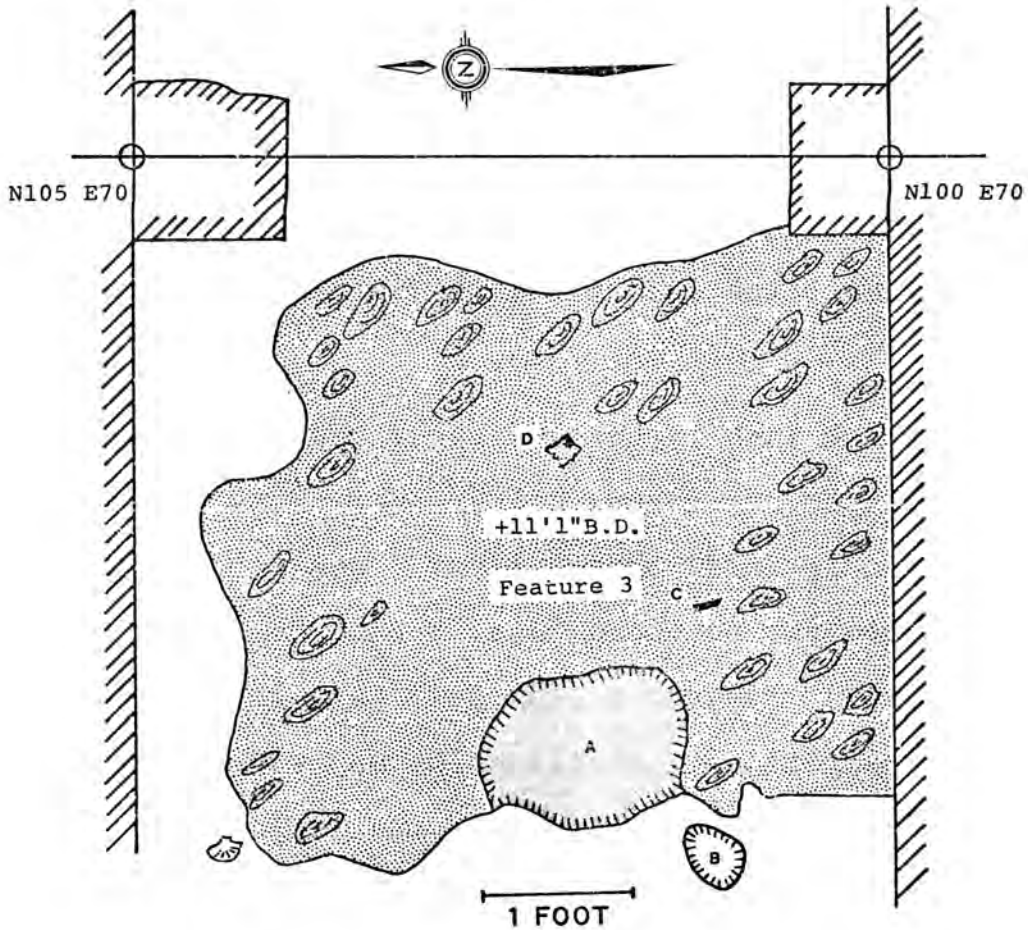
Features 2 & 4  
All area not  
included in A and  
between dotted  
lines is Feature 4  
at 11'11" BD.

and that the colonial material was introduced by disturbance.

It is possible given the discoloration of the soil in Features 2 and 4 that the palisade that we were searching for passed through this part of the trench, but there was no specific evidence indicating a palisade.

### Feature 3

This feature, located in N100'.00" E65'.00", was a compact mass of oyster shell about four inches thick. Beneath the shells was an extremely dark soil with a high charcoal content. On the western side of the feature (see Figure 19), there was a definite hearth area approximately one foot in diameter and composed of finely crushed and charred shell. The shell in Feature 2 seemed to be piled on a surface at 11'6" B.D. and the total feature area resembled a pile rather than a pit, although there could well have been a fire beneath the feature. Feature 3 proved to be more extensive in profile than was evident in shovel shaving, (see Figure 20). There were several Indian artifacts in addition to a larger quantity of colonial material on top of the feature resembling the same pattern of occurrence as found in features one and two. A colonial pipe stem fragment as well as a piece of square olive green colonial bottle was found on top of the feature. Indian artifacts in-



- A- Charred and finely crushed oyster shell (Hearth?)
- B- Charred and finely crushed oyster shell (Hearth?)
- C- Colonial pipestem, 11'2" B.D.
- D- Sherd abrader (Irene)

Figure 19  
UNIT ONE  
Feature 3

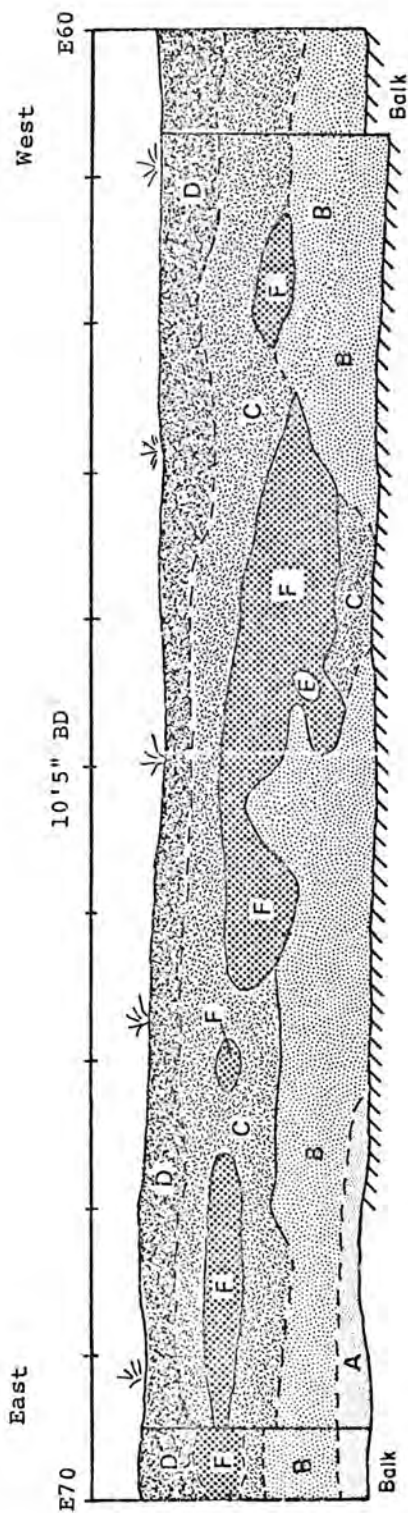


cluded two Lamar bold incised sherds and one sherd abrader. The shell in Feature 3 could be either colonial or aboriginal in origin. The mechanical mixing of materials and the absence of artifacts that would adequately define Feature 3 leaves the origin of the feature unknown. However, the general impression was that Feature 3 was probably aboriginal in origin and was subsequently disturbed by colonial activity.

#### Feature 6

Feature 6 was an irregular band of dark mottled soil that extended across the trench from north to south. This band of soil was 9 to 14 inches thick within Zone C. This irregular band of soil produced several colonial artifacts including an iron key, a fragment from a square olive green bottle, an unidentified iron fragment and several pieces of brick. The square bottle fragment was extensively chipped on one edge. Chipped glass scrapers have been noted on a number of colonial sites and may possibly indicate an adapted use of a broken glass fragment by an Indian using a traditional scraper form. Unfortunately this artifact as well as the iron key were lost in transporting the material from the field.

The meaning of Feature 6 remains unclear. Perhaps this stained band containing colonial artifacts represents the soil and artifacts thrown from the nearby moat



A- Light tan (sterile?) sand

B- Mottled light greyish tan sand

C- Dark greyish brown sand (mottled)

D- Grey sand and humus

E- Light tan sand (indicates disturbance)

F- Feature 3, blackish tan sand with much organic matter, some shell

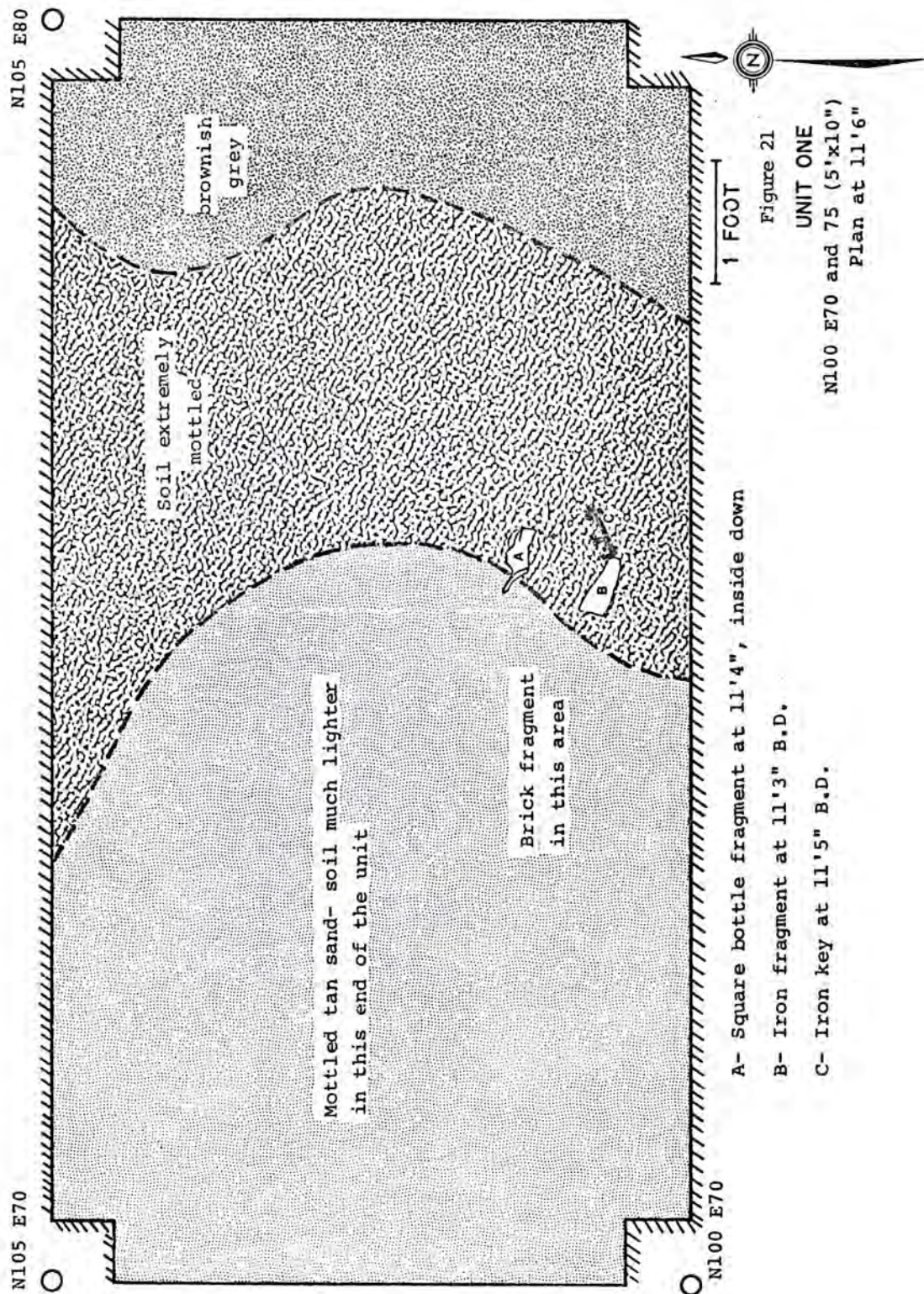
Figure 20

UNIT ONE

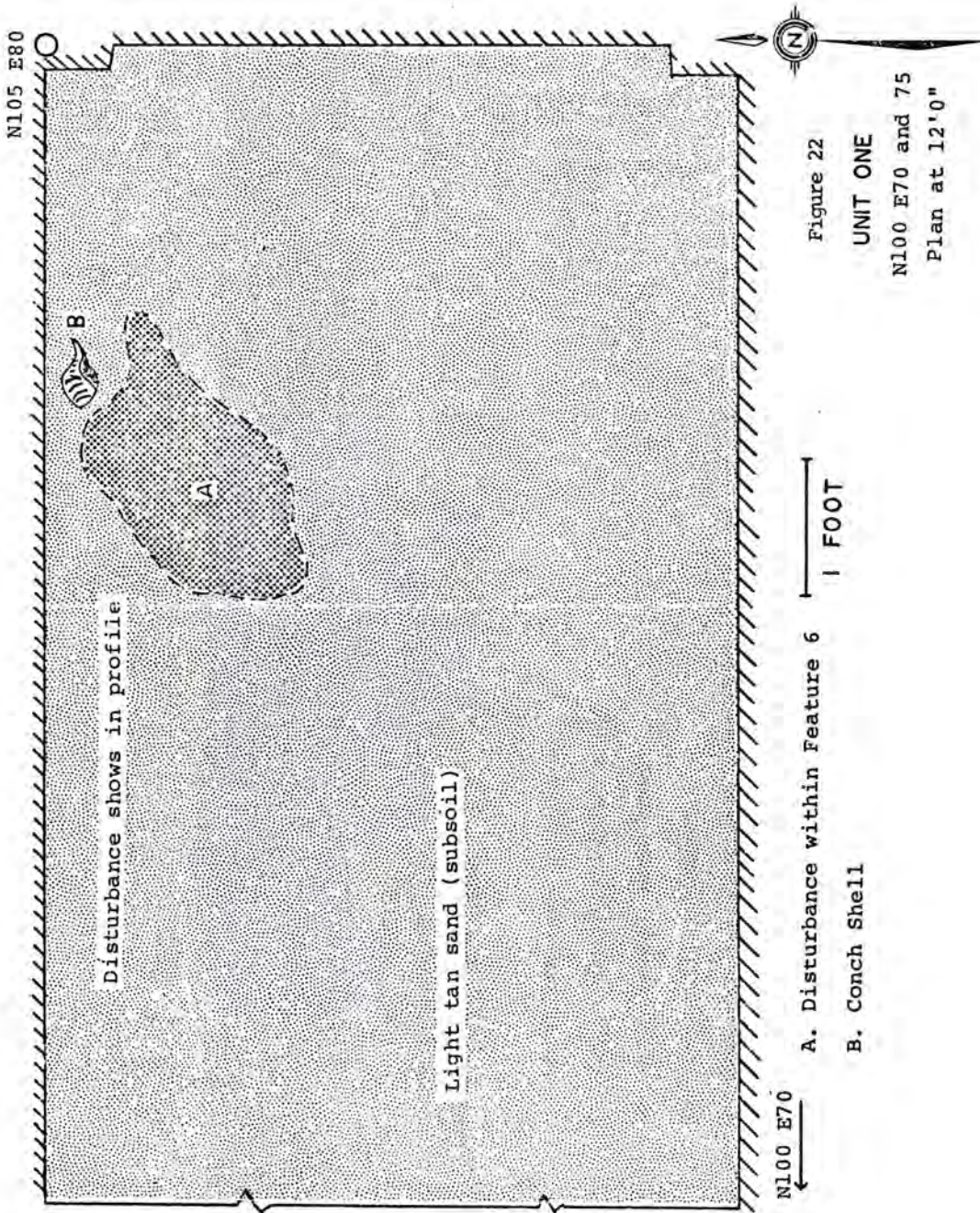
N100 E60-65

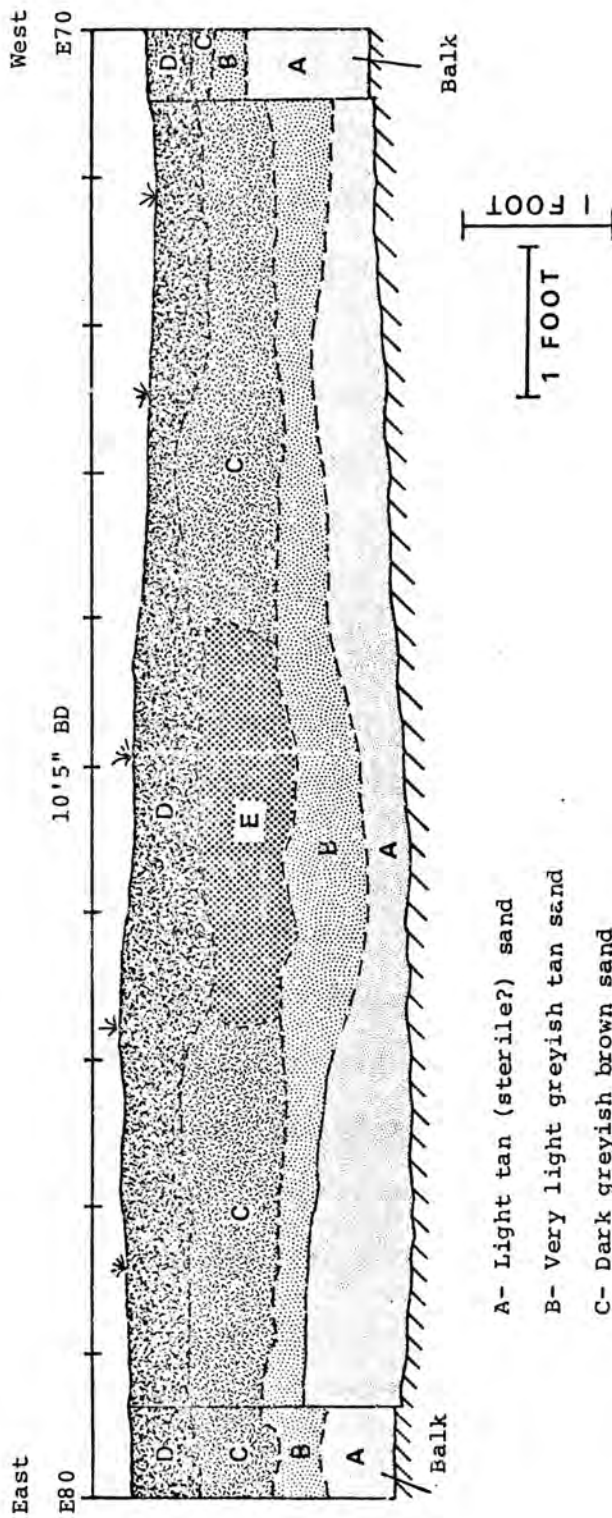
South Wall











A- Light tan (sterile?) sand

B- Very light greyish tan sand

C- Dark greyish brown sand

D- grey sand and humus

E- Very mottled area with both very light and very dark soil mixed. May be associated with colonial artifacts found in this area.

Figure 23

UNIT ONE

N100 E70 and 75

South Wall



during revetment of the fortification in 1814, (see Figure 12 and Figures 21-23).<sup>7</sup>

Within Feature 6 near the northeastern corner of N1C0 E175 a disturbance was located that extended from 12' B.D. to 14'4" below datum. This disturbance appeared to be a burned out stump hole filled in with top soil or a collapsed animal burrow filled with topsoil and later enlarged by root action. This disturbance in Feature 6 did provide evidence of a cream colored sand beneath the lowest zone in the trench. This cream colored sand was found at the bottom of all other excavation units in the 1971 season.

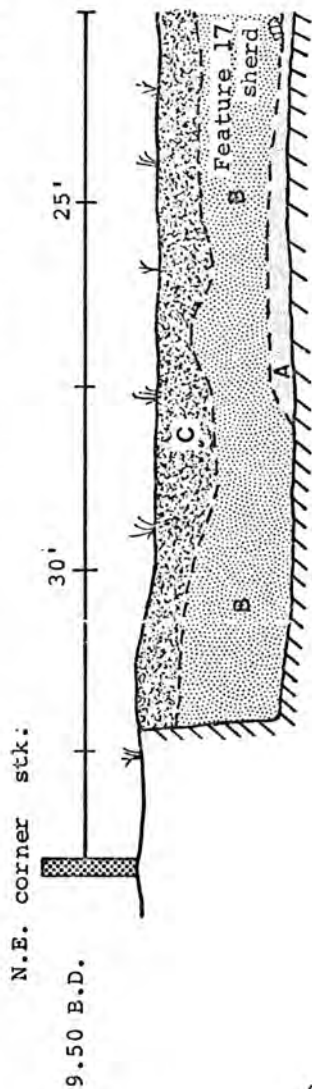
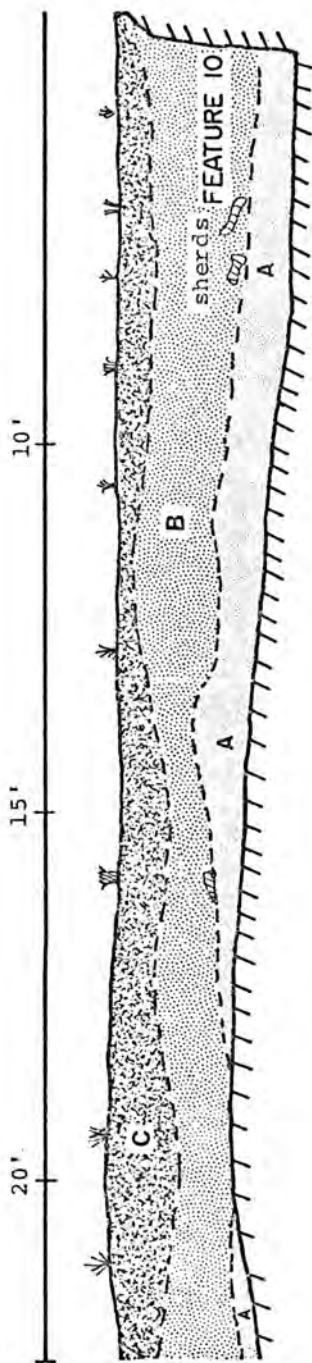
#### Unit Two

This small excavation beyond the Fort was located approximately 180' northwest of Datum L, (179'6" N 21° 25'W). Excavation was carried out to inspect a possible road leading from Fort Morris to Sunbury. The results were largely negative in that no subsurface evidence for a road (colonial or otherwise) was forthcoming.

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<sup>7</sup>During the 1971 season the moat was not completely mapped on the north, south or west sides of the fort. The east end of Unit One was within 20 feet of the western moat (see Figure 12).





Vertical scale

Horizontal scale

1 FOOT

Vertical scale is exaggerated

- A Light tan sand
- B Greyish tan sand
- C Grey sand and humus

Figure 24

UNIT TWO  
Profile of South Wall of Unit Two

In the first six inches of the excavation the following artifacts were found; an iron kettle fragment and one small fragment of English delft, three Altamaha line block sherds and two coastal Lamar bold incised sherds. A Deptford occupation and evidence for the fibre tempered occupation noted for Unit I was also found in Unit II.

Feature 10 (Figure 24) was a loosely massed concentration of sherds covering about a five foot square area. There were 83 sherds, most of which belonged to one partially restorable Deptford linear checked vessel. A single quartz Savannah River type point was found about ten inches beneath the Deptford feature. Feature 17 was a small group of 12 sand tempered sherds found in the south profile of the excavation about 12 feet from Feature 10 at the interface of the greyish tan sand and the light tan sand (see Figure 24).

### Unit Three

This unit contained five standard five foot squares located inside the parade area behind the southwest bastion. On the grid these squares are N95 E175, N95 E180, N95 E185, N90 E180, and N90 E185 (see Figure 12 and Plates 18-19). This unit was designed to give stratigraphic information concerning the relationship between the parade and the parapet without disturbing the latter. Data from this unit when combined with other evidence from Units one, four and





Plate 18

South end of the parade with unit three in the foreground and unit  
five in the background



five produced a hypothesis concerning the modification of the bluff area where Fort Morris is located as well as several insights into the possible construction of the fort. These are discussed at the end of Chapter IV.

The Fort Morris occupation was represented by a greyish tan midden which contained a large quantity of late 18th century artifacts. In fact this greyish tan midden, present in all units on the parade, contained 95% of all recovered material dating to the late colonial or Revolutionary War period. In the West face of N95 E175 at the point in the excavation nearest the parapet and at 7'9" below datum, what appeared as an *old land surface (clods of humus, etc.) was clearly visible*. This stratum is illustrated in the West profile (Figure 25) and will be referred to in later discussion as the pre-Fort Morris humus zone.

In all squares of this Unit the highest soil zone was a grey sand and humus. This was underlain by the greyish tan sand midden containing the Fort Morris occupation. Throughout most of the Unit a light tan sand underlay the midden. A few fibre tempered sherds occurred near the top of the stratum but for the most part it was sterile. A small test placed in square N95 E175 showed that the light tan sand rapidly graded into a sterile cream colored sand.

6'4" B.D.

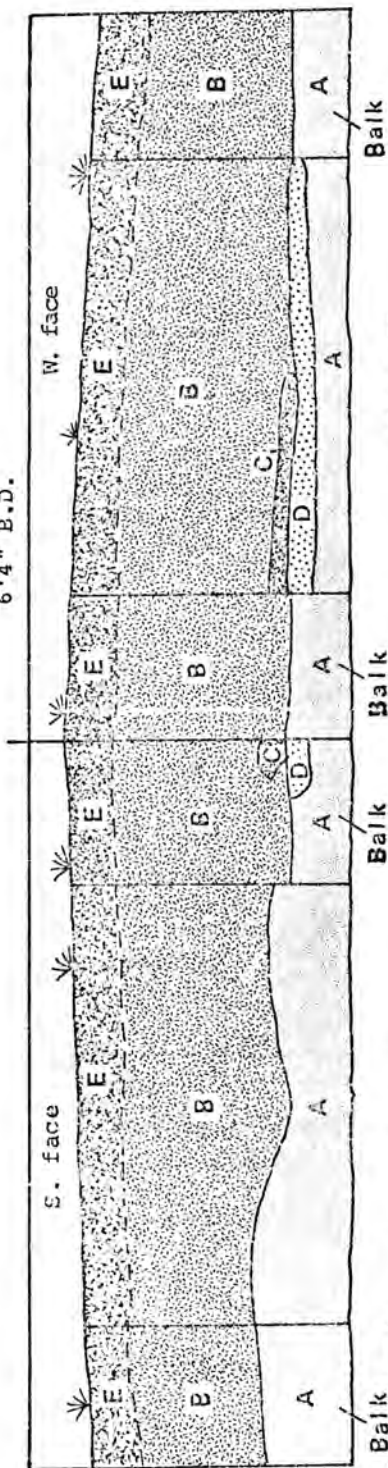


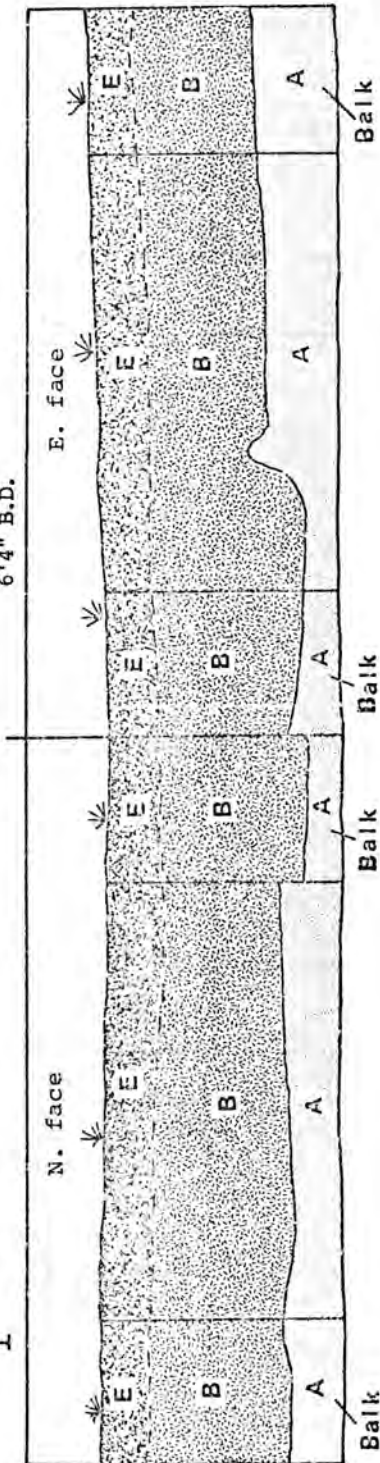
Figure 25

### UNIT THREE

NORTH, SOUTH, EAST, AND WEST PROFILES  
OF N95 E175

- A- Light tan sand
- B- Greyish tan sand
- C- Grey sand Old Humus Line
- D- White sand
- E = Grey sand and humus

6'4" B.D.



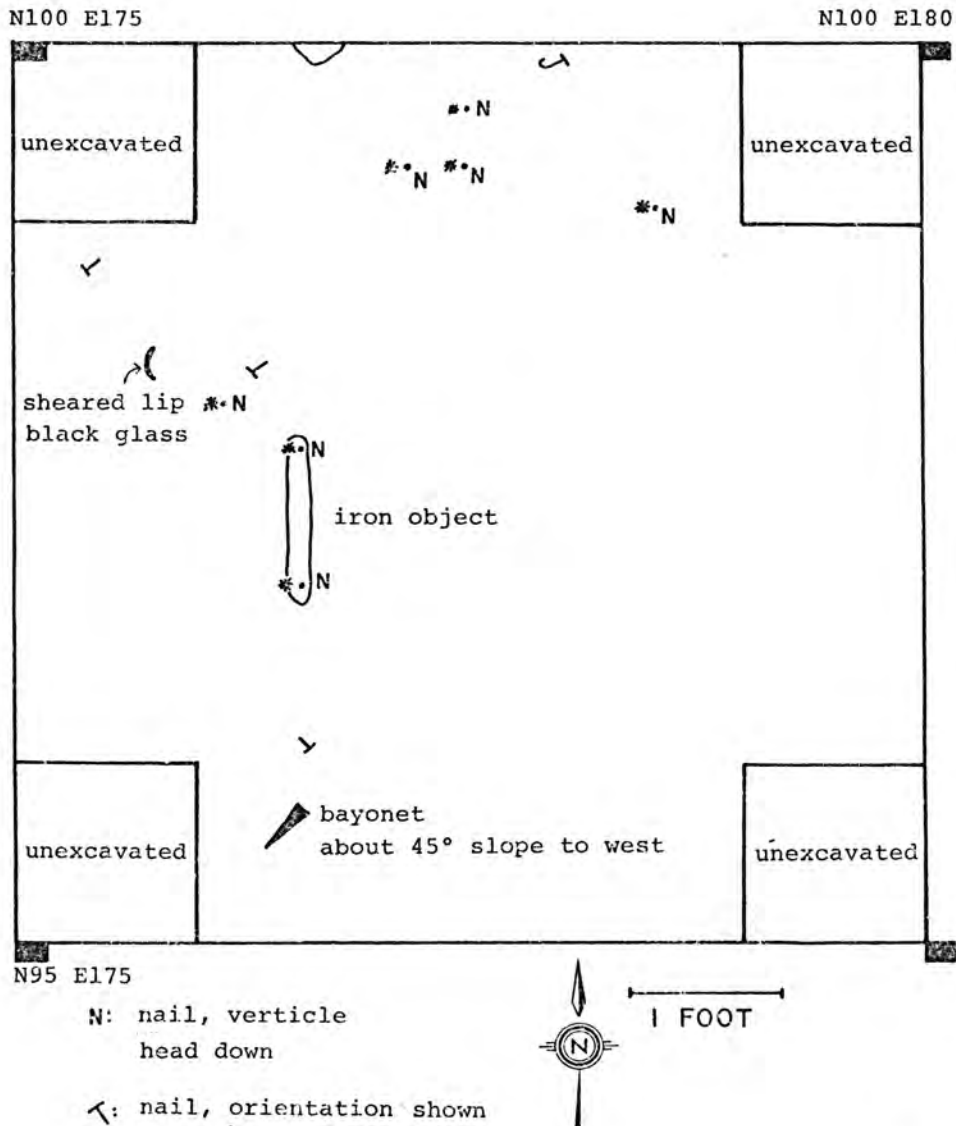


Figure 26

UNIT THREE  
N95 E175  
Plan at 7'5"



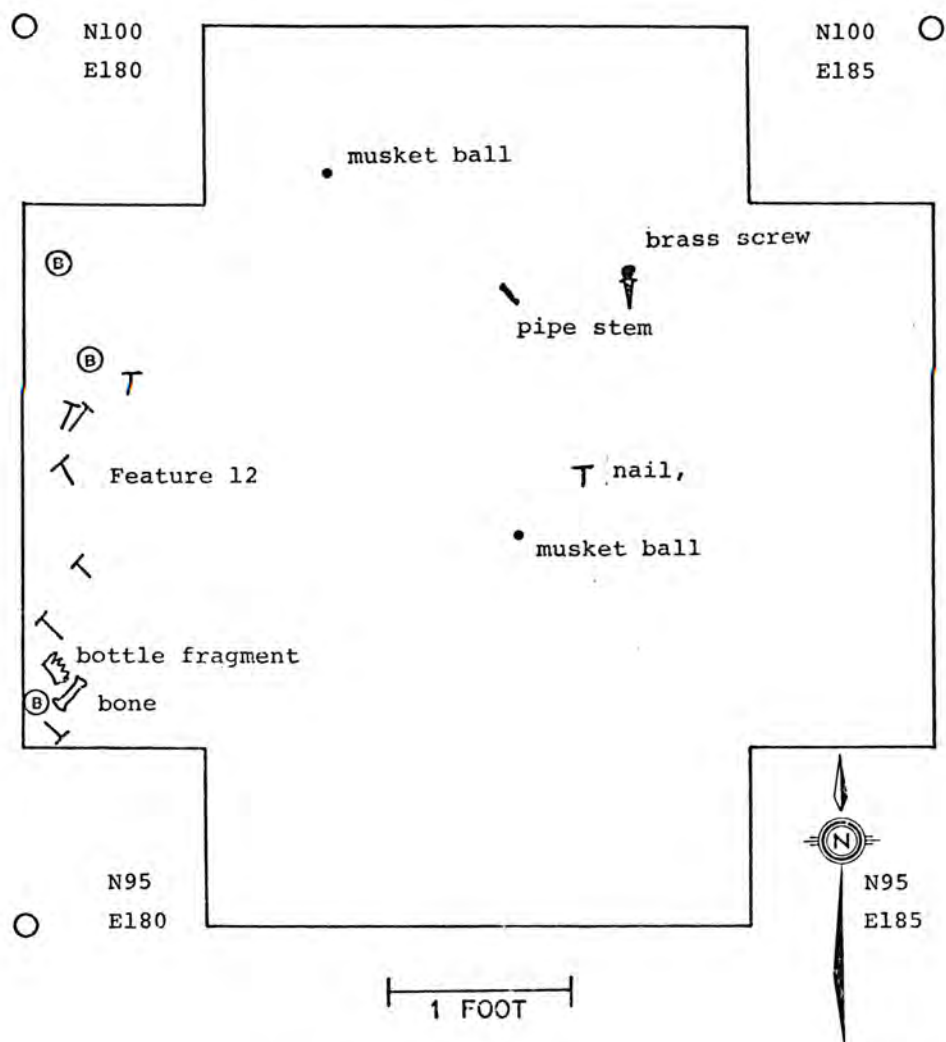


Figure 27

UNIT THREE  
N95 E180

7' 6" - 7' 9"

← nail, orientation shown  
Ⓟ brick fragment

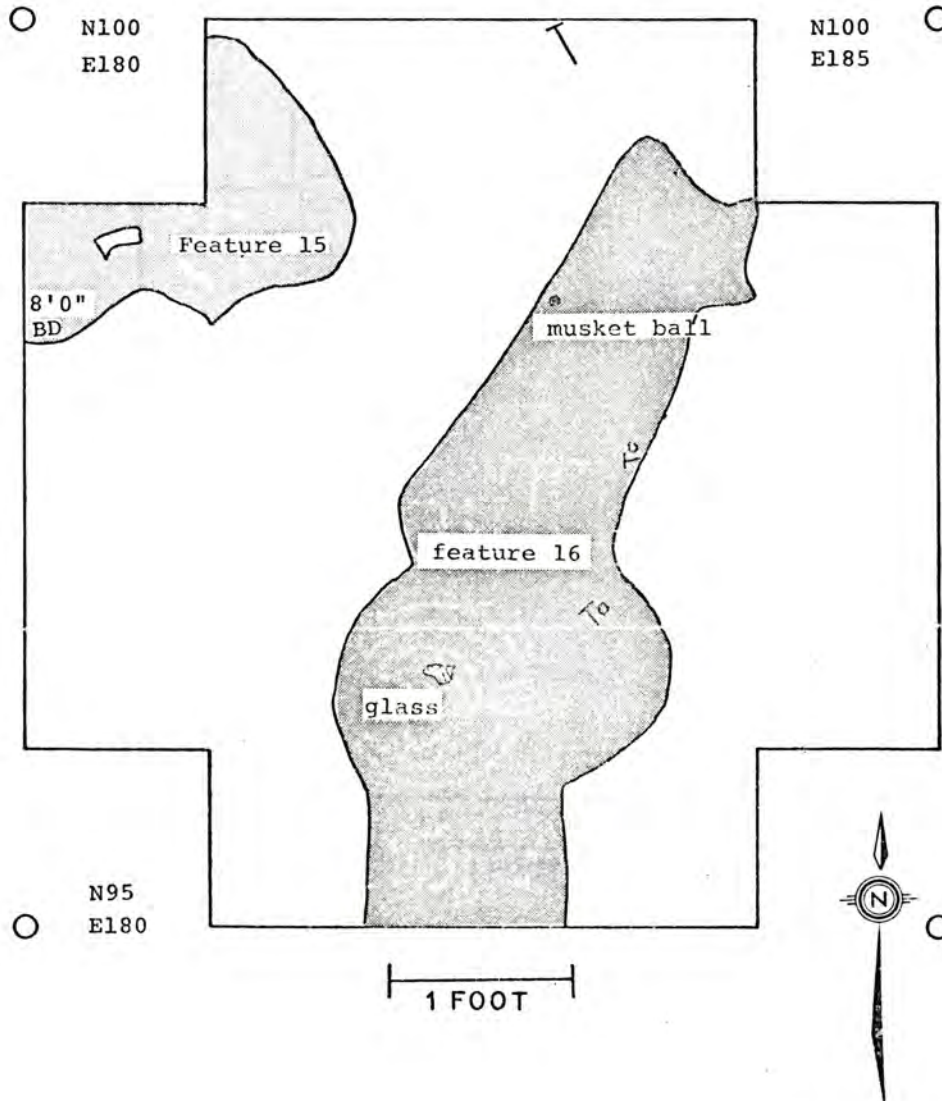


Figure 28

UNIT THREE  
N95 E180, 8'0" BD - 8'3" BD  
features 15 & 16

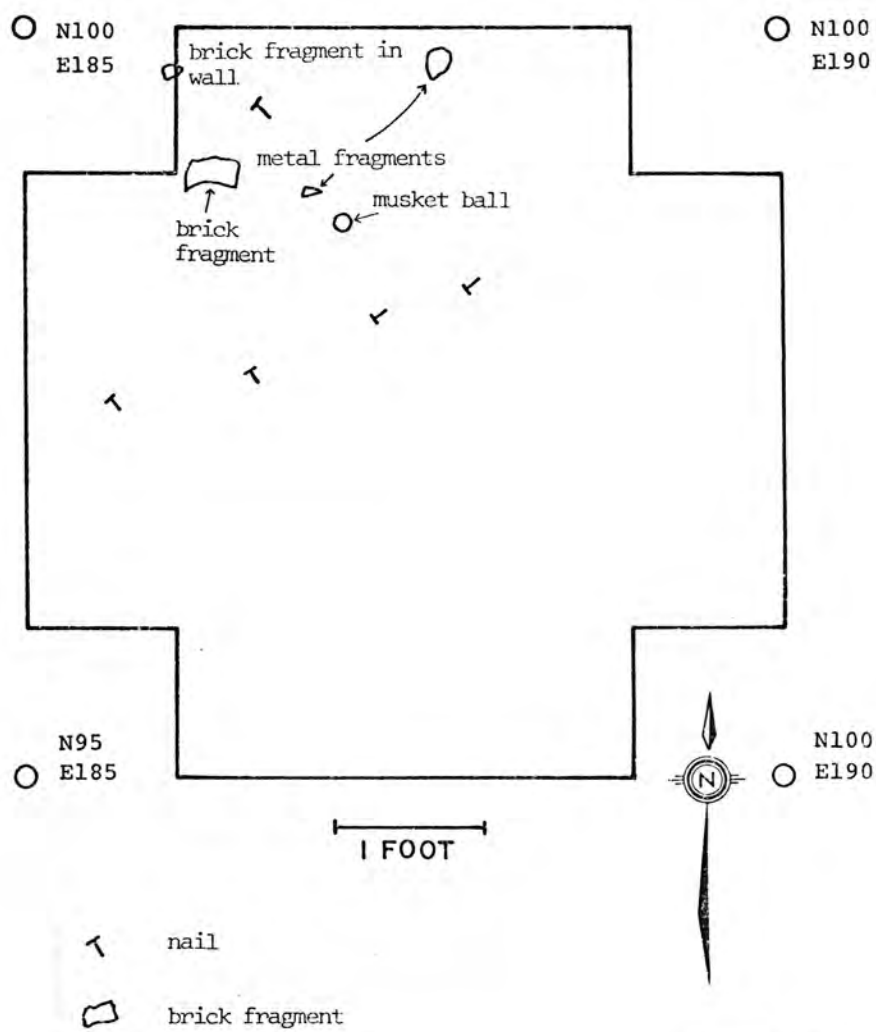


Figure 29

## UNIT THREE

N95 E185

bottom of grey sand to 7'6" BD





The primary artifact concentrations in this unit are illustrated by the level plans in Figures 26-30. Over the entire unit the depths where greatest artifact concentrations occurred was between 7'4" and 8'0" below datum or from 4" beneath the surface to approximately one foot. Nail concentrations were most intense between 7'6" and 7'9" below datum.

Only three features were found in Unit III. All were encountered in N95 E180.

Feature 12 (Figure 27) consisted of a line of nails in the west side of the square at a depth of 7'11". It is possible that these nails were associated with a wooden plank which has totally disappeared through decay.

In addition to Feature 12 several other nail alignments suggestive of decayed planks were encountered. Where possible we mapped the nail locations and orientations (see Figures 29-30).

Feature 15 was a small, shallow pit like feature containing one small piece of animal bone.

Feature 16 is a shallow gully like feature running north to south across the square. This feature represents the lower end of a wash extending from the parapet that was later filled with darker sand and Fort Morris debris. Erosion of the walls of the fort probably resulted in numerous gully-like features as described above. Erosion



Plate 19

Unit three near the southwest bastion



from the parapets during the Revolution undoubtedly accelerated what is normally a slow accumulation of soil at the site of Fort Morris and is probably responsible for much of the foot or so of Revolutionary period midden.

The parapet was not tested in the survey, but examinations of several washes, pothole and other disturbances indicated that it was composed of a fill of sand, humus and oyster shells. One gully that was particularly evident at the time of the survey can be seen just south of Station A on the topographic map. This gulley formed at a place in the parapet that has lost all of its vegetative cover due to a modern path over the works. Most of the parapet and parade were covered with a heavier growth of trees and other vegetation, (see Plates 18 and 19).

#### Unit Four

This unit consisted of a single five-by-five in the northwest section of the parade at N225 E175 (see Figure 12). The stratigraphy in this test was almost identical to that found in Unit III (see Figure 25).

This probable pre-Fort Morris humus zone described as old humus line in Unit III (Figure 25) has as its probable counterpart in Unit IV, a greyish brown sand (Zone B in Figures 31-32). This zone is plainly visible

in plates 20 and 21.

In both Units III and in Unit IV the Fort Morris midden containing late colonial and Revolutionary period materials was above this probable pre-Fort Morris humus zone. In both units the bottom of the Fort Morris midden appeared at approximately 8.0' below datum. Only one nail was found beneath 8.0' B.D. in Unit IV. However, several coastal Lamar sherds were found below 8.0' B.D. Additional evidence for the pre-Fort Morris origin of zone B in Unit IV was the existence of Feature 11, a small pit beginning at 7.75' B.D. Unit IV and containing nothing but dark brown soil, some small shells, one Irene plain sherd, and at the very edge of the pit an intruded bottle fragment, (see Figure 34). This pit indicates that the pre-Fort Morris humus zone served as the occupational surface of the site when the fort area was being utilized by late aboriginal shellfish eaters.

Units 3 and 4 both produced nearly identical inventories of artifact types from the Fort Morris midden with only minor differences in quantities of material.

In Unit IV as well as all other parade units the artifacts dated consistently within a third quarter 18th century time frame. There was also a close similarity in the type of artifacts found in the Fort Morris midden

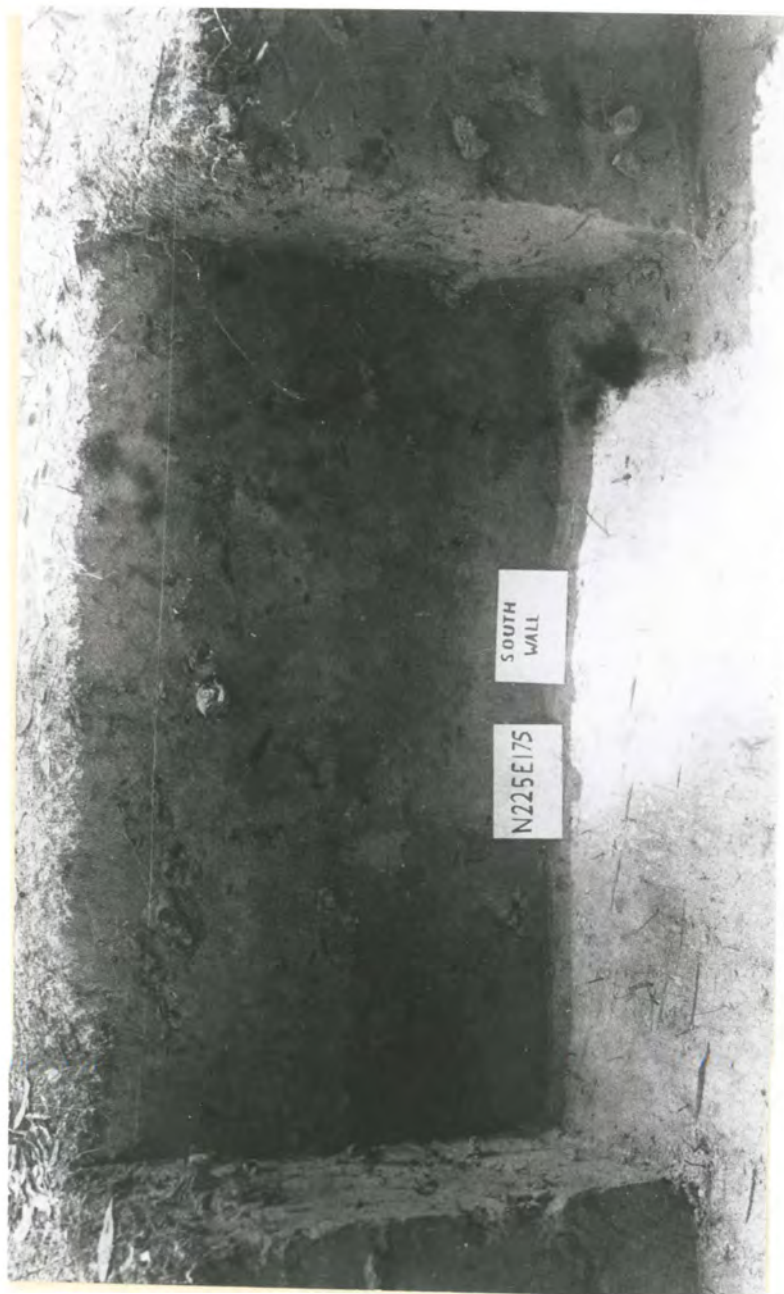


Plate 20

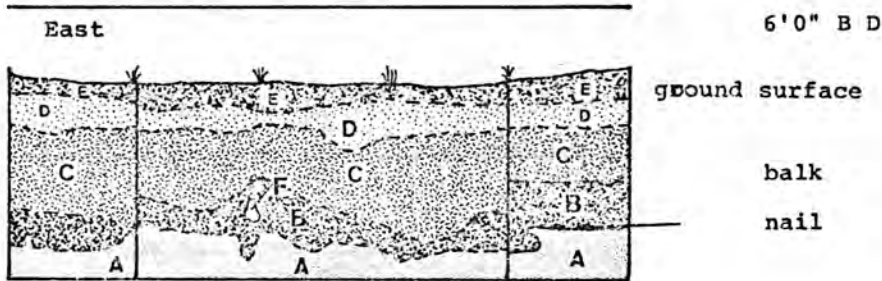
N225 E175, South wall profile, Unit IV



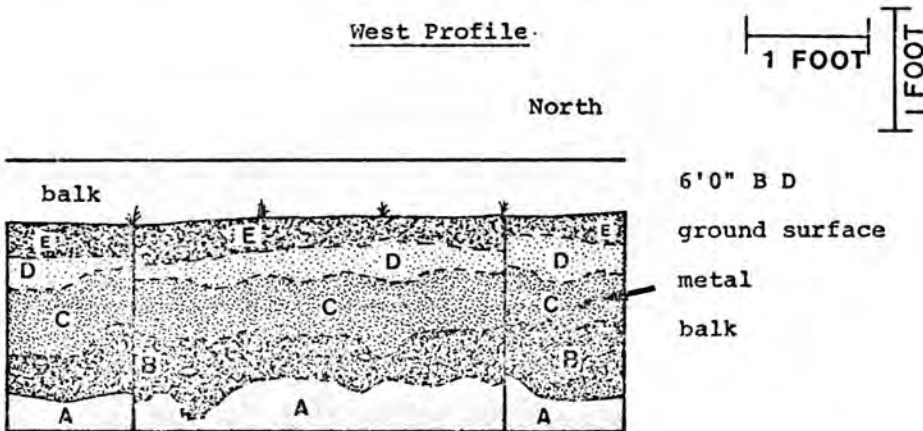


Plate 21

N225 E175, East wall profile, Unit IV

South Profile

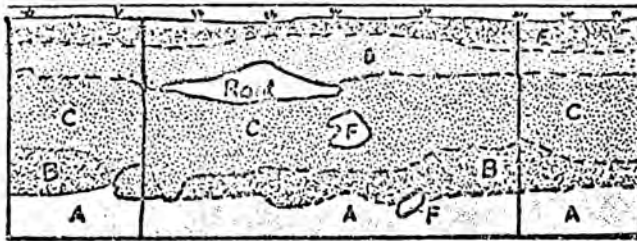
- balk
- A- light tan sand (almost sterile)
- B- greyish brown sand (pre-Fort Morris humus zone)
- C- Mottled greyish, brownish tan sand with charcoal flecks
- D- brownish grey sand
- E- grey sand with undecayed organic material
- F- light tan sand (lighter than A, disturbances)

West Profile

o - shell

Figure 31

UNIT FOUR  
N 225 E 175

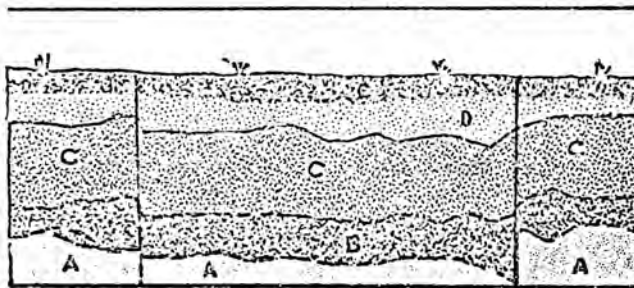
North Profile

6'4" ground surface

balk

bottom of excavation

- A- light tan sand (almost sterile)
- B- greyish brown sand (pre Fort Morris humus zone)
- C- mottled greyish, brownish tan sand with charcoal flecks
- D- brownish grey sand
- E- grey sand with undecayed organic material
- F- light tan sand (lighter than A; (disturbances))

East Profile

6'0" B D

ground surface

balk

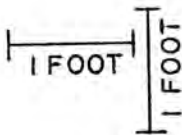


Figure 32

UNIT FOUR

N 225 E 175



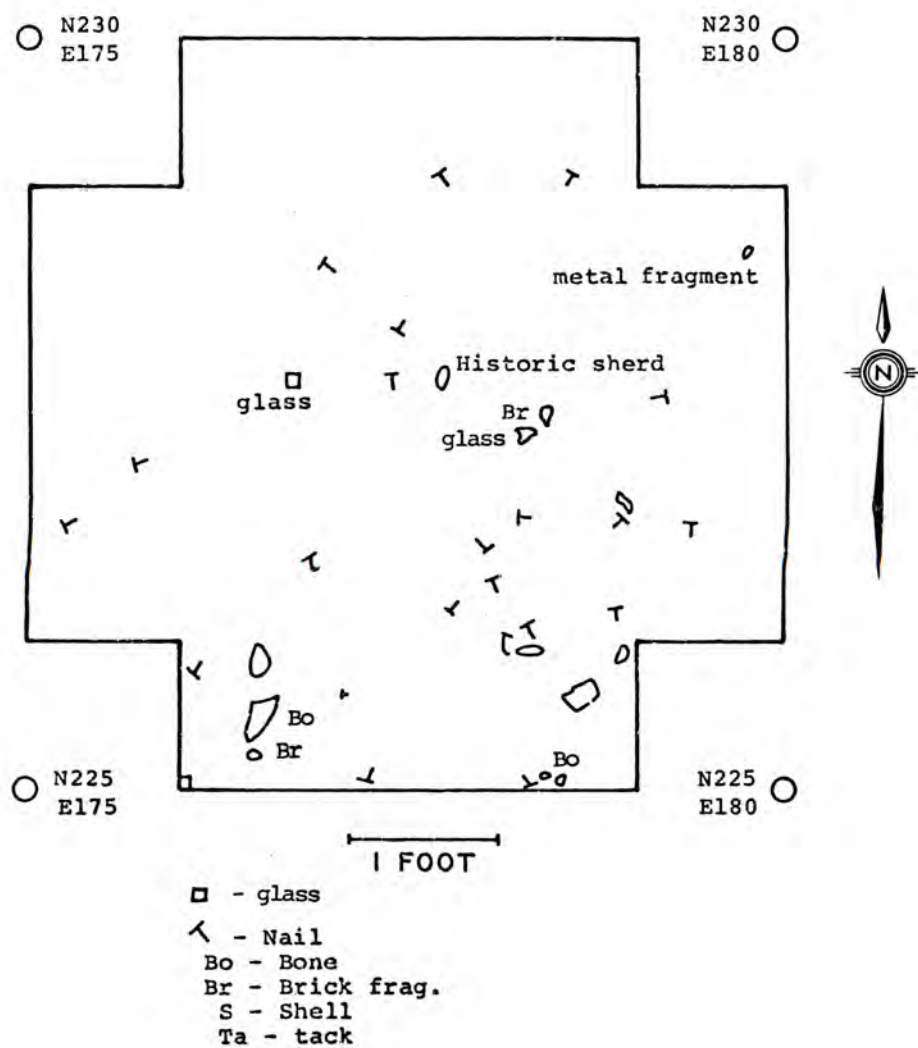


Figure 33

## UNIT FOUR

N 225 E175

Plan at 7'6" - 7'9" B.D.

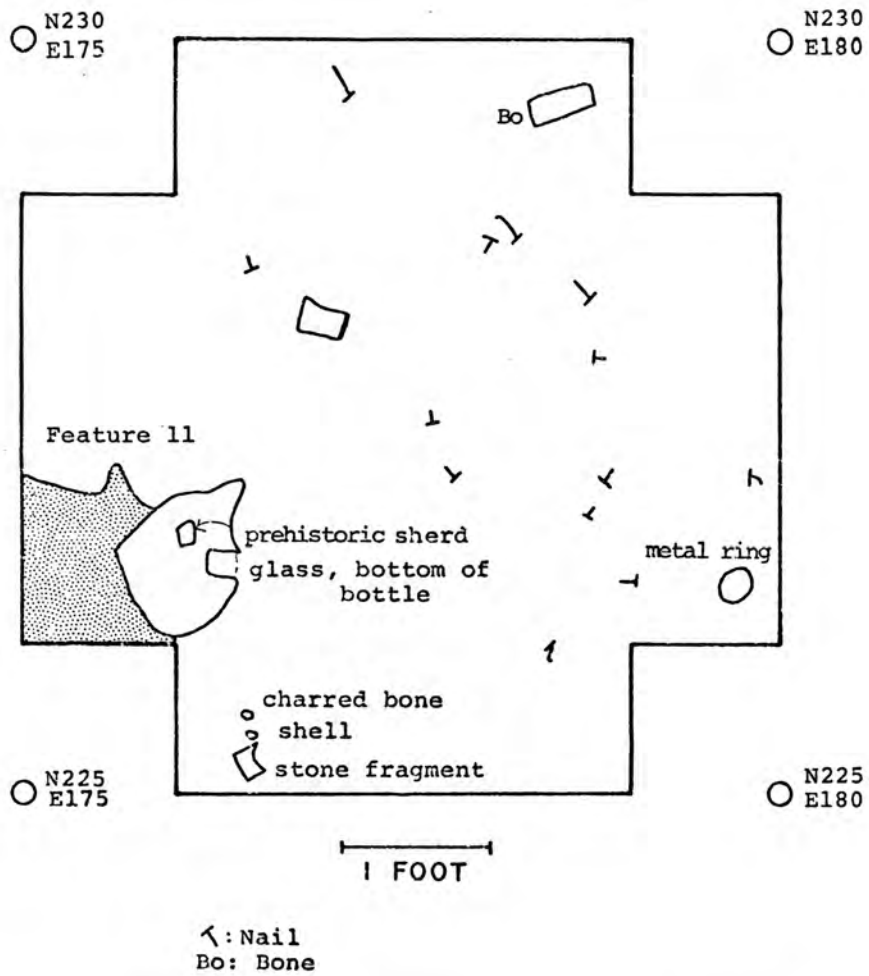


Figure 34

UNIT FOUR

N 225 E 175

Plan from 7'9" - 8'0" B.D.

at widely separate points on the parade. These artifacts are discussed in detail in Chapter VI of this thesis.

#### Unit Five

This unit was placed directly east of Unit III, and contained four five-by-fives, N95 E200, N95 E205, N100 E200, and N105 E200. These squares were placed at the edge of an area of the parade characterized by an extensive shallow depression about four to six inches deep. This shallow depression occurring in Unit V is filled with a humus and grey sand. This zone is thicker than is found in Units III and IV.

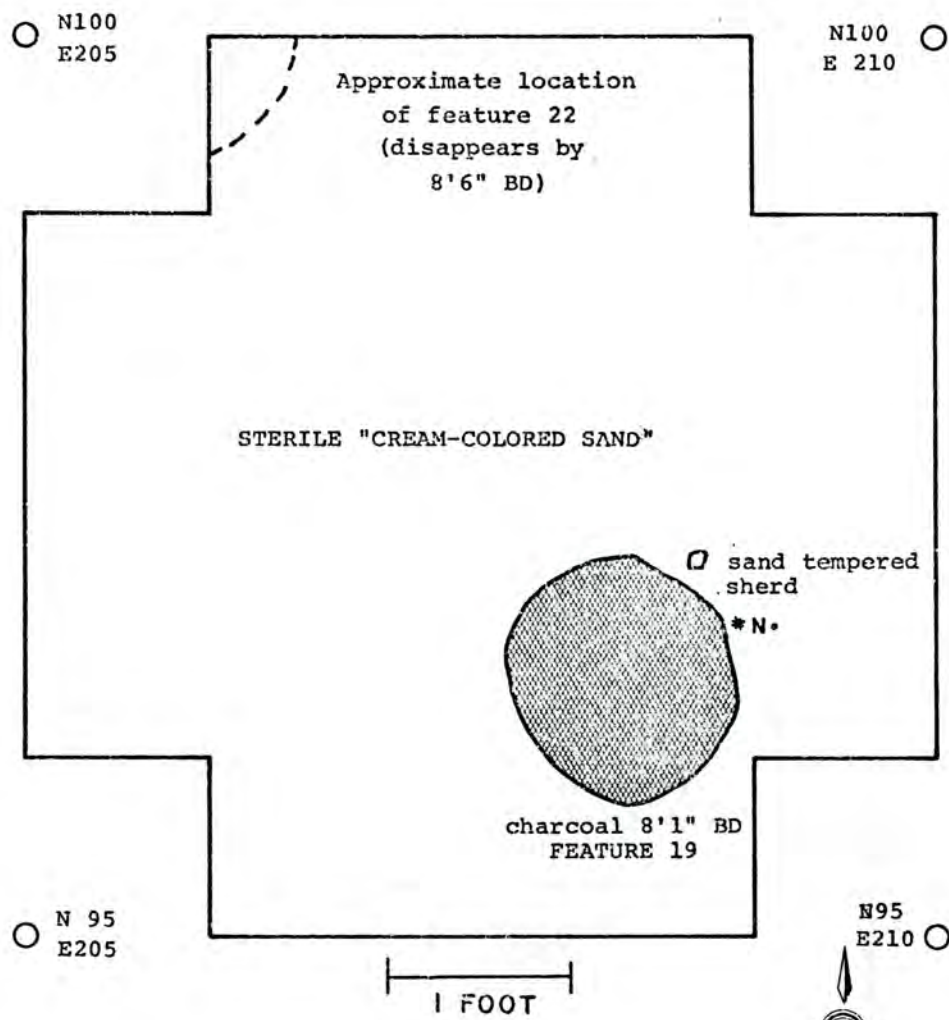
The light tan sand so evident in Units III and IV was absent in N95 E205. In N95 E205 the cream colored sand that seems to underlie the light tan sand throughout most of the site was found directly beneath the greyish tan Fort Morris midden. Feature 19 in Figure 35 and Plate 22 was a hearth containing ash, burned earth and charcoal. This feature containing colonial ceramics and a musket ball was directly on the cream colored sand at 8'1" below datum. Although relatively shallow itself, the hearth seemed to be in a shallow basin that bottomed out at 8'3". Neither N95 E200 and N95 E205 in Unit V nor N95 E180 and 185 in Unit III contained any trace of a pre-Fort Morris humus zone. As discussed earlier the





Plate 22

N95 E205, Feature 19, Unit V



\*N\* (nail, head down)

Figure 35

UNIT FIVE  
N95, E205

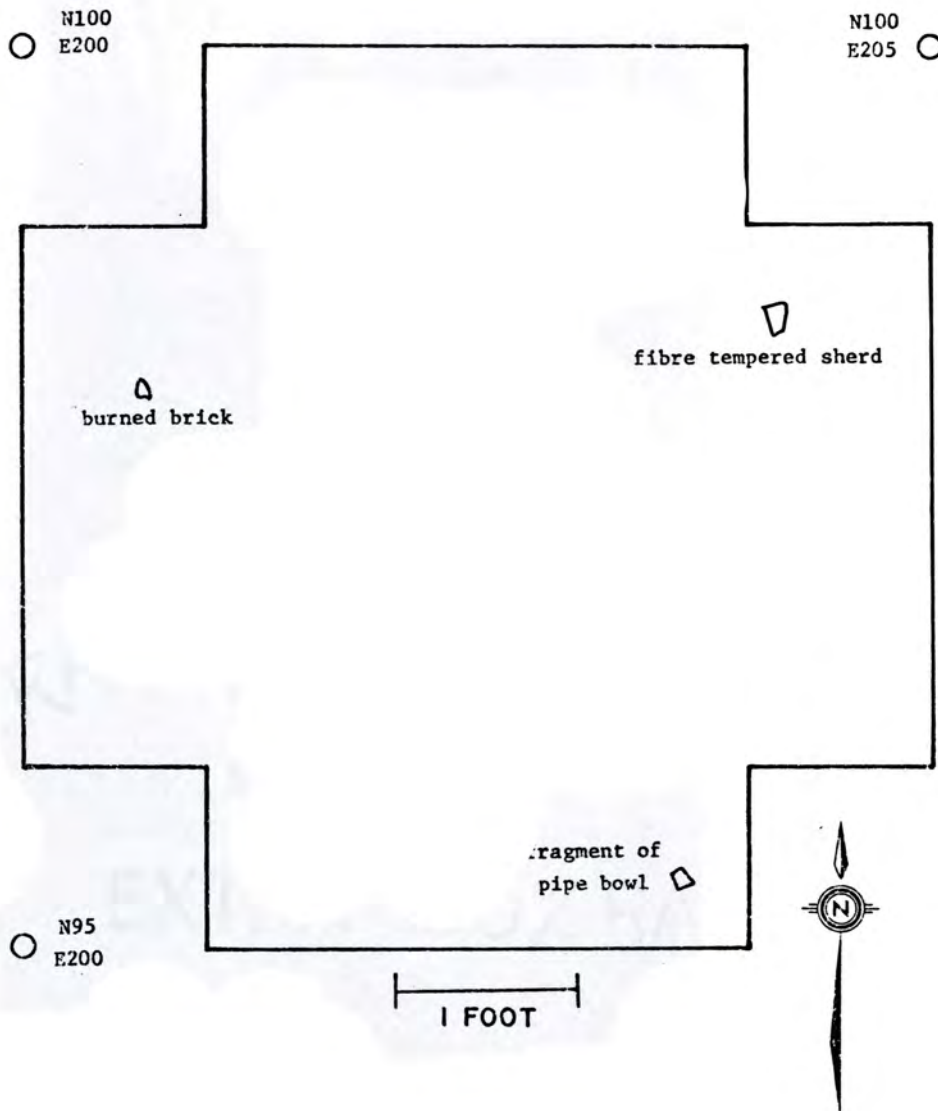


Figure 36

## UNIT FIVE

N95 E200

Plan at 8'0" -- Cream colored sand





Plate 23

N105 E200, spike at 7'9" Below Datum, Unit V

western wall of N95 E175, the southwestern most of the units on the parade, and N225 E175 in the northwest part of the parade produced evidence of the old land surface designated the pre-Fort Morris humus zone. This evidence in conjunction with the appearance of the cream colored sand just beneath the Fort Morris midden in N95 E205 and the presence of a Fort Morris period hearth on this normally sterile zone is evidence for a possible leveling of the parade as described in Figure 44. If this hypothesis is correct, then features from the leveled portion of the parade (like Feature 19) should potentially give dates for the leveling of the parade area and consequently construction dates for the fort.

Another distinct possibility is that the shallow depression in this part of the parade represents the below-ground level floor of a structure. A large structure with a subground level floor may be considered as an alternative hypothesis to the idea that the parade was leveled. However, this would not explain the pre-Fort Morris humus zone in the western units. More extensive excavation would be necessary to determine whether either hypothesis is correct.

#### Unit Six

Unit Six was laid out with the same objectives as those described for Unit one. This series of five-by-fives run-





Plate 24

N100 trench east of the fort



ning from N100 E350 to N100 E288 was designed to test the possibility that a palisade existed on the east side of the fort between the moat and the marsh. No evidence for a palisade was found.

Five features were discovered in this unit. Features 7, 8, and 9 as shown in Figures 37-39 were identified as campers' trash pits. All were filled with recent trash including drink cans, tin foil, bottles and cans. Most of these features appeared to be several years old.

Feature 14 was greyish brown midden (Zone B) beneath a mottled light tan sand (Zone E) in E370 (see Figure 41). Some oyster shells and fibre-tempered pottery were found in the midden. Feature 14 raised the possibility that Zone E was colonial loam on top of a midden overlain by more recent natural soil. The primary difficulty in so interpreting Zone E is that there is no trace of a humus zone on top of Feature 14. The probability then remains that Feature 14 is a midden covered with a natural soil.

Feature 13 was a deposit of shells right next to the marsh in Zones B and C in Figures 42-43. This could be an old shell road. There was some evidence for an old shell road on the surface above Zones B and C.



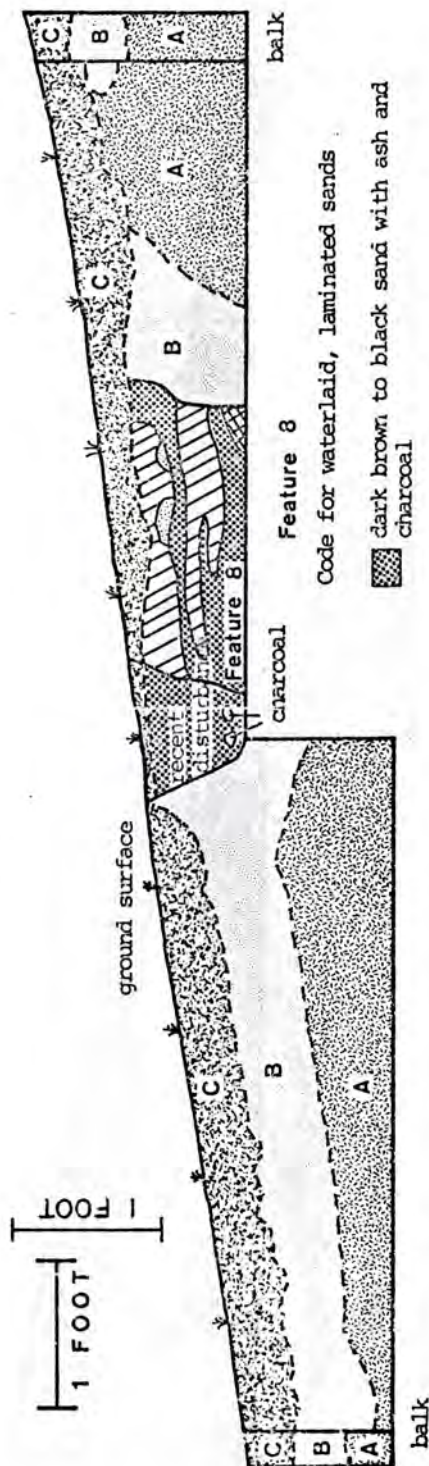
Plate 25

N100 E360 and 365, South wall profile, Unit VI



east-----west

10'0" ED



A - greyish, brown midden with oyster shell

B - mottled, light tan sand (same as B on north profile)

C - humus

Feature 8

Code for waterlaid, laminated sands

dark brown to black sand with ash and charcoal

grey, ashy sand

light grey mottled with light tan sand

light tan sand

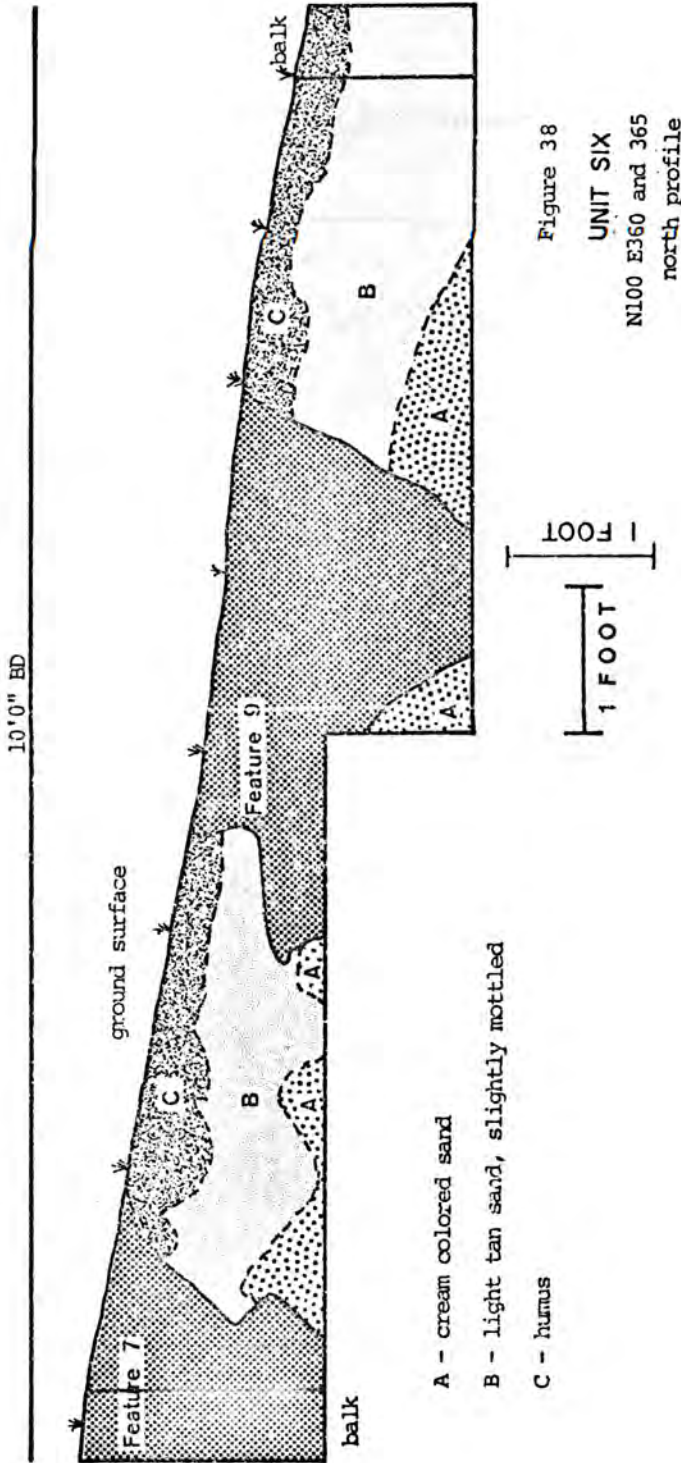
Figure 37

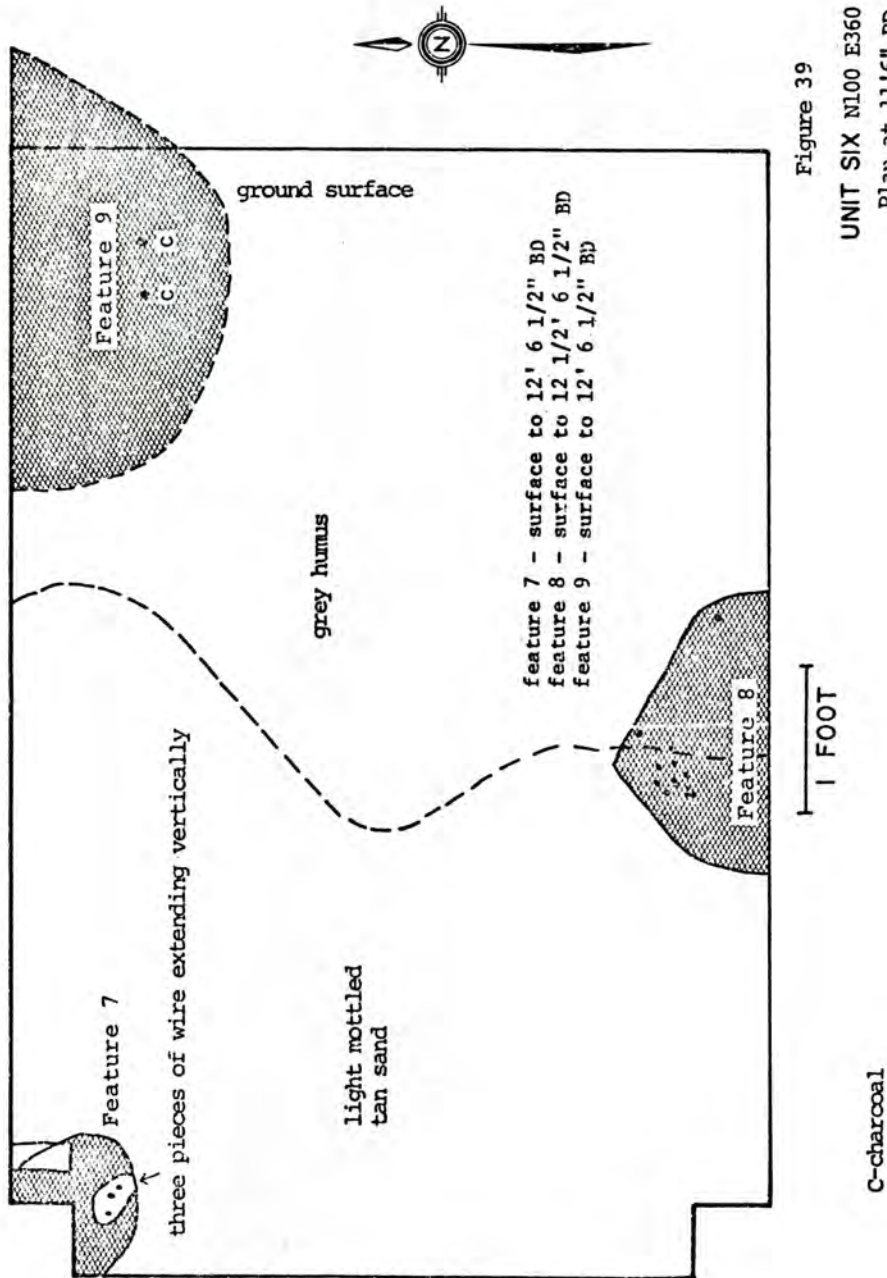
UNIT SIX

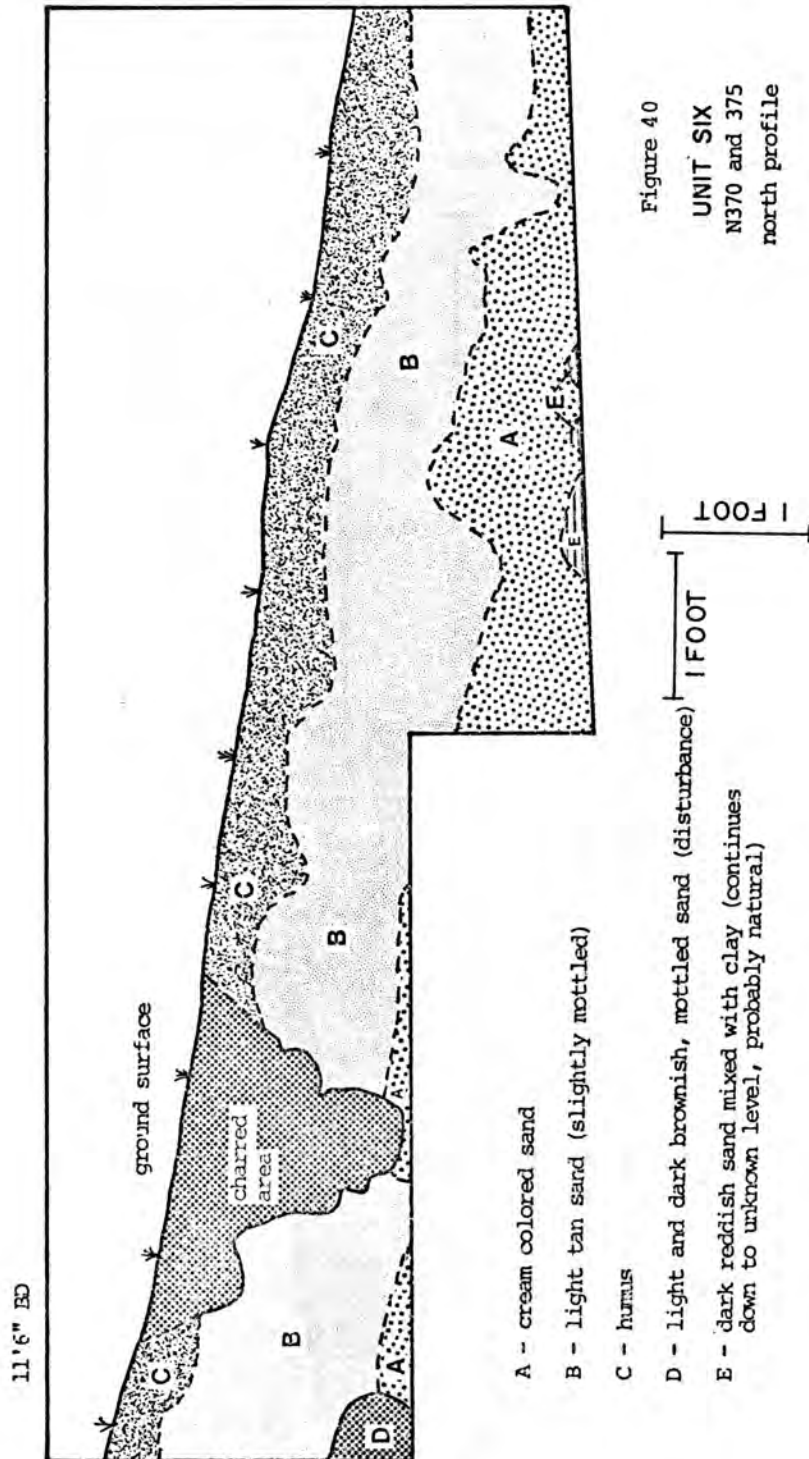
N100 E360 and 365

south profile







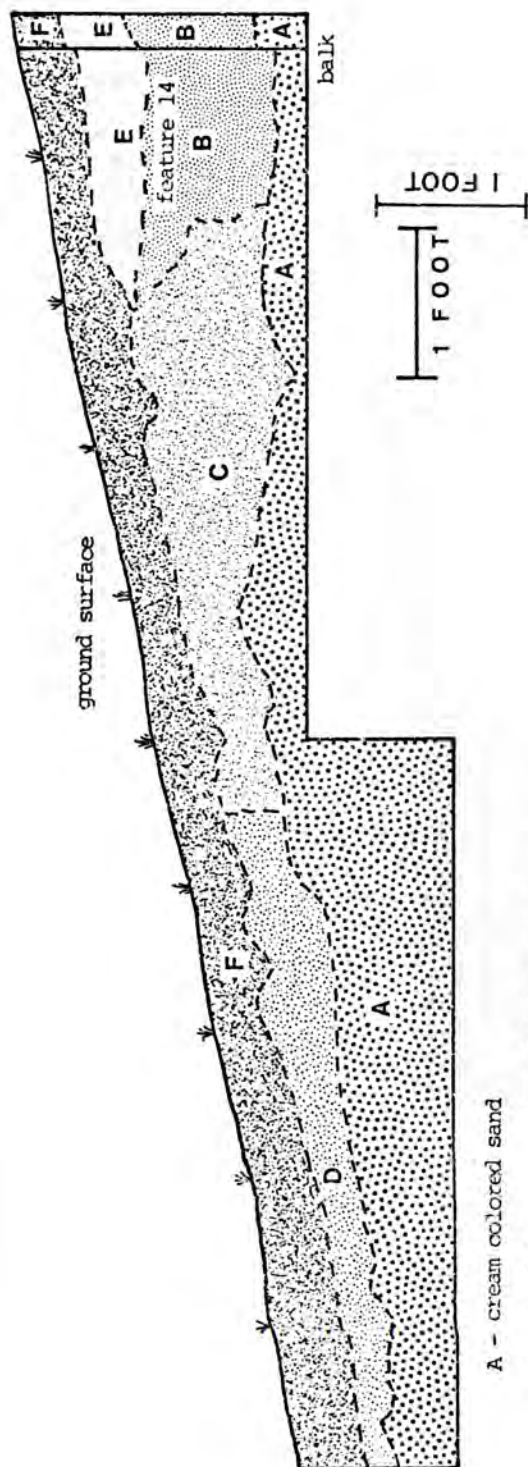




east

11'6" BD

west



A - cream colored sand

B - greyish brown midden with oyster shell

C - greyish midden with oyster shell (lighter than B)

D - light greyish midden with oyster shell (lighter than C)

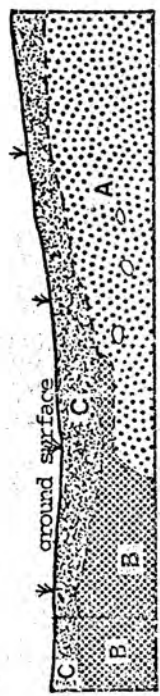
E - mottled light tan sand, (same as B in north profile)

F - humus

Figure 41

UNIT SIX  
N100 E370 and 375  
south profile

east 13'0" 30 west



- o - shell stains
- o shell
- A - cream colored sand; extremely mottled with shells and shellstains
- B - soil stained black, grey, and brown, extremely mottled
- C - grey sand and humus

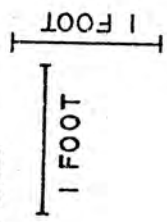
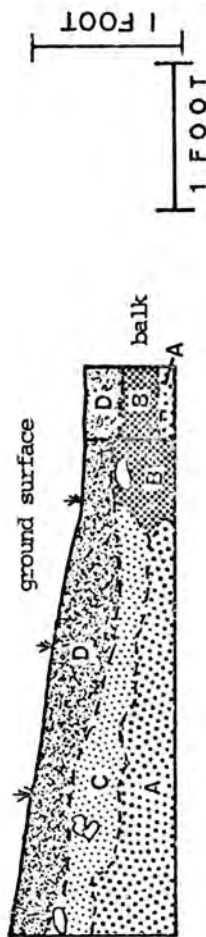


Figure 42  
UNIT SIX  
N100 E385 - 389'8"  
South Profile

west 13'0" BD east



A - cream colored sand, mottled with black flecks throughout (same as A, in N100 E380 & 385)  
 B - soil stained brown, grey, and black, with shell  
 C - white sand with shell  
 D - grey sand with humus

o - shell

UNIT SIX  
 N100 E385'0" - 388'11"  
 north profile



Table 1

## Features Catalogued for Units I Through VI

<u>Feature Number</u>	<u>Unit Number</u>	
1	I	Shell pile in N100 E35
2	I	Shell pile in east end of N100 E40
3	I	Shell pile in east end of N100 E60 and 65
4	I	Brown stain surrounding Feature 2
5	I	Oyster shells at 12'6" in north wall on N100 E30
6	I	Dark grey stain at 12'0" in N100 E70 and 75
7	VI	Pit with wire in it, northwest corner of N100 E360
8	VI	Pit with charcoal in N100 E360
9	VI	Charcoal cluster in N100 E360
10	II	Cluster of Deptford Sherds, west end of road trench
11	IV	Pit starting at about 7'9", N225 E175
12	III	Group of nails in N95 E180, 7'7" B.D.
13	VI	Deposit of shells on east end of N100 profile trench, east of fort
14	VI	Midden zones underlying tan sand in south wall of N100 trench east of fort

Table 1 (cont)

<u>Feature Number</u>	<u>Unit Number</u>	
15	III	Pit in northwest corner of N95 E180
16	III	Long darker zone running north- south in N95 E180
17	II	Group of sherds in south wall of road trench 12' east of Feature 10
18	V	Cluster of charcoal on "grey sand and humus" - "greyish tan" contact in N100 E200
19	V	Hearth on "cream-colored sand" in N95 E205
20	V	Brown stain below 7'9" in N105 E200
21	V	Disturbance (animal burrow) in north edge of Feature 10

### Summary of Stratigraphy

The complex interrelationship of the stratigraphy represented by the profile figures in the explanation of strata within Units I, III, IV, V, and VI is synthesized in Figure 44. The parade units inside Fort Morris and Unit I just west of the fort proved to be more valuable in reconstructing a general profile for the bluff on which Fort Morris was constructed.

Unit II reflected the same general stratigraphy found in Unit I, but this unit was not subject to the same horizontal and vertical controls found in the other units and the soil was not as meticulously screened. Unit VI stratigraphy was highly disturbed by a number of recent trash pits, but was nevertheless consistent with the general occupational sequence found in Unit I.

Sterile cream colored sand designated as Zone 5 in Figure 44 was first identified beneath Zone A in Unit I during excavation of a deep disturbance (see Figure 5, Figure 22). The sterile cream colored sand was then encountered beneath a light tan sand corresponding to Zone A, Unit I in all other units with the exception of Unit V. The light tan sand occurring in Units I, III, IV, and VI is designated Zone 4 in Figure 44. Absence of the light tan sand in Unit V was the probable result of either



construction of Fort Morris or a structure or structures within the fortification. In Unit V the cream colored sand was directly beneath the Fort Morris midden.

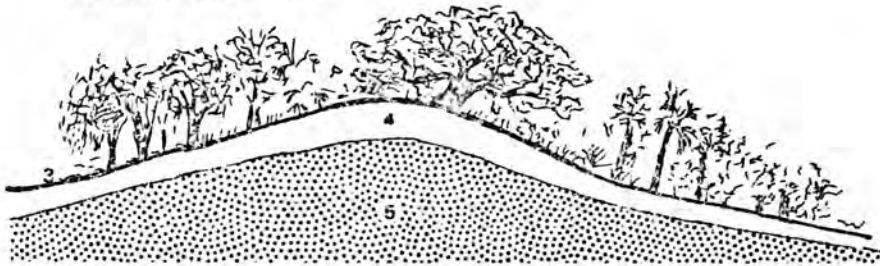
Zone 4 in Figure 44 represents a natural soil that was encountered and used as an occupational surface by fibre-tempered pottery users in at least those areas investigated by Units I and III.

Inside the fortification the greyish tan sand (Zone 2 in Figure 44) is the Revolutionary period Fort Morris occupation.

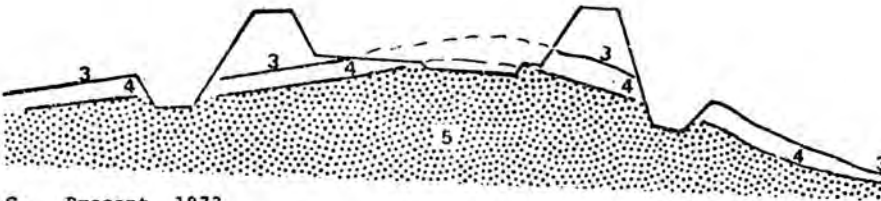
Beneath Zone 2 but above Zones 4 and 5 (Figure 44) evidence was obtained for the existence of an old land surface. Evidence for this land surface (Zone 3, Figure 44) consists of a buried, grey sand humus (Zone C) in the west profile for Unit III (see Figure 25), and a more conspicuous, northward sloping humus zone of greyish brown sand occurring across the entire floor of Unit IV as Zone B (see Plates 20-21 and Figures 31-32). One possible Irene or Coastal Lamar pit was excavated in Unit IV with its origin in the surface of this pre-Fort Morris humus zone, (see Figure 34, Feature 11). The pre-Fort Morris humus zone inside the fortification reflects the Irene-Coastal Lamar occupation designated as Zone B in Unit I (see Figures 13-17). Outside the fort no situation resembling the old humus level was encountered. However

- A. Original land surface  
 3. humus and grey sand  
 4. light tan sand  
 5. cream colored sand

West ← → East



- B. When Fort Morris was constructed in 1776  
 3. humus and grey sand  
 4. light tan sand  
 5. cream colored sand



- C. Present, 1973  
 1. grey sand and humus  
 2. greyish tan (zone where Fort Morris occupation yields 95% of all 18th century artifacts)  
 3. original land surface, humus and grey sand  
 4. light tan sand  
 5. cream colored sand



Possible evolutionary sequence of the bluff where Fort Morris is located based on a limited testing program in 1971

Figure 44

outside the fort Zone B contained Irene sherds and is probably stratigraphically equivalent to the old humus zone within the fortification. The Irene-Coastal Lamar occupation inside and outside the Fort is identified as the ground surface encountered by the Colonial and Revolutionary period builders of the fortification. This surface is designated as Zone 3 in Figure 44.

It is hypothesized that the building of Fort Morris leveled off the Knoll prior to building the fort. Where this leveling resulted in the greatest modification of the old ground surface zones three and four were removed. These results are graphically represented in Figure 44.

### Conclusions

Preliminary archaeological testing and survey was conducted by the author from late May until early September, 1971 at Fort Morris, an existing earthwork fortification traditionally accepted as the site of the Revolutionary period fort that constituted the primary defense of Sunbury, Georgia during two attacks by British forces. The first assault was repulsed in November 1778. Fort Morris then fell to the British and was renamed Fort George in the second and final assault in January, 1779. The Fort was then abandoned, but was reveted and cleared of undergrowth in the fall and winter of 1814. No action

was fought at the fortification during the 1812-15 war with England. Except for the salvage of some of the cannon in the fort for use at other sites during the Civil War, Fort Morris was not involved in further military action and was for all substantive military purposes abandoned following the revetment of the fort in late 1814-15 and the peace with England in January, 1815.

The testing program described in this chapter had the following objectives:

1. To obtain evidence that would clarify whether or not Fort Morris had undergone major modification following the Revolution.
2. To map Fort Morris topographically and to gain an understanding of its relationship to the immediate geography of the area.
3. To gain some understanding of the fort's stratigraphy with a limited amount of excavation.
4. To provide a basic body of data that would allow for preliminary interpretation and planning for more extensive excavations at the site.

The objectives of the 1971 season were met and a number of unanticipated results were obtained that should provide a reasonable base for planning any further work at the site.



### The Fort Morris Midden

The uniformity of the distribution of the Fort Morris midden as indicated by the similarities in the stratigraphy and the types of artifacts found on opposite ends of the parade in Units 3 and 4 was the most important fact to be observed in the summer of 1971. All artifacts in these units can be assigned to the third and fourth quarters of the 18th century as discussed in Chapter VI in detail. There were no areas that were excavated inside Fort Morris that produced anything but 18th century artifacts. The uniformity of the artifact distribution on the parade as indicated by Unit IV on the north end of the parade and Unit III on the south end of the parade is a very strong indication that the present structure is synonymous with the 18th century star fort illustrated by Lieut. Archibald Campbell on his field map of the site.

Erosion from the parapets during the Revolution undoubtedly accelerated the normally slow accumulation of soil found on coastal Georgia sites, and is probably responsible for much of the foot or so of Revolutionary midden. Nothing but Revolutionary and Colonial artifacts were found in this midden and the distribution of the artifacts through the midden was further evidence that this zone accumulated rapidly. Only one artifact (a bomb

fragment eroding from the western parapet) was found on the surface in the fort and the Fort Morris midden was well sealed by the layer of humus (Zone E, Figure 25) above the Revolutionary midden. Stabilization of the site by vegetation including the rich system of roots that undoubtedly developed in the thirty year period between the Revolution and its revetment in 1814 would have been sufficient to stop the rapid accumulation of soil when the site was fully cleared and subject to erosion and decay following the Revolution. Zone E, Figure 25, could very well represent the entire accumulation of soil at the site from the close of the Revolution (following vegetative stabilization) to the present.

#### General Stratigraphy

The general stratigraphy of the bluff on which Fort Morris was built was established in Unit I. The relatively undisturbed sequence of strata in Unit I and its correlation with the other excavation units on the parade inside the fort and in the eastern flank as described in Figure 44 established that:

- a. The bluff on which Fort Morris was originally built was the site of successive prehistoric, and historic Indian occupations with the earliest occupation belonging to a culture using fibre-tempered pottery.

b. The fort's construction probably destroyed a number of scattered shell middens and this shell was used in the fill of the embankments.

c. The natural slope of the bluff in the present parade area inside Fort Morris was probably leveled during the construction of the fort.

d. The Fort Morris midden was a distinct and separate zone of deposition from the general sequence of strata in Unit I. There is a possible correlation of the original construction surface of the Fort with the late aboriginal shellfish gathering culture or cultures represented by Zone B in Unit I.

#### Structural Evidence

There were structures built and possibly destroyed by fire and/or explosions on the parade ground of Fort Morris. While the only documentary evidence for structural activity is the Campbell sketch of the fort, several hundred small to very small brick fragments were excavated at widely separate areas of the fort, and some nail alignments were found indicating planks that had either burned or decayed in situ. Nail alignments were particularly in evidence at the intersection of the parade and the southwest bastion in Unit III. Since extensive excavation was not attempted, the exact nature of structures indicated near the southwest bastion is not determinable with

the present evidence. Proximity to the parapet and the southwest bastion does suggest that the structural debris may be associated with a collapsed casemate.

More specific data regarding the constructional phases of Fort Morris will by necessity have to come from areas that will produce sealed contextual evidence. One area that will produce such evidence is the north embankment where previous disturbance revealed a hearth area on a level with the parade. This area is clearly visible as an irregularity in the topography (see Figure 12).

The short time span separating Colonial-American and intervening British and Tory occupations does not permit an easy separation of occupations on the parade at Fort Morris, and if such separation proves possible, it will probably have to be done through a meticulous analysis of pits and other features. Analysis of the artifacts from the parade strongly suggests that any remains from the post-Revolutionary period will be very sparse. Since both Tory and patriot troops from Sunbury served with their respective armies, there will not necessarily be that much difference in the material culture representing the British and American occupations, except where actual continental and British soldiers and supplies are involved. Historical records and the artifacts strong-



ly suggest that the major occupations at Fort Morris were the first American occupation and subsequent British occupation. The Fort Defense phase of the fort's history did not entail any major concentration of men in the fort for a significant period of time.

## CHAPTER VI

### The Artifacts

#### Introduction to the Artifact Descriptions

The artifacts from the Fort Morris survey constitute a cross section of materials that would normally be expected from a third to fourth quarter 18th century military site located at a wealthy, and at times busy, seaport along the south Atlantic coast of North America.

Plates twenty-six through forty-seven represent artifacts dating to the actual military occupation of Fort Morris and with one or two noted exceptions are all from within the fort on the parade ground or other activity areas near the embankments. This cross section of materials suggests the range of daily activities for the men, structural evidence, as well as military activity.

Of the approximately 3,150 artifacts excavated in the 1971 field season, 2,756 artifacts came from the unstratified midden inside the fort, although the small area excavated inside Fort Morris represented only about one-third of the total area excavated in Units I-VI. Of the 2,756 artifacts more than 2,500 artifacts could be placed within the 1756-1780 time frame. With almost no exceptions all of the excavated material was either

English, Dutch or fourth quarter 18th century American.

The remaining 256 artifacts were prehistoric, and historic potsherds from aboriginal occupations or twentieth century materials from the humus. No 19th century materials were encountered in the excavations inside or outside Fort Morris. Plates 48 and 49 represent material from the late prehistoric and protohistoric periods as well as materials from the 1500 to 2500 year old Deptford occupation and the 3000 to 4000 year old fibre tempered occupations. All of the materials shown on Plates 48 and 49 are from Unit II outside the fort. Plate 50 is composed of material collected from the surface on the road between Sunbury and Fort Morris.

#### The Ceramic Sample

Two hundred and sixty-four European ceramic sherds were excavated from the foot or so of Fort Morris midden in Units III, IV, and V. Though small, this sample indicated that the types found were uniformly distributed within the fort. All types were represented on opposite ends of the parade in Units III and IV. Only eight European ceramic sherds were found in Unit V, seven of which were English creamware. The remaining sherd from Unit V was Staffordshire ware. The total sherd count is broken down according to type in Table 2.

Table 2

European Ceramics From the Fort Morris Midden  
(Units III-V)

<u>Type</u>	<u>Number of Sherds</u>	<u>Approx. % of Total</u>
creamware	91	34.00
Staffordshire	58	22.00
delft	53	20.00
stoneware	42	16.00
Chinese porcelain	15	6.00
Whieldon Ware	5	2.00
	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL	264	100.00



## English Creamware (Plate 26)

Creamware representing 34.46% of the tabulated sample from inside the fort was also the most varied type in terms of decorative motif and vessel form.

According to Hume, the "feather edged" type using relief molded fronds began to be produced about 1765.<sup>1</sup> Hume does not find it in Virginia before 1769.<sup>2</sup> The "feather edged" type as well as most of the other types described below were among the most commonly occurring 18th century (1765-1780) English ceramics found in the excavations at Fort Michilimackinac, Michigan.<sup>3</sup> Miller and Stone found that the cream colored wares were definitely associated with the British military occupation in a post-1770 context:

The abundance of cream colored earthenware at Fort Michilimackinac indicates a substantial use of these wares by the British Army. The archaeological excavations confirm this. During the 1959 excavations 387 creamware sherds were found in association with features (completed after 1770) relating to the British military occupation. The recovery of cream colored wares

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<sup>1</sup>Noel Hume. *Artifacts of Colonial America*. Alfred A. Knopf, New York. 1970. P. 125.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 126.

<sup>3</sup>J. Jefferson Miller, II and Lyle M. Stone, "Eighteenth Century Ceramics From Fort Michilimackinac: A Study in Historical Archaeology," Smithsonian Studies in History and Technology, no. 4, (Smithsonian Institution Press, City of Washington, 1970). Pp. 42-46.

11. Plate rim sherds with "feather edged" or relief molded frond border. (For provenience see discussion above).
12. Small cup bottom from N95 E185 at 7'9" to 7'12" below datum.

## Provenience of English Creamware in Plate 26

1. Beaded rim sherd of a large bowl from N95 E175 at 7'5" to 7'8" below datum.
2. Pierced plate rim sherd from N95 E185 at 7'3" to 7'6" below datum.
3. Pierced cup (?) rim from N95 E180 at 7'6" to 7'9" below datum.
4. Vessel wallsherd of unidentified form from N95 E180 at surface to 7'3" below datum.
5. Small bowl rim from N95 E180 at 8'0" to 8'3" below datum.
6. This sherd is part of the bottom of the mug represented by number 8 in Plate 38. Number 6 was found in N95 E185 at surface to 7'3" below datum.
7. Small bowl or cup rim from N95 E175 at 7'7" to 8'2" below datum.
8. Fragment of a mug bottom from N95 E185 at 7'3" to 7'6" below datum.
9. Well pitted small bowl (?) sherd from N90 E185 at 6'9" to 7'0" below datum.
10. Pierced plate rim from N95 E185 at 7'3" to 7'6" below datum.

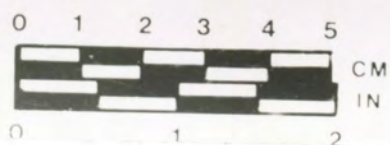


Plate 26

Creamware



in this context raises the question of whether it was usual for officers to include ceramic dinner and tea services in their personal luggage? The evidence at Fort Michilimackinac suggests an affirmative answer to this question. The fact that some of the Fort's civilian population owned and used dinner and tea services raises the difficult problem of ascertaining to what degree these artifacts represent the material culture of each group. Certainly the more affluent civilians observed traditional English amenities.<sup>4</sup>

Following the surrender of Fort Morris in January 1779 the fort was renamed Fort George and occupied by British army units. Since more than 34% of the total ceramic sample was creamware, there may be a correlation similar to that found at Fort Michilimackinac between creamware and British occupation. However, Sunbury's function as a port and the wealth of its citizens in the years just prior to the war would certainly indicate their ability to acquire tea and dinner services. More intensive work with the many estate inventories for Sunbury and additional excavation in town and the fort may clarify this.

#### Chinese Porcelain, Whieldon, and Staffordshire Wares (Plate 27)

Fifteen sherds of Chinese porcelain were found in the excavations. Specimens 1, 2, 3 (Plate 27) appear to be fragments of small cups or bowls. Specimens 1 and 2 are pale grey on the body, but with a decorative pattern in

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 44.

overglaze red. Hume states that the overglazed types were most common in the second half of the 18th century.<sup>5</sup>

Miller and Stone place the Chinese hard paste porcelain with underglaze blue decoration from Fort Michilimackinac primarily within the post-1761 English occupation, although it is conceded that small amounts of Chinese porcelain were received as early as the 1740 French occupation of the fort.<sup>6</sup>

In discussing the preponderance of the underglaze blue Chinese porcelain at Fort Michilimackinac the authors state: "The extensive range of blue and white decorative patterns found at the Fort adds to the evidence of continuous importation of small lots of ceramics for the private use of traders and army personnel."<sup>7</sup>

In discussing documentary evidence for the presence of Chinese porcelain at the fort, the authors refer to John Askin's 1778 inventory:

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<sup>5</sup>Hume, op. cit., p. 259.

<sup>6</sup>Miller and Stone, op. cit., p. 81.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 82.

We have some documentary confirmation of the presence of Chinese porcelain at the Fort. The trader John Askin at the time of his 1778 inventory owned "1 small set of new China," "1 box with 2 sets of China," and "1 large China Bowl."<sup>8</sup>

Miller and Stone illustrate nearly identical rim sherds for tea wares at Fort Michilimackinac as illustrated in Item 2, Plate 27 for Fort Morris.<sup>9</sup>

Similar rim sherds are illustrated for the Rosewell Plantation site in Virginia.<sup>10</sup> Hume places the underglaze blue porcelain in the last half of the 18th century.<sup>11</sup>

Specimen 4, Plate 27, is a brilliant black glazed red bodied ware, probably of the Whieldon type. Whieldon made this ware in the 1760's and it is most common on American sites in the 1760's.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., Figure 46, p. 83, Figure 47, p. 84.

<sup>10</sup>Ivor Noel Hume. "Excavations at Rosewell, Gloucester County, Virginia, 1957-1959." Contributions From the Museum of History and Technology, United States National Museum Bulletin 225, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 1962, p. 181, Figure 11.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 182.

<sup>12</sup>Hume, op. cit., p. 123.

Fifty-eight sherds of Staffordshire or slipware were found in the excavations. Ten of these are illustrated as Items 5-14 in Plate 27.

The decorative motifs are combed lines or dots in iron oxide under a pale yellow glaze. This slipware type does not seem to have been imported after the Revolution, although it was popular in the early 1770's.<sup>13</sup> Items 7 and 8 could well be fragments of a Staffordshire candleholder. Hume found a specimen with a handle loop resembling 7 and 8 at Williamsburg. Hume's example was dated at mid 18th century.<sup>14</sup>

Staffordshire ware or English slip decorated wares were recovered at Fort Michilimackinac, although in a smaller quantity than most of the British occupation wares.<sup>15</sup> Miller and Stone give only a generalized 18th century date for its occurrence at the site:

Sixty-seven English slip decorated sherds were recovered at Fort Michilimackinac. In all instances the decoration consisted of brown slip upon a cream or yellow slip ground (Figure 33). Drinking cups, dishes, and possibly jugs and bowls were the forms represented.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 139.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>15</sup>Miller and Stone, op. cit., p. 62, Figure 33.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 59-60.



Chinese, Porcelain, Whieldon, and  
slipware or Staffordshire

Illustrated in Plate 27

1. From N95 E180 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
2. From N95 E180 at surface to 7'3" B.D.
3. From N95 E180 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
4. From N95 E185 at 7'9" to 7'12" B.D.
5. From N95 E185 at 8'0" to bottom of greyish tan soil, B.D.
6. From N95 E185 at surface to 7'3" bottom of grey sand, B.D.
7. From N95 E185 at 7'9" to 7'12" B.D.
8. From N95 E185 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
9. From N95 E185 at 8'0" to bottom of greyish tan soil B.D.
10. From N95 E185 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
11. From N95 E185 at 7'9" to 7'12" B.D.
12. From N95 E180 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
13. From N95 E185 at 7'9" to 7'12" B.D.
14. From N95 E185 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.

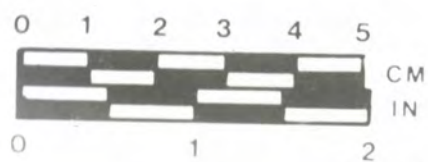
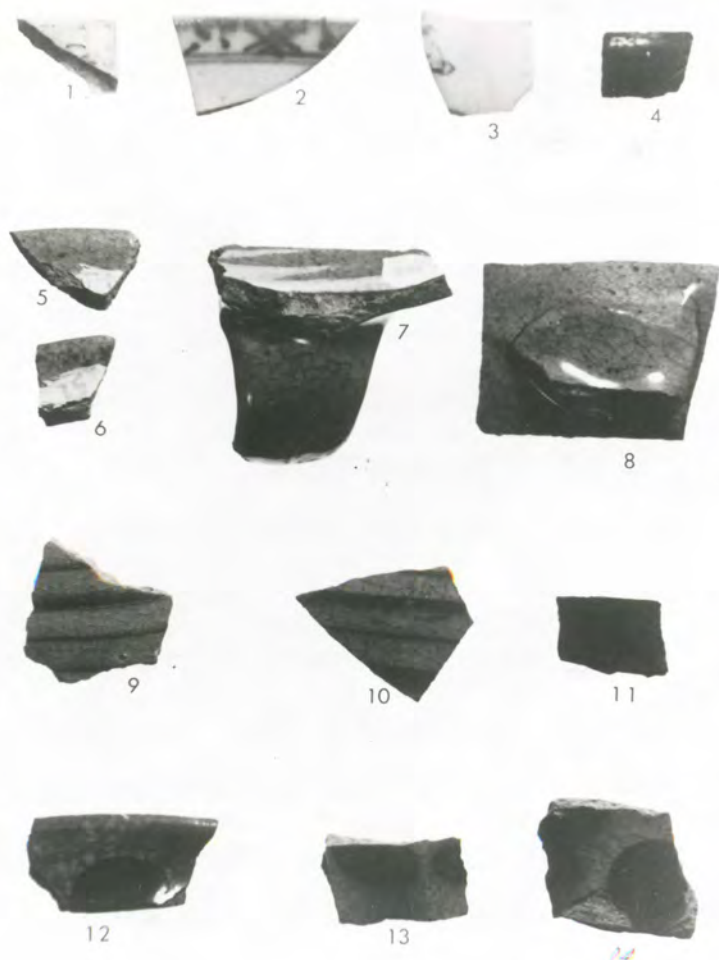


Plate 27

Chinese Porcelain, Whieldon, and Staffordshire or  
Slip Wares

## delftware (Plate 28)

This ware made with a tin enamel has its counterparts in a number of earlier types. In the 14th century and thereafter the Spanish used the tin enameling process to produce majolica. In France the technique produced a ware known as Faience. English delft derives its name from the Delft wares made in Holland at the city of Delft, and the small disused to distinguish English delftware from the Delftware produced at Delft, Holland. By the 1760's delftware had lost much of its appeal in the English market. Originally delft was designed to provide an English counterpart to Chinese porcelain and was used for tea cups and saucers, etc. The delftware glaze was too brittle and was not suitable for the purpose intended. Creamwares were stronger and had largely replaced delft by the time of the Revolution in England.<sup>17</sup> However, Hume states that,

Much of its output referring to Glasgow, Scotland's Delftfield was shipped to America in the third quarter of the eighteenth century, and it continued to be exported as late as 1791. In the late 1760's and 70's however, Delftfield followed Bristol and Liverpool in the march of fashion and technology, adapting part of its operation to the manufacture of white salt

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<sup>17</sup>Hume, op. cit., p. 136.

glazed stoneware and creamware.<sup>18</sup>

The delftware from the Fort Morris midden, representing 20.07% of the total ceramic sample, was glazed with a very fragile eggshell thin, light blue glaze over a soft buff interior. On most of the illustrated examples in Plate 40 the glaze is either cracked or has actually peeled off the plate. Objections to delftware glaze as too brittle for the purpose intended seem to be indicated by the excavated condition of the material. Although the glaze may have partially broken down as a result of normal weathering in the soil, some specimens indicate that the glaze wore off under normal usage. This can be seen in Items 5 and 6 in Plate 40. On these two sherds which are part of the same cup or bowl the lip has worn through the glaze. The stripes in Specimens 1, 2, 3, and 4 are dark blue against the light blue glaze. Item 10 is striped with a deep purple design against a powdered light blue glaze. The shallow bowl form represented by Items 5 and 6 is from N95 E180 at 7'6" to 7'9". Item 10 is from N95 E185 at 7'3" to 7'6" below datum.

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 96.



Although there are other possibilities, the striped examples listed above as well as the small jar base, Number 12 in the illustration, strongly suggest a standard apothecary jar type common in the 1755-1780 period. Hume states:

The same design combination in blue alone continued to be used for apothecaries' storage and dispensary jars until at least the mid 18th century. In its most degenerate form, probably dating in the period 1755-1780, the decoration was reduced to a series of plain blue encircling bands extending up the entire body or leaving a blank zone in the mid-section where the earlier chain pattern would have been. A few of these late jars are glazed in a pale duck egg blue as a background for the darker bands, though it is uncertain whether this was intentional.<sup>19</sup>

The striped apothecary jar type sherds were found in both Units III and IV on opposite ends of the parade.

The only other published references on the Georgia coast to delftware similar to the Fort Morris material are given in William Kelso's dissertation on Wormsloe, an eighteenth century plantation site near Savannah, Georgia. Kelso's illustrated examples of delftware are primarily from two pits that he dates to the last half

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 106.

of the 18th century.<sup>20</sup> One of Kelso's examples also gave evidence of a brittle glaze that was worn through the lip of the mug.<sup>21</sup>

One sherd of what could be the same delftware type found at Fort Morris has been reported for Fort Toulouse, originally a French fort in the junction of the Coosa and Tallapoosa rivers in central Alabama that came under British control after 1763.<sup>22</sup> Miller and Stone found tin-glazed earthenware to be numerically the largest category of ceramic artifacts found in the Fort Michilimackinac excavations.<sup>23</sup> However, both the earlier French and the later British occupations possessed these wares, and both French faience as well as English delft show the characteristic flaking off of the glaze.<sup>24</sup> On the subject of assigning these wares a

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<sup>20</sup>William Kelso, Captain Jones' Wormsloe: A Historical, Archaeological, and Eighteenth Century Plantation Site Near Savannah, Georgia. (Emory University Ph.D. Dissertation, 1971, Atlanta, Georgia), pp. 160-161.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 161.

<sup>22</sup>David Chase. "Fort Toulouse, First Investigations, 1966." The Conference on Historic Site Archaeology Papers, Vol. 2, Part 1, September, 1967. P. 41.

<sup>23</sup>Miller and Stone, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

national origin, Miller and Stone are somewhat hesitant to give iron clad French or English identifications except in terms of very specialized decorative techniques.<sup>25</sup>

Though it is not practical to include in this publication the complex question of differentiations between typical French and English blue and white tin-glazed earthenware decoration, some general remarks on decorative style may prove helpful. Though the usual motifs (geometric, foliate, landscapes, chinoiserie) are found on the tin-glazed wares of both countries, the style of painting is frequently different. This is especially true in the foliate designs (Figures 13 and 14). The polychrome wares discussed in the following section can often be distinguished in the same manner as well as by the palette. Since illustrated publications on these wares are limited, the best way to achieve some degree of proficiency in identification is to visit museums, dealers, and private collections and to handle as much English delft and French faience as possible.<sup>26</sup>

Other than the striped apothecary jar style sherds already described for Fort Morris in Plate 40, only one sherd offers some promise of a specialized decorative style that can be placed with some degree of accuracy as to national origin. Sherd 10 in Plate 40 is described above as having a deep purple design against a powdered light blue glaze. The paste of this sherd was somewhat

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. 28-30.

## Delftware Illustrated in Plate 28

1. From N95 E180 at 7'9" to 8'0" B.D.
2. From N95 E180 at 7'9" to 8'0" B.D.
3. From N95 E180 at 7'9" to 8'0" B.D.
4. From N95 E180 at 7'9" to 8'0" B.D.
5. From N95 E180 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
6. From N95 E180 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
7. From N225 E175 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
8. From N225 E175 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
9. From N225 E175 at 7'3" to 7'6" B.D.
10. From N95 E185 at 7'3" to 7'6" B.D.
11. From N95 E180 at 8'0" to 8'3" B.D.
12. From N95 E180 at 7'9" to 8'0" B.D.





Plate 28  
Delftware

harder and the glaze unlike most of the other specimens illustrated was more strongly attached. While this is probably a sherd from the bottom of a plate type that Miller and Stone would identify as "Powdered Blue on Purple," English delft from the last half of the 18th century, it may also be a fragment of tile.

The proportionately small amount of this type reflects its comparative rarity. Powdered blue and purple English delft also has been found at the English Fort Ligonier and at the French Fortress of Louisbourg. Of special interest at Louisbourg is a fine tile, decorated with a purple powdered ground and blue landscape scenes in white reserves. Tiles were often used for fireplace borders. The absence of decorative pieces such as this at Michilimackinac demonstrates a major difference between the material culture of the Fort and that of the more advanced areas along the eastern seaboard ranging from Williamsburg to Louisbourg.<sup>27</sup>

#### Stoneware (Plate 29)

Forty-two sherds of Stoneware were found in the excavations. With three exceptions, (Items 10, 11, 12) all specimens illustrated in Plate 29 are English Brown Stoneware. This mottled brown-salt glazed ware, popularly known as Fulham ware, was made throughout the 18th century.<sup>28</sup> The Fort Morris stoneware comprised 15.90%

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., pp. 41-42.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 106.

of the total sample from the parade. Although no stamped items were found, these can be expected in further excavations and will be an aid in the dating of the fort wherever they should be found. The usual stamp is (WR) for Williams III Rex. Other stamps occasionally found in this series is an (AR) for Anna Regina and of course the (GR) for Georgius Rex.<sup>29</sup> Hume states that:

It is safe to say that all English mottled brown stoneware mugs found on American domestic sites date between 1690 and 1775. Exceptions are likely to be found in New York, which continued to receive British exports during the Revolutionary War years, and on British military sites to which the troops brought their own supplies undeterred by American boycotts.<sup>30</sup>

Items 10, 11, and 12 are greyish white salt glazed types with a cobalt blue decorative motif. In addition to the examples cited above, the stoneware sample also included a few specimens of the "scratch blue" type popular in the 1765-1775 period.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

## Stoneware Illustrated in Plate 29

1. From N95 E180 at surface to 7'3" B.D.
2. From N95 E185 at 7'3" (bottom of grey sand" to 7'6" B.D.
3. From N95 E185 at 8'0" to bottom of greyish tan soil B.D.
4. From N95 E185 at 7'9" to 7'12" B.D.
5. From N95 E185 at 8'0" to bottom of greyish tan soil B.D.
6. From N95 E180 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
7. From N95 E175 at 7'2" to 7'5" B.D.
8. From N95 E180 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
9. From N95 E180 at 8'0" to 8'3" B.D.
10. From N95 E175 at 7'2" to 7'5" B.D.
11. From N95 E180 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
12. From N95 E180 at 8'0" to 8'3" B.D.



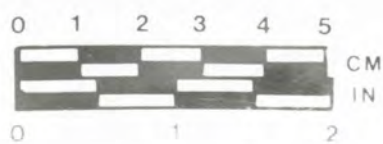
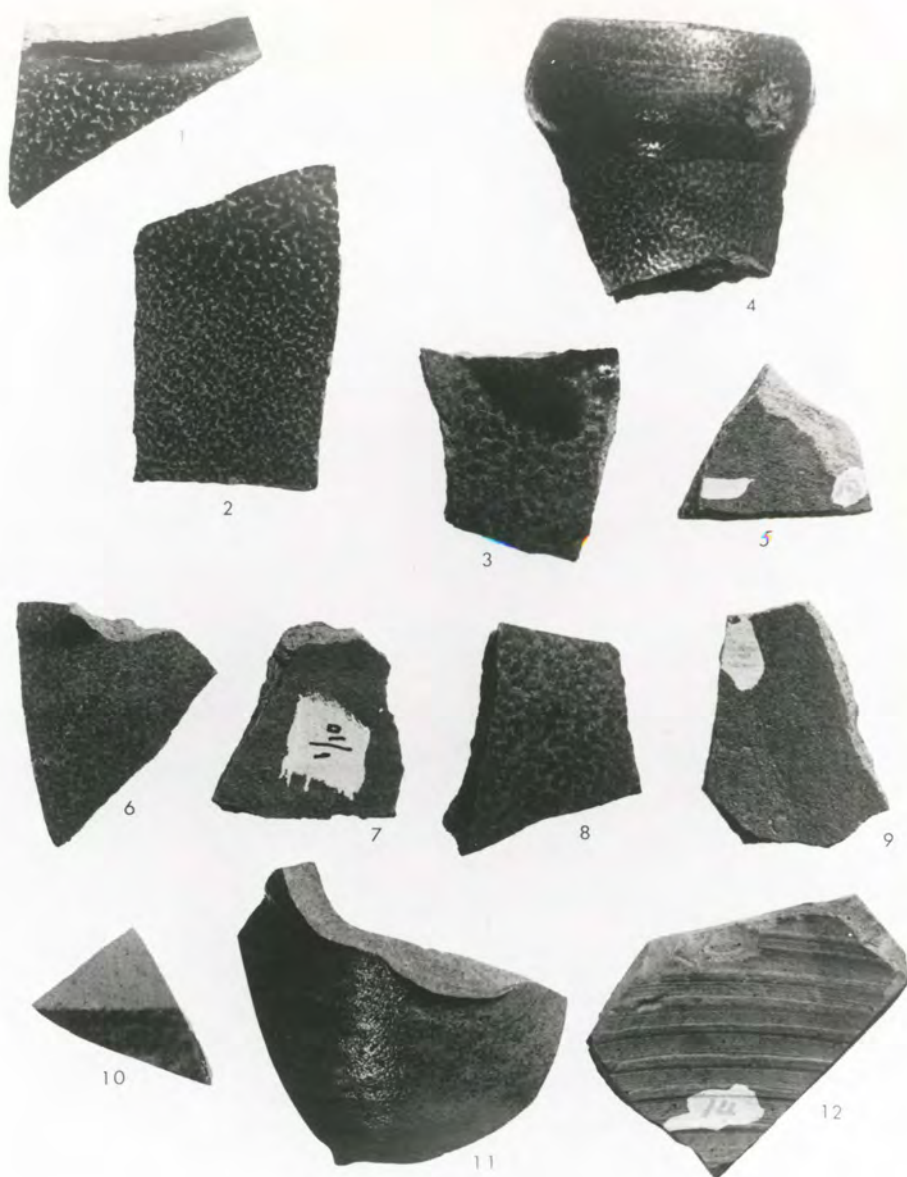


Plate 29

Stoneware

### Gunparts and Other Weapon Fragments (Plate 30)

Eight gunparts were found in the excavation. With the exception of one iron piece, (Item 3, Plate 30) all are brass. Parts 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 10 were found close together and are probably parts of the same gun. Items that can be considered helpful in dating the gun are the brass ramrod pipe, number 4; the engraved brass trigger guard, number 6; the brass vice-lock screw, number 10; and the two brass serpent side plate fragments, numbers 5 and 8.

The ramrod pipe is made of a small sheet of brass that has been drawn up into a strip on one side of the tube and pierced with a hole near the center. These tubes were placed on the underside of the stock and were used to store the rammer. The chances of this being a part from at least a mid to third quarter 18th century musket are somewhat enhanced by the fact that the tubes, sometimes called thimbles or pipes, were expanded or flared on one end towards the end of the 18th century.

On regulation military muskets the thimbles were of cast brass, and by the mid-eighteenth century the first and third were made flaring at the forward end. However, in the latter years of the century all three thimbles were expanded at one end. <sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 215.

However, it is entirely probable that the thimble illustrated is not from a regulation English musket.

The two side plate pieces are fragments of a cast brass musket side plate decorated with the engraved serpent design. Kelso found a somewhat similar specimen intact at Wormsloe for which he gives a probable date of the 1770's and attributes it to the work of the London gunsmith, John Whatley, who worked in the 1770's.<sup>33</sup> The crudeness of the illustrated side plate fragments suggests that the casting techniques had not been perfected. Although this type is earliest on the Atlantic coast, it became very popular in the northwest at the end of the 18th century and became a standard item on trade guns by the early 19th.<sup>34</sup> Hamilton illustrates a "fish skin" type design that may be closer to the illustrated specimen than Kelso's serpent type.<sup>35</sup>

One very definite possibility concerning these gun parts is that they represent one or more old confiscated

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<sup>33</sup>William M. Kelso. Captain Jones' Wormsloe. Emory University, Ph.D. Dissertation, 1971, p. 178.

<sup>34</sup>T. M. Hamilton. "Indian Trade Guns," The Missouri Archaeologist, Vol. 22, December 1960, p. 135.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 87.



weapons that were stored at the fort and destroyed when the British evacuated. Regarding the stringent regulation of firearms following the collapse of the American forces in Georgia, Jones states:

When General Prevost, after the junction of his forces with those under Colonel Campbell, moved from the coast into the interior for the complete subjugation of Georgia, the command of Savannah and the adjacent country was confided to Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Innes. Proclamations of the most stringent character were issued by him, by Colonel Campbell, and by Sir Hyde Parker. The inhabitants were enjoined to collect their arms and accoutrements of every description, and surrender them to the military storekeeper. Should these have been concealed or buried, as was not infrequently the case, they were to be uncovered and brought in under pain or rigid search, exposing the delinquent to punishment as an enemy to the King.<sup>36</sup>

Item 7 is a piece of shrapnel from a bomb and Item 1 is a bayonet fragment, triangular in cross section, and probably of the Queen Bess type.

Hume, in discussing the frequency of occurrence of bayonet fragments on historical sites, states that:

It may not be possible to identify the exact model, for there were many variants, some of which appear in none of the published literature, but it is generally a reasonably simple matter to answer the basic question: Is it Revolutionary, War of 1812, or Civil War?<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>C.C. Jones. Dead Towns of Georgia. Collections of the Ga. Historical Soc., Savannah: Morning News Steam Printing House, 1878. Vol. IV, p. 198.

<sup>37</sup>Hume, op. cit., p. 49.



Hume, in differentiating the British Brown Bess bayonet from later American type, states specifically that:

The blade of the British bayonet was 1" 4 3/4" in length and triangular in section, the lower and shorter sides ending in a vestigial guard or block at the junction of blade and shank.<sup>38</sup>

Unfortunately for identification purposes the portion of bayonet recovered was close to the end of the blade so that the critically diagnostic sections where the blade and shank met as well as the locking mechanism were not present. However, blade shoulders of American bayonets during the War of 1812 were square, and after 1842 till well after the Civil War the blade shoulders were sloped off and the upper face of the blade was deeply dished.<sup>39</sup> Given these facts the bayonet fragment represents a blade that was not available to the American army after the Revolutionary War. Since the Brown Bess bayonet continued to be made into the 19th century and was used by Mexico in the 1846-48 Mexican War, it is remotely possible that a souvenir from that conflict could have been lost on the parade at Fort Morris prior to or

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

Provenience of Gun Parts and Other Weapon Fragments  
Illustrated in Plate 30

1. From N95 E175 at 7'5" B.D.
2. From N95 E175 at 7'5" to 7'8" B.D.
3. From N95 E175 at 7'5" to 7'8" B.D.
4. From N95 E185 at 7'9" to 7'12" B.D.
5. From N95 E180 at 7'9" to 8'0" B.D.
6. From N95 E185 at 7'10" B.D.
7. From N95 E175 at 7'2" to 7'5" B.D.
8. From N95 E185 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
9. From unit III at spoil.
10. From N95 E180 at 7'9" to 8'0" B.D.



Plate 30

Gun parts, shell fragment, bayonet fragment

during the Civil War.<sup>40</sup> This would not, however, explain its broken condition, or its association with Brown Bess musket balls, 18th century gun parts, or other artifacts described for the 1971 field season at Fort Morris.

General Discussion of Musketballs, Lead Sheets,  
Cut Musketballs, Small Shot, and Bombs  
 (Plates 31, 32, 33)

The only type of bullet used in 18th century America was a round lead ball of various sizes. Within the relatively small excavation area on the parade at Fort Morris more than fifty musketballs, lead sheets, and other items made from musketballs were recovered. With the exception of a twenty-two caliber lead bullet from the humus zone nothing resembling the tapered Minie' bullet used by the U. S. Army and most European armies by 1850 was found. There was much individual variation in the musketballs recovered.

Items 1, 2, 15, 16 and 17 were all recovered from Unit V. Unlike the other specimens recovered, these items were evenly covered with a brownish red lead oxide on the outside surface. Neither the cut nor uncut items listed above had visible seam marks generally found on

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 51.



specimens from Units III and IV, and the first two items in Plate 31 were approximately eleven sixteenths of an inch in diameter, the usual size for British Brown Bess musketballs.<sup>41</sup> Differences in soil conditions in Units III and IV and those of Unit V are probably responsible for the differences in coloration. Depletion of oxygen in the soils of Units III and IV caused by the oxidation of large quantities to iron in the form of nails and other hardware could have kept the oxidation of the lead to a minimum in those units. Very few iron objects were recovered from Unit V. However, color differences could also be due to differences in trace elements in the lead itself combined with different oxygen levels in the corresponding soil context. Musketballs from Units III and IV tended towards a regular, fresh lead bluish-black to dull leaden grey or, as in example four (Plate 31), a whitish lead oxide.

Items 15, 16 and 17 in Plate 31 were among some of the most individualized specimens found in the excavations.

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<sup>41</sup>William Lewis Calver and Reginald Pelham Bolton, History Written with Pick and Shovel. New York: The New York Historical Society, 1950. Pp. 80-81.

Provenience of Musket Balls, Lead Sheets, Cut  
Musket Balls Illustrated in Plate 31

1. From N95 E205 at 8'1" B.D. beside Feature 19.
2. From N95 E205 at 8'1" B.D.
3. From N95 E185 at 7'3" to 7'6" B.D.
4. From N95 E175 at 7'9" to 8'0" B.D.
5. From N95 E185 at 7'9" to 7'12" B.D.
6. From N225 E175 at spoil.
7. From N225 E175 at (ball dropped from profile. Unknown vertical location).
8. From N95 E180 at 7'9" to 8'0" B.D.
9. From N98'6" E183'1" at (both items at 8'3" B.D.).
10. From N95 E185 at 8'0" B.D. (both items).
11. From N95 E180 at spoil (both items).
12. From N95 E180 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
13. From N99'3" E181'8" at 7'9" B.D.
14. From N95 E175 at 8'2" to 8'6" B.D.
15. From N105 E200 at 7'3" to 7'6" B.D.
16. From N105 E200 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
17. From N105 E200 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
18. From N95 E175 at 7'11" to 8'2" B.D.

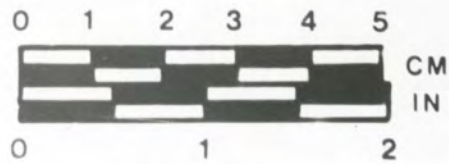
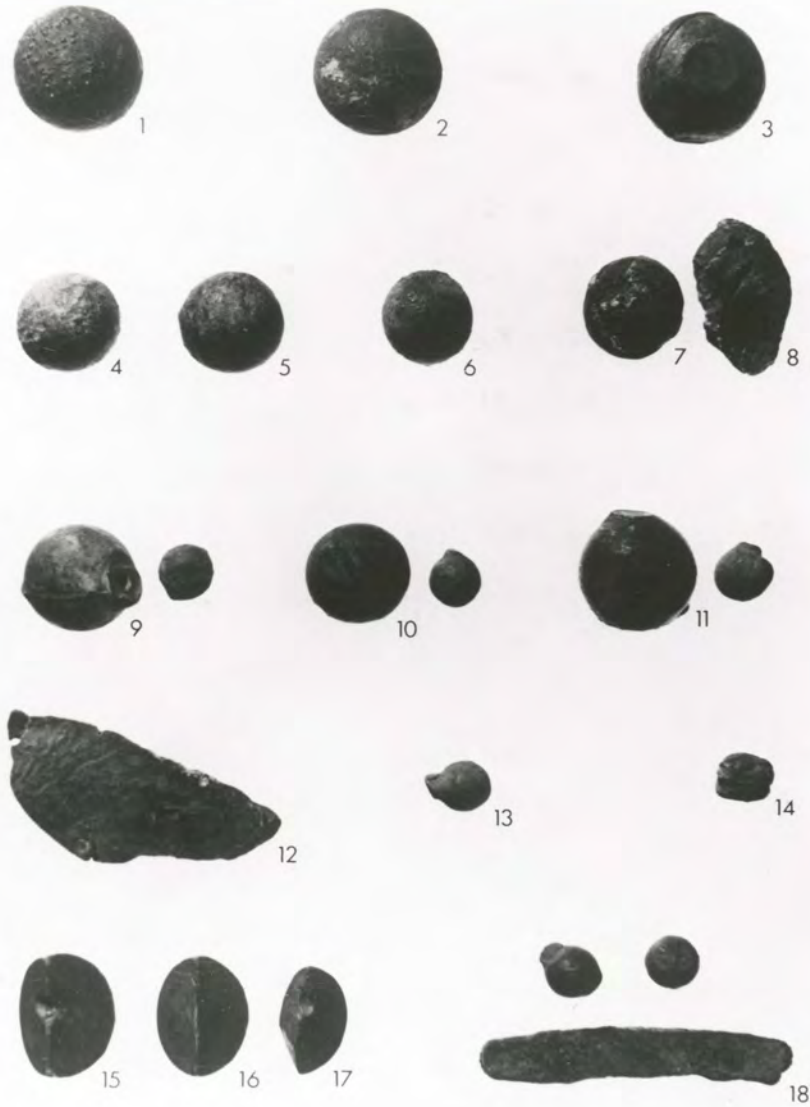


Plate 31

Musketballs, lead sheets, cut musketballs

All three were cut musketballs and were found within a few inches of one another in N105 E200. The contextual evidence when taken with the following descriptive and comparative data indicates a set of roughly improvised field weights, possibly for measuring powder or substances like tobacco or sugar.

Item fifteen with a small undercut incision on the inside angle of the cut ball weights 158.1 grains or approximately three-eighths of an ounce. Item seventeen weighs 61.8 grains or approximately one-eighth of an ounce and also has a small undercut incision on the inside angle of the cut. Item sixteen weighs 117.3 grams, just 7.9 grains more than two-eighths or one quarter of an ounce, and has no undercut incision as do items fifteen and seventeen. Given the above weights of the three cut musketballs the author derives the following proportions:

Item 15 equals approximately three-eighths of an ounce

Item 16 equals approximately two-eighths of an ounce

Item 17 equals approximately one-eighth of an ounce

A combination of the two cut musketballs having undercut incisions would then equal approximately one half ounce. This combination is extremely close with 218.8 grains being a true one half ounce and 219.9 grains being the true weight of the two cut balls having undercut incision. It is suggested that these two cut balls are made



for hanging on some crude form of balance. As to whether the third item or number sixteen at approximately three eighths of an ounce and without an incision was a counter weight of some kind there can not be as sound a conclusion. It does seem likely that since Brown Bess balls were regularly weighed in at just over an ounce, a set of weights weighing approximately one half the weight of the ball could have implications for powder to ball ratios.<sup>42</sup>

Calver and Bolton illustrate two specimens that are described as probably being weights made by British soldiers from bullets. "Specimens number 7 and 9 were probably used as weights, one half ounce, and one ounce respectively."<sup>43</sup> Other items made from bullets from Revolutionary War camps in New York State and described by Calver and Bolton include lead pencils, dice, buttons, fish line sinkers, sheathing for musket flints, and a buzzer-like toy made from a flattened disc with teeth cut alternately to the left and right like a circular saw and driven with a loop of twine.<sup>44</sup> One item that re-

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 78.

sembles the lead bullet buzzer was found in Unit IV, but was made of an unidentified horn-like substance.

In summary, concerning the use of probable bullet weights at Fort Morris it should be emphasized that standardized weights are not that infrequently found at historical sites that have been extensively excavated. Part of a set of brass balance weights was found in excavations at Fort Raleigh on the upper end of Roanoke Island in North Carolina.<sup>45</sup>

Balance Weight. A tiny cup shaped brass object (no. 83) was found in the fort ditch less than one foot deep. It is one of a set of nested apothecary weights, and can very well date from the 16th century.<sup>46</sup>

In discussing the existence of a trading house at Macon Plateau, Ocmulgee National Monument at Macon, Georgia, Carol Mason states: "A. R. Kelly (1938:55) has even reported a brass scale weight found on the site with a 1712 date on it."<sup>47</sup> Unlike the two specimens illustrated and identified by Calver and Bolton as bullet

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<sup>45</sup>Jean Carl Harrington, Search for the Citty of Raleigh: Archaeological Excavations at Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, North Carolina. Archaeological Research Series No. Six, National Park Service, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Washington, D.C., 1962, p. 21.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>47</sup>Carol Mason, "Gunflints and Chronology at Ocmulgee National Monument," Historical Archaeology, 1971. (Annual Publication of the Society for Historical Archaeology, Mackinac Is. St. Pk. Comm. Lansing, Mich., 1971) P. 107.

weights two of the Fort Morris specimens were equipped with a hool-like incision that would have allowed the weights to be suspended, in addition the three cut musketballs were found in the same context and bore proportional relationships by weight to one another.

Other musketballs illustrated in Plate 31 plainly show evidence of casting, probably in bullet molds used at the site (see Items 3, 7, 9, and 11). A number of the musketballs show dents and small irregular flattened areas. Some of this damage was probably due to bouncing around in cartridge boxes. Item number 8 clearly resembles a ball that has been flattened on impact. This may be lead recovered from target practice or possibly from the actions at the fort in the fall of 1778 and early January 1779. Item 12 appears to be a deliberately flattened ball, possibly a sheath for a musket flint. Item 18 is either a standardized sheet of lead used for molding the smaller caliber shot or possibly another flint sheath. Clusters of the smaller swanshot size musketballs were frequently encountered within Units III and IV (see Plate 32), or almost as frequently in association with one of the larger musketballs (see Plate 31). This may reflect a common tendency among American troops to cram a number of smaller shot in after the primary load had been rammed down the barrel.

Item 2, Plate 32, is a piece of swanshot still attached to the sprue or waste from the bullet mold.<sup>48</sup> The item furthest to the left is probably a flint sheath. This specimen appears to have two rounded projections on one edge that possibly reflect the outline of the flattened ball while the other edge has been neatly trimmed. While approximately  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches in length, the specimen described above as well as numbers 12 and 18 in Plate 31 are not the right width for musket flints according to Hume's description:

Flints were inserted into the cockgrip with either base or face upward, but never without first being enfolded at the back with a strip of leather or lead. The latter strips are frequently found on archaeological sites, sometimes still adhering to the flints. The grips were cut from sheet lead that was often socred so that they could be just cut into pieces of the right width for the sizes of gun. Thus, rectangular strips of lead measuring approximately  $1" \times 1\frac{1}{2}"$  with one or two socred lines running down one side can reasonable be identified as flint grips.<sup>49</sup>

One large section of a bomb was found and this specimen was located on the surface of the parapet just south of the gate. This artifact, representing one half of a burst shell was so highly corroded that the outer surface

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<sup>48</sup>Hamilton, op. cit., p. 102.

<sup>49</sup>Hume, op. cit., p. 220-221.



Provenience of Lead Sheets and Small Shot From  
Plate 32

1. From N95 E175 at 7'5" to 7'8" B.D.
2. From N95 E200 at 7'11" B.D.
3. From N95 E180 at 7'9" to 8'3" B.D.
4. From N95 E185 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
5. From N95 E175 at 7'2" to 7'5" B.D.
6. From N95 E185 at 7'9" to 7'12" B.D.

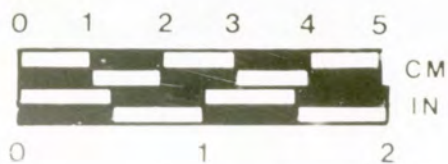


Plate 32

Lead sheets and small shot

had largely lost any resemblance of its original spherical form. The inner cavity had retained its shape. Smaller fragments of bombs were found at a number of points in the excavation and offer conclusive evidence that the fort was either bombarded or else was subjected to an internal explosion that included bombs (see Plate 33).

The British captured Fort Morris and its stores intact,<sup>50</sup> and it does not seem likely that good ammunition would have been wasted to blow up whatever structures were still standing in the fort when the British evacuated the state. Also, Fort Morris, reveted and renamed Fort Defense in 1812-15, was never fired on during that conflict, but was the subject of an intense bombardment by the forces of General Augustine Prevost in early January, 1779.<sup>51</sup> All available evidence indicates but one bombardment at the site although two actions were fought, the first in November, 1778 and the bombardment in January, 1779.

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<sup>50</sup>See Appendix

<sup>51</sup>For a detailed discussion of this matter, see pp. and pp.

One Half of Six Pound Bomb and Section of Bomb  
Shrapnel from Plate 33

1. From on top of the parapet south of the date.
2. From N225 E175 at 7'3" to 7'6" B.D.





Plate 33

One half of six-pound bomb and section of  
shrapnel from a six-inch bomb

### Gunflints (Plate 34)

Seven gunflints were found in excavations inside Fort Morris. Most of the gunflints reflect the late 18th century prismatic types. Items 3 and 4 (Plate 34) are both nearly complete specimens of the light honey colored French gunflints. Item 6 is also probably a chip from a French honey colored flint. At Wormsloe Plantation Kelso found several specimens that are identical with items 3 and 4.<sup>52</sup> In reference to the use of the French gunflint, Hume states:

The vast majority of gunflints found on eighteenth-century Colonial and Revolutionary sites (be they British or American) are French for these were universally considered to be superior to the English. By the War of 1812, however, the British were using at least as many English flints as French, and in the first half of the nineteenth century western traders -both American and British -were selling only the English product. In short, therefore, the more common the English black prismatic gunflint, the later may be the date of one's site.<sup>53</sup>

Only one flint was found in the 1971 season that could possibly qualify as an English black prismatic flint and that specimen, item 1 in Plate 34, was found more than a quarter mile from the fort on the surface of the ground near the Georgia Historical Commission marker

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<sup>52</sup>Kelso, op. cit., pp. 176-178.

<sup>53</sup>Hume, op. cit., p. 220.

for Fort Morris. This specimen was very thick with some secondary chipping along the edges. Some whitish bands through the flint indicated to the author that the specimen may actually be made from a black north Georgia material known as Fort Payne chert.

Although Hume does not mention the fact black gunflints apparently were made in America during the Revolution. In a discussion of Lieutenant E. Elmer's journal contained in the New Jersey Historical Society Proceedings, Vol. 3, (1849), p. 41, Charles Bolton, the historian, states:

Flints were not easily obtained and workmen who would shape them were few. When "a vein of prodigious fine black flint stone" was discovered upon Mount Independence (near Ticonderoga) in 1776, the commanding officers of regiments were ordered to inquire if there were among their soldiers any old countrymen who understood the hammering of flints.<sup>54</sup>

Item number 2 in Plate 34 is probably a French flint although the shape and color are unlike specimens 3 and 4 in Plate 34. Item number 2 is rounded at the back and then carefully retouched along the edges with secondary flaking. The face is a typical flat rectangular shape.<sup>55</sup> Items 7 and 8 are chips of flint that appeared

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<sup>54</sup>Charles Knowles Bolton, The Private Soldier Under Washington. Kennikat Press, Inc. Port Washington, N.Y. First published in 1902; reprinted in 1964 by Kennikat Press, p. 120.

<sup>55</sup>Hume, op. cit., p. 220.



to be fragments of gunflints or possibly gun flint blanks. Although these chips were found close to specimens 1 through 4 in the Fort Morris midden, they may be artifacts churned up from the prehistoric midden.

Item 5 is a greyish chip that has been well flaked along the edges. This is probably a fragment from a discarded gunflint. Further identification was difficult because of the size and lack of distinguishing characteristics. Item 5 may represent a type of gunflint stone identified by Wittoft as Belgian Honestone. This material is described as being:

. . .non-translucent, dull, grey to tan to brown chert. . .It is probably a novaculite (chert filled with microscopic voids, of an open spongy texture) much like the hone material of Arkansas. The Belgian stone is known for its tough, non-brittle character.<sup>56</sup>

At the present time very little has been published on gunflints in Georgia with the exception of Lee Hanson's article on gunflints found in the W.P.A. excavations at Ocmulgee.<sup>57</sup> The author has also examined the gunflints

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<sup>56</sup>John Whitthoft, "A History of Gunflints." Pennsylvania Archaeologist, Vol. XXXVI, June, 1966, p. 26.

<sup>57</sup>Lee H. Hanson, Jr., Gunflints From the Macon Plateau, Historical Archaeology 1970, Annual Publication of the Society for Historical Archaeology, Vol. IV, 1970. Moravian College, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.



found in the excavations at Fort Frederica National Monument, St. Simon's Island, Georgia as well as a collection of about seventy gunflints recovered in two excavations at the presumptive site of Mount Venture, the 1742 period fort and trading post operated by one of Oglethorpe's officers, Captain Matthews, and his wife Mary, better known in history as Mary Musgrove, Oglethorpe's wellknown Creek interpreter.<sup>58</sup>

From what is presently known about gunflints in Georgia and during the Revolutionary period, 100% of the items definitely identified as gunflints and recovered in the Fort Morris midden indicate a date between 1760 and 1800. These dates are based largely on what is known about the distribution and use of French gunflints in America during the 18th century. All seven gunflints excavated from the parade at Fort Morris with the exceptions of items 2 and 5 are of the well known French honey colored stone. Item number 2 which resembles a gunspall could well be described as being greyish with white clouds,

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<sup>58</sup>National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form, January 27, 1972. Titled: Aleck Island - Lower Sansavilla, #2, by Gordon M. Midgette.

## Provenience of Gunflints from Plate 34

1. On surface near Georgia Historical marker.
2. From N95 E180 at 8'0" to 8'3" B.D.
3. From N95 E180 at 8'0" to 8'3" B.D.
4. From N95 E180 at 7'9" to 8'0" B.D.
5. From N95 E180 at 8'0" to 8'3" B.D.
6. From N95 E180 at 7'2" to 7'5" B.D.
7. From N95 E180 at 8'0" to 8'3" B.D.
8. From N95 E180 at 8'0" to 8'3" B.D.



Plate 34

Gunflints

a description that Hanson gives to his French gunflints from Macon Plateau based on Witthoft's analysis.

While French gunflints are usually made from a honey colored translucent chert, most of the Macon Plateau specimens have a grayish cast and contain white "clouds" in the chert. In this respect they greatly resemble a collection from Battery Island at the Fortress of Louisbourg, Nova Scotia, examined by the author.<sup>59</sup>

Gunflints from Fort Frederica and Mt. Venture were both made almost exclusively of Belgian hornstone. Since there was an early and close tie between the Fort Morris site and Fort Frederica, item number 5 may date to the earlier Colonial occupation of the site.

#### Buttons and Uniform Adornments (Plates 35, 36)

Three general types of buttons were excavated on the parade at Fort Morris. The first type represented by items 7, 8, and 9 in Plate 35 is identical in most respects to Olsen's type C button made of cast white metal with a prominent boss, iron wire eye remnant, and mold seam with gas plug scar.<sup>60</sup> Item 8 in Plate 35 clearly shows a rusted out boss with two small holes for receiving

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<sup>59</sup>Hanson, op. cit., p. 53.

<sup>60</sup>Stanley J. Olsen, "Dating Early Plain Buttons by Their Form." American Antiquity, Vol. XXVIII, No. 4, April, 1963. P. 553.



the ends of the iron wire eye. The mold seam and gas plug scar are also clearly visible. Olsen dates this type between 1760 and 1790.<sup>61</sup>

Two of these specimens, items 7 and 9 were clearly "domed" white metal types having some of the same characteristics as item 8 except that the iron content in the white metal had caused a considerable amount of oxidation, giving a partially oxidized coating to the surface. The domed surface is most clearly seen in item 9, Plate 35. These buttons combine characteristics of Olsen's type C with South's type 12. South's description as follows is nearly identical for items 7 and 9 with the exception that the Fort Morris specimens were not made as "solid" domed types.

Type 12:

Domed white metal button with high iron content and an iron wire eye. The oxidation of the iron in the metal has produced a coating of oxide over a soft white metal core. A solid domed type shaped like type 2. Comments: Only one of this badly preserved type was found.<sup>62</sup>

Unlike item 8, neither 7 nor 9 had mold seams or gas plug scars. Both 7 and 9, like Olsen's type C,

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

<sup>62</sup>Stanley South. "Analysis of the Buttons from Brunswick Town and Fort Fisher." The Florida Anthropologist, Vol. XVII, no. 2, June, Pp. 118-119.

were of white metal, had prominent bosses and contained rusted areas in the boss where the iron wire eye would have been attached. Like South's type 12 dated between 1726 and 1776, items 7 and 9 were made of two circular halves of white metal that had been brazed together and both exhibited the tendency of this type button to peel apart where the brazed sections are joined. Items 7 and 9 can safely be assigned the range given to the type of 1726-1776.<sup>63</sup>

The second type of button found on the parade at Fort Morris was a plain brass button type that closely resembles Olsen's type G, dating between 1785 and 1800.<sup>64</sup> This type is illustrated as item 2, Plate 35.

Olsen states that many examples of this button type have words stamped into the brass: "Many of these buttons carry the words 'Treble Gilt,' 'Extra Gilt,' 'Extra Quality,' or similar slogan denoting the button quality, to catch the eye of the purchaser."<sup>65</sup>

Item 2, Plate 35, does not have any stamped words although it does have a stamped wreath design and the

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<sup>63</sup>Ibid., p. 115.

<sup>64</sup>Olsen, op. cit., p. 553.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., p. 552.

edge of the button on the front side is slightly rounded. Wreath designs were stamped on British Revolutionary War buttons that closely resemble Olsen's type G, which is dated between 1785 and 1800. Examples are illustrated in Calver and Bolton's *History Written with Pick and Shovel*.<sup>66</sup>

One additional characteristic of item two would seem to place the button in the earlier range of time given for Olsen's type G. The brass wire eye seems to be partially soldered into a well or countersunk space in the back of the button. In Hume's typology of button types derived from South's examples from excavations at Brunswick Town and Fort Fischer he illustrates type 9 with a "well soldered eye."<sup>67</sup> Item 2 as far as the brass eye is concerned most resembles Hume's type 9 dated to the period 1726-1776.<sup>68</sup>

The third type of button recovered at Fort Morris in 1971 is classified by South as a sleeve link button form.<sup>69</sup> Items 3 and 6, Plate 35, are both sleeve link types. South's description is as follows:

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<sup>66</sup>Calver and Bolton, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

<sup>67</sup>Hume, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>69</sup>South, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

### Type 35:

Domed, hemispheric, round, oval, square or octagon shaped set holders for glass, paste or composition sets. These were made of white metal, brass, copper, silver, pewter or iron. The set was held by crimping the domed back over the edge of the set. The two buttons were held together by brass links of wire or stamped links. The eyes were cast as a part of the set and drilled, or a wire eye was fastened through the holder and soldered, or soldered to the back of the domed holder.

Context 1726-1776.<sup>70</sup>

Item 3 in Plate 35 is a composite made of a domed, faceted green glass imitation jewel and a brass holder. The setting is held in place by crimping the edges of the brass holder around the edges of the faceted glass. The eye is drilled through the shank which was cast with the rest of the brass holder in one piece.

Item 6 was badly burned but the distinguishing characteristics can still be determined. The setting was covered with a bluish glaze remnants of which can still be seen close to where the glazed "stone" (?) and brass holder are crimped together. The back, though badly burned, appears to have a heavy U-shaped iron eye.

The many illustrated examples of sleeve link type buttons in Calver and Bolton's History Written with Pick and

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid.



Shovel are from Revolutionary war camps.<sup>71</sup> South recovered 33 specimens from the Brunswick ruins and 7 from Fort Fischer. While he gives these types an 18th century date (see description cited above), South declines further analysis because of the limited number of the type found.<sup>72</sup>

Item 5 in Plate 35 is a small pewter or white metal, heart-shaped ornament. The design is a relatively simple set of concentric hearts with the central element slightly in relief. Between the edge of the interior heart and the exterior heart are a series of small, straight lines. The back of the ornament was badly corroded, but the remnants of a small iron wire eye were present. This element was extremely fragile and fell off when it was removed from the ground. The eye was apparently soldered to the back. The corroded eye as well as the back of the ornament are illustrated in Figure 36.

While digging at Fort Haldimand on Carleton Island in the St. Lawrence River, Calver and Bolton recovered a number of nearly identical heart-shaped ornaments in association with buttons of the 21st Royal Provincial Corps. These ornaments date to the 1770's and 1780's.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup>Calver and Bolton, op. cit., pp. 224-225.

<sup>72</sup>South, op. cit., p. 130.

<sup>73</sup>Calver and Bolton, op. cit., pp. 54-55.

Calver and Bolton identified the function of the ornaments in the following way:

The best conjecture as the use of these objects is that they served, in connection with a small leather strap, to hold the front and tail lapels of the skirts of the coats where they were folded towards each other at the right and left sides of the garments. An engraving printed in 1786, of a British officer in his uniform, shows hearts upon the skirt of the coat as described above.<sup>74</sup>

Items 1 and 4 in Plate 35 were unidentified pewter or silver ornaments. The metal in both cases was a very black silver oxide color. Item four at first appeared to be a small ring that had been crudely soldered together. However, the ring finger would have to have been extremely small. An alternative and perhaps more plausible explanation is that both items 1 and 4 are silver or pewter wire insignia that were attached to the uniform, buttons or some other personal belonging of the soldier. The "ring" example is identical to what appears to be an attached insignia for the IX Royal Provincial Corporation illustrated in Calver and Bolton's book on New York Revolutionary War Sites. This button is described in the following terms: "The other

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid., p. 54.

9th Regiment button, with Roman numeral, bears the broken circle which was fairly common on British military Buttons of the Revolutionary period."<sup>75</sup>

The following items with the exception of item 5 are the backs of buttons or ornaments illustrated in Plate 36:

Item one, Plate 36, corresponds with item 3, Plate 35.

Item two, Plate 36, corresponds with item 6, Plate 35.

Items 3 and 4, Plate 36, correspond with item 5, Plate 35.

Item 5, Plate 36, is a shoe buckle of a type commonly found on Revolutionary War Period sites. Calver and Bolton illustrate an identical specimen that they identify as a British officer's shoe buckle.<sup>76</sup> Both sleeve buttons and shoe buckles were imported by the Americans during the Revolution.

Much pride was taken by the Revolutionary officers in their personal buckles and they frequently mentioned them in the records. We see also occasional mention of sleeve links. The arrival of a French ship (the Fier Roderique) at Hampton Roads, Virginia, was reported to the Con-

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<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., p. 221.

Provenience of Buttons and Uniform Adornments from  
Plate 35

1. From N95 E175 at 7'5" to 7'8" B.D.
2. From N225 E175 at spoil.
3. From N95 E180 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
4. From N95 E175 at 7'5" to 7'8" B.D.
5. From N95 E175 at 7'3" to 7'5" B.D.
6. From N95 E205 at 7'9" B.D.
7. From N95 E180 at 7'3" to 7'6" B.D.
8. From N95 E175 at 7'8" to 7'11" B.D.
9. From N95 E185 at 7'3" to 7'6" B.D.



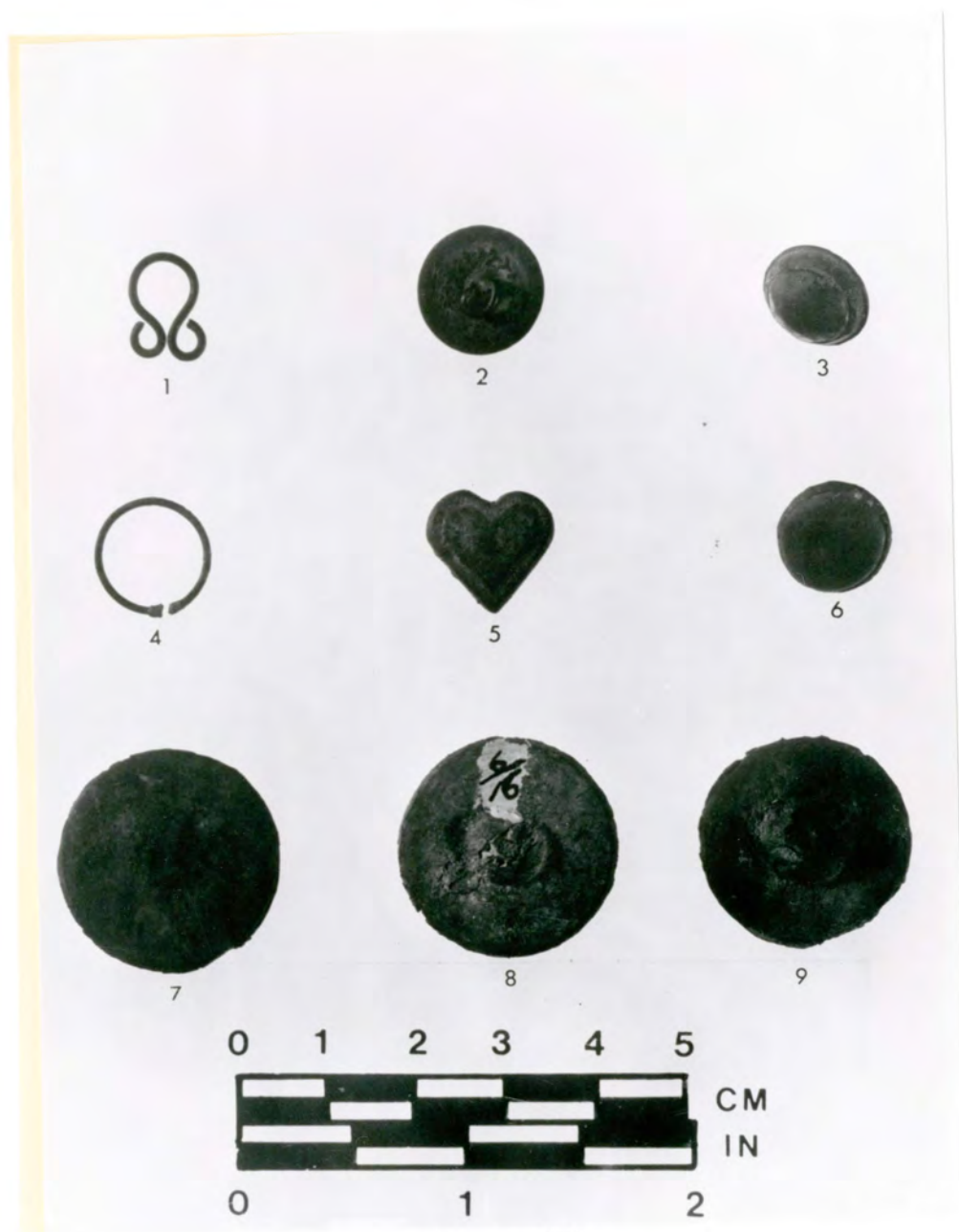


Plate 35

Buttons and uniform adornments

## Provenience of Button Backs and Buckle from Plate 36

1. From N95 E180 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
2. From N95 E205 at 7'9" to 8'0" B.D.
3. From N95 E175 at 7'3" to 7'5" B.D.
4. From N95 E175 at 7'3" to 7'5" B.D.
5. From N95 E180 at 7'3" to 7'6" B.D.

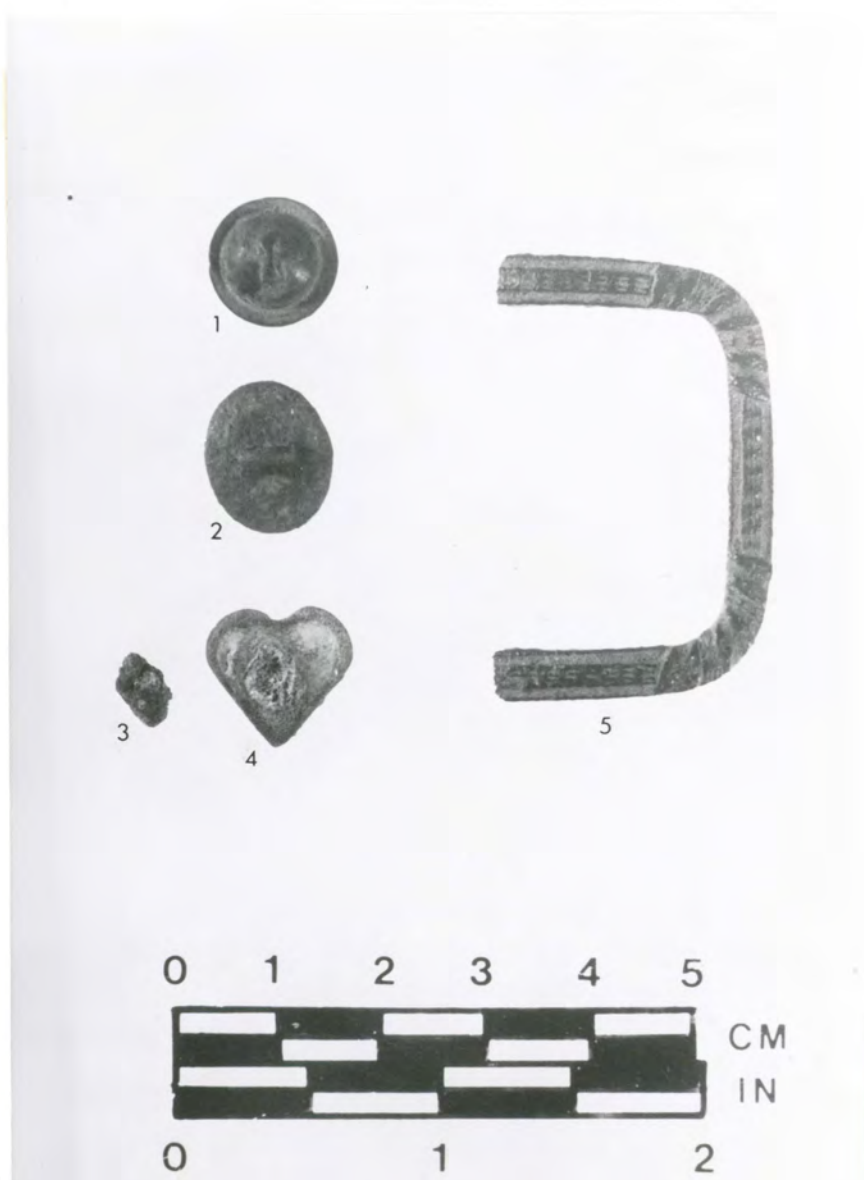


Plate 36

Button backs and buckle

tinental Congress June 8, 1778 as having on board material desirable for use by the United States, and in the list there appear different kinds of buckles, sleeve buttons, and wrist bands for shirts. It was resolved by the Congress, June 10, 1778, that Governor Henry of Virginia be requested to purchase for the United States articles contained in the list.<sup>77</sup>

Pipestems and Pipebowl Fragments (Plate 37, 38)

A small population of machine molded clay tobacco pipe fragments were found in the 1971 excavations. The 27 pipestem fragments in the sample averaged 5/64's of an inch in diameter and fell into the 1750 range according to the Harrington-Binford hypothesis. This date is too early and does not agree with the majority of the other artifacts or the known documentation for the site. The pipestem bore index has been consistently too early in the 1760 to 1780 range at a number of historical sites.

Two maker's marks and the rouletted pipe bowl fragments found in the excavations were more informative.

The bowl fragments illustrated in group 2 and group 5, Plate 37, were of the Dutch type. The bowl form could not be determined because of the fragmentary condition of the specimens. However, they did have the outside surface features of the Dutch type including a polished

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<sup>77</sup>Ibid., p. 227.



surface and rouletting around the lip of the bowl.<sup>78</sup>  
 The rouletting in the Fort Morris examples were small, single bands of impressed triangles. Walker has described the Dutch pipe material from Louisbourg Fortress in the following description:

Pipe material from Louisbourg came from two sources, the Netherlands and England. Dutch pipes differ from English pipes of this period in shape, size, (Dutch bowls being smaller), in the plane of the bowl not being parallel to the line of the stem, and in the lip of the Dutch bowl having a form of rouletting. Dutch material is usually more delicate and better made than English, frequently having a polished surface (Fig. 1). For reasons as yet uncertain the shape shown in the upper row was popular in the New World to the total exclusion of the more traditional barrel-shaped English bowl, but was in a minority in Britain.<sup>79</sup>

The most definitive maker's mark (Plate 38, item #3) appeared on the heel of a fragmentary pipe bowl (where the bowl and stem join). This mark appears to be a combination of two marks in common use in the 1755-1760 period. These marks described below are generally recognized as registered trade marks for the Gouda pipe-maker's industry in Holland.<sup>80</sup>

Walker states that:

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<sup>78</sup>Iain C. Walker, "Clay Pipes from the Fortress of Louisbourg, Nova Scotia, Canada," in: The Conference on Historic Site Archaeology Papers, 1965-1966, Vol. 1, p. 96.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

Dutch marks found at Louisbourg include the crowned 6 (Fig. 3) (with and without the arms, and found in 1755-60 and c. 1700-1749/50 contexts); the letters SVO (1755-60) (Fig. 4); the mermaid (1755-60; the trumpeter (1720-32) (Fig. 5); and a monogram like design which appears to be the letter V with a C and a reversed C overlaid (1720-32). The letters LV, surmounted by a crown, with what appears to be a flying bird underneath, occurred a 1720-32 context, and pipes with this mark carried complex stem decoration (Figs. 6, 7).<sup>81</sup>

Item 3 (Plate 38) when examined with the naked eye appeared to be a crowned 16. However, when placed under magnification the mark clearly appears to be a combined mermaid 6 design. If the design is a mermaid 6, this could mean the merger of two trade marks that were common in the 1755-1760 period, the mermaid and crowned 6. Such a merger of two separate trade marks could indicate the passage of perhaps twenty-five years, giving a hypothetical 1780 date. Since trademarks were inherited, this could mean that a mermaid 6 design represents a significant combination at some stage in the life cycle of the Gouda pipemakers.

Item 2 in Plate 38 clearly is a Gouda marked pipe-stem with the letters GOUDA circling the stem beneath four rouletted circles of small triangular marks.

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<sup>81</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

The question of how the Gouda pipe material was deposited at Fort Morris is an intriguing one. This particular item can be one of the most important dating devices that a site can produce as Hume has noted in the following statement:

The English kaolin tobacco pipe is possibly the most valuable clue yet available to the student of historical sites, for it is an item that was manufactured, imported, smoked, and thrown away, all within a matter of a year or two.<sup>82</sup>

The Georgia campaigns of 1778 and 1779 by the British army at Fort Morris were under the command of Brigadier General Prevost, whose headquarters and troops were stationed in the old Presidio at St. Augustine. The attack in January of 1779 at Fort Morris was carried out mostly by men from the 60th Royal American Regiment under Gen. Prevost's command at St. Augustine. These were the troops that occupied and held Fort Morris. A large portion of these troops were Germans who had been recently recruited into the British army.<sup>83</sup>

During the same month the Secretary of State wrote to Tonyn saying that two additional battalions, as well as additional companies of the

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<sup>82</sup>Hume, op. cit., p. 296.

<sup>83</sup>Ricardo Torres-Reyes, Historic Preservation Team Historic Resource Study: British Garrison of St. Augustine 1763-1784. Castillo De San Marcos Nat. Mon., Fla. Denver Service Center, National Park Service. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, pp. 26-27.

Provenience for Items Listed in Plate 37  
Pipestem and Bowl Fragments

1. From N95 El85 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
2. From N95 El75 at 7'2" to 7'8" B.D.
3. From N95 El85 at 7'3" to 7'6" B.D.
4. From N95 El75 at 7'11" to 8'2" B.D.
5. From N95 El75 at 7'2" to 7'5" B.D.
6. From unit III or IV at (context lost).
7. From N90 El80 at 7'0" to 7'3" B.D.
8. From N95 El80 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
9. From N95 El80 at 8'0" to 8'3" B.D.





Plate 37

Pipestem and bowl fragments

## Provenience of Material from Plate 38

1. Inscription scratched on glass fragment, Unit IV, dropped from profile, but associated with feature 11, a small pit in N225 E175.
2. Gouda pipe stem maker's mark from N95 E180 at 6'11½" to 7'3" B.D.
3. Gouda pipe maker's stamp on heel fragment at the junction of bowl and stem from N225 E175 at 7'8 3/4" to 7'10" B.D.

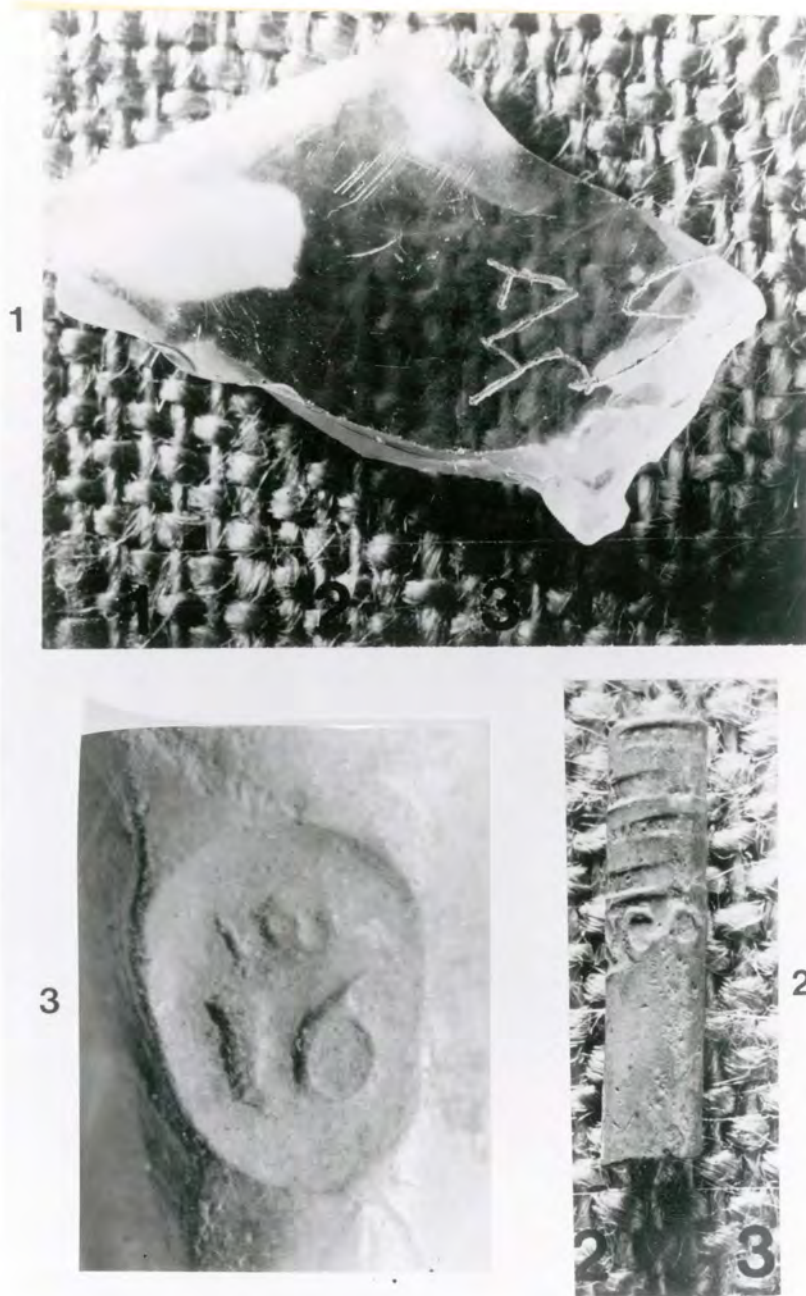


Plate 38

- A. Enlargement of scratched engraving on frosted white bottle glass fragment
- B. Gouda pipestem fragment stamped GOUDA
- C. Enlargement of stamped heel mark from the function of the pipestem and bowl of a Gouda pipe

60th would be formed and sent to St. Augustine as soon as the men were collected in England and in Germany. . . .<sup>84</sup>

Tonyn reported in July that the garrison (St. Augustine) was composed chiefly of foreign recruits refractory and mutinous inclined, which is not uncommon with new levies, until they settle with the corps.<sup>85</sup>

It is entirely probable that the Gouda pipe fragments found in the 1971 Fort Morris excavations were personal possessions of the British-German soldiers who advanced and took the Fort in January, 1779.

Noel Hume has noted the small number of Dutch pipes found on eighteenth century American sites. According to Hume, Dutch pipes have been found in the southeast only at those sites that were under the influence of German mercenaries.<sup>86</sup>

Squared Bottoms, Sides and Necks from Green Case or "Gin" Bottles (Plates 39, 40)

Of the several hundred bottle glass fragments found in the 1971 excavations all can be divided into two basic categories. Light, olive, and black-green liquor bottle fragments, most frequently squared in cross section, but occasionally rounded, were the most commonly

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<sup>84</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., pp. 25-26.

<sup>86</sup>Hume, op. cit., p. 307.



occurring types. Hume has noted that squared, olive green to black bottle fragments from the 18th century are "frequently identified as gin or case bottles."<sup>87</sup> The second category is composed of clear to frosted white fragments of case bottles or what may possibly be pharmaceutical phials. Pontil marks were present on both types.

Of the eight green glass bottle neck fragments found in the foot or so of Fort Morris midden in Units III and IV, all were partially melted (see Plate 40). The same exposure to heat was evidenced in the squared bottoms and sides of the green glass bottles (see Plate 39).

The many melted glass fragments in association with other damaged artifacts indicate that structures were burned on the parade at Fort Morris. This may well have occurred as a result of the January, 1779 bombardment by the British.

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<sup>87</sup>Hume, op. cit., p. 172.

Calver and Bolton have noted the frequent occurrence of demolished square case bottles on Revolutionary sites with the features associated with the types found at Fort Morris. These included the inverted base, and the band twisted around the neck of the bottle. These features are plainly visible in the illustrated examples.<sup>88</sup>

The material is always the common greenish black glass. The characteristic inverted base, the high and sometimes bulging shoulders, the tapering and often bloated neck, are all significant features, and with the rude band twisted around the nozzle, give an individuality to each specimen.<sup>89</sup>

That the squared case bottles were fragile and unlikely to be found in a restorable condition was also noted by Calver and Bolton.

There are also frequent pieces of square-bodied case bottles, or flasks of black glass, which were naturally more fragile than the round bodied bottle, and thus have rarely escaped complete demolition.<sup>90</sup>

Calver and Bolton have noted that bottoms and neck are the most commonly found remnants of the squared case bottle as was the case at Fort Morris: "These glass bot-

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<sup>88</sup>Calver and Bolton, op. cit., p. 259.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., p. 263.

bles are always relatively thin about their middle part and in their shoulders, and usually have been broken at that part, leaving the neck and bottom intact."<sup>91</sup>

The second category of glass found at Fort Morris seems also to have been fairly common on New York sites during the Revolution:

There were also case bottles made of white flint glass having ground glass stoppers, and in the Fort and elsewhere, fragments and necks of Bristol glass flasks were found, both opaque and clear, with pretty foliated decorations formed by drawing or blowing the body outwards from the neck.<sup>92</sup>

Only one clear glass bottle bottom fragment was found, so little can be said about this relatively minor type at Fort Morris. However, there was a considerable amount of death and illness at Fort Morris as a result of disease during the earlier American occupations. Part of a scratched inscription was found on an opaque glass fragment that may possibly be part of an apothecary mark (see Plate 38).

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<sup>91</sup>Ibid.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., p. 259.

Provenience of Squared Bottoms and Sides of Green  
Case Bottles from Plate 39

1. From N95 E180 at 8'0" to 8'3" B.D.
2. From N95 E180 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
3. From N95 E175 at 7'2" to 7'5" B.D.
4. From N95 E180 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
5. From N95 E185 at 7'9" to 7'12" B.D.
6. From N95 E180 at 8'0" to 8'3" B.D.
7. From N95 E180 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
8. From N95 E180 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.



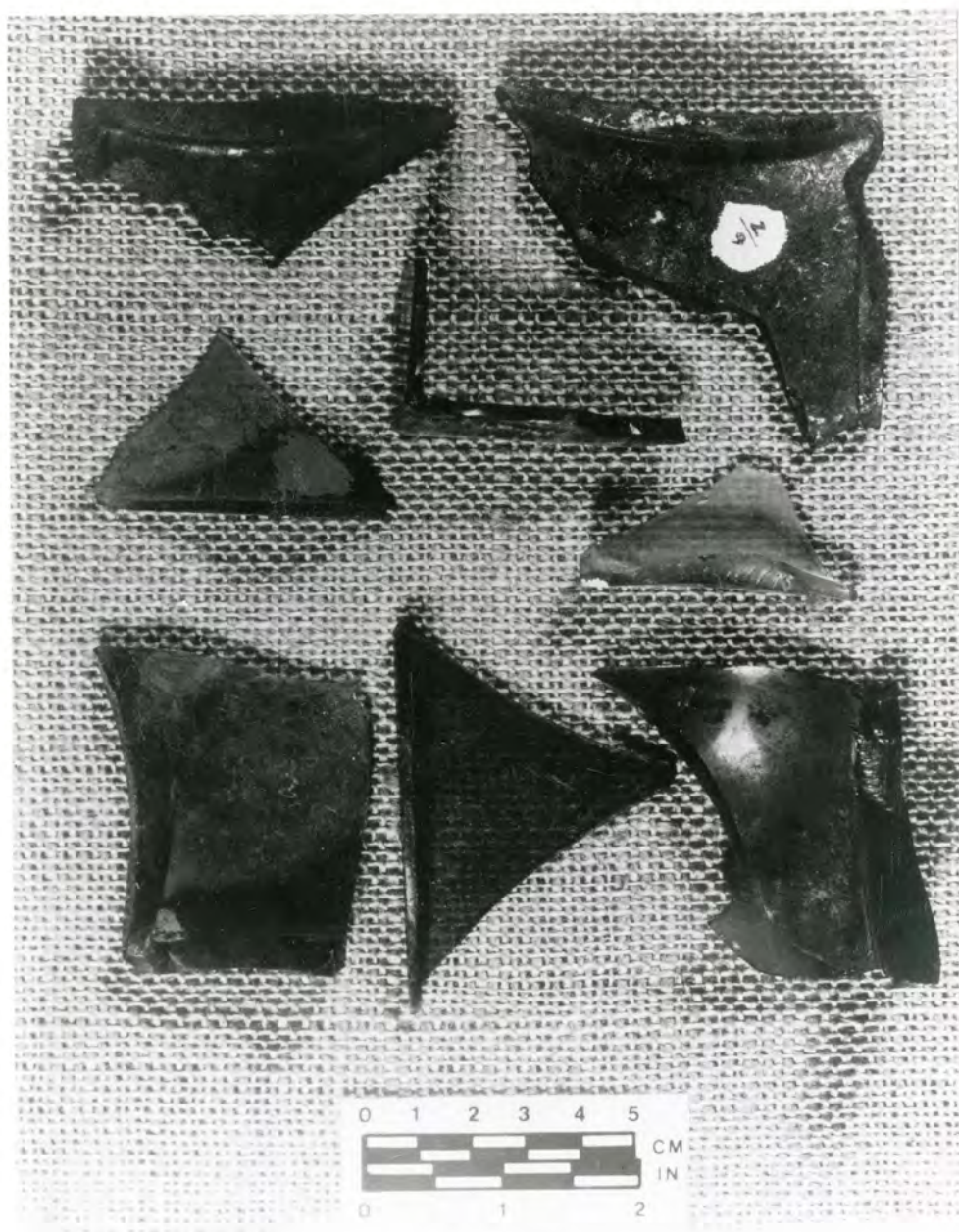


Plate 39

Squared bottoms and sides of green  
case bottles

Plate 40  
Partially Melted Bottle Necks from Green  
Case or "Gin" Bottles.  
All are from Fort Morris midden in Unit  
III.



Plate 40

Partially melted bottle necks from green  
case or "gin" bottles



Animal Teeth and Bones Showing Butchered Specimens  
(Plate 41)

Most of the bone found in the 1971 excavations was too fragmented for identification by a non-specialist. Some specimens were found that could be tentatively identified as domestic or wild cattle and pig bones. Item one in Plate 41 is from the proximal end of the femur of a large animal, probably bos. This was found in the test on the north end of the parade. Item two shows a butchered or cut acetabulum from a large animal, probably also bos. Again, in item two the cut is precisely where the ball is no longer protected by the acetabular ridge of the hip joint. This indicates that the ball segment is from a quartered section of a cow. Item two was found in Unit III on the south end of the parade. Item three is a molar from either a pig or cow. Item four is an incisor from a small cow or pig. A total of 107 bone fragments were found on the parade in Units III, IV, and V.

Most of the bone fragments were small, thick, cracked specimens that appear to be fragments of larger bones. Olsen found the bone scrap from Valley Forge to be fragmented beyond identification largely as the result of cracking and breaking bone to obtain edible parts in marrow cavities.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>93</sup>Stanley J. Olsen. "Food Animals of the Continen-



The reliance of the British garrison at St. Augustine on stolen beef from coastal Georgia prior to the British takeover in 1778 and 1779 has been recently discussed in some detail by National Park Service historians; supplies sent to Fort Morris for the troops engaging in the occupation probably differed very little from the fare discussed below:

Provisions were but little grown in East Florida prior to Revolutionary days, the bulk of the needed supplies being imported from the northern colonies and the British Isles. During the war the main source of provision from the north was cut off by the revolutionists of Georgia and South Carolina. Thus the garrison of St. Augustine and Apalache were compelled to rely on the efforts of some planters in tilling the soil, the uncertain supply of grain and cattle brought in by the raiding parties of rangers and importations from England.

Provision stores were received irregularly, as a consequence of which the garrison was often in distress. Of all the provisions supplied to the army the most important were beef, pork, bread, flour, oatmeal, rice, peas, butter and salt. Of somewhat less importance were cheese, bacon, suet, fish, raisins and molasses.

A soldier's diet was based primarily on bread or flour, beef, potatoes, butter, peas, rice or oatmeal. Rum was a regular and very important part of the soldiers' ration. Usually it was diluted with water and the ordinary allowance was a gill and a half or a gill and a third per diem except during inclement weather or especially hard duty, when additional gill was allowed. Occasionally

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<sup>93</sup>(cont) tal Army at Vally Forge and Morristown." American Antiquity, Vol. 29, No. 4, pp. 506-509.

Provenience of Items in Plate 41  
Animal Teeth and Bones Showing Butchered Specimens

1. From N225 E175 at 7'9" to 8'0" B.D.
2. From N95 E185 at 7'10" B.D.
3. From N95 E175 at 7'5" to 7'8" B.D.
4. From N225 E175 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.



Plate 41

Animal teeth and bones showing butchered specimens

the troops were allowed to have small quantities of claret, spruce beer, or porter.

It is difficult to describe a soldier's diet during the war, since it varied from week to week, if not from day to day. As army victuals arrived in port irregularly, the amounts and kinds of different provisions in store fluctuated greatly, especially after the beginning of the war. Great quantities of provisions were consumed in St. Augustine due to increase of refugees and a constant flow of Indians arriving in town. In 1777 Tonyn wrote that he was able to obtain rice in the province and fresh beef by means of the rangers. When there was no beef available, the garrison was fed with flour and fish.<sup>94</sup>

Apparently the British soldiers and Tories ate anything they could get according to the records of the companies that invaded Georgia from Florida:

In the theater of operations sometimes the men had to shift for themselves when there were no regular provisions available. When General Prevost marched from St. Augustine upon Savannah in 1778-79 his supplies were transported in boats along the shore and his troops were often separated from them. Frequently hard pressed for food, at one time his men lived on oysters found in inlets of the sea; at another, on alligator and some Madeira wine salvaged from a wreck.<sup>95</sup>

Large quantities of oysters from apparent oyster roasts were found in the 1971 excavations.

An Iron Spike, Iron Strap, Nails, Tacks,  
and Other Hardware (Plates 42, 43, 44)

A large quantity of almost totally oxidized iron fragments was excavated in the 1971 season. No identi-

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<sup>94</sup>Ricardo Torres-Reyes, op. cit., p. 52.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., p. 53.



fication was possible for most of this material because of its highly deteriorated, amorphous condition. However, 124 "nail heads" and/or reasonably preserved and identifiable nail specimens were recovered. Eight-nine of these nails had the easily identified "rose head" consisting of five hammered facets spreading downward from the top. This was also true of the seven-inch spike illustrated in Plate 42.

The range of variation in the "rose head" type specimens can be observed by comparing items 5 and 6 in Plate 43. Specimens 13, 17, 18, and 19 in Plate 43 indicate the L-shaped nails used as trim and flooring nails. All of the nails recovered were handwrought. Since cut nails were readily available after 1790 and all of the Fort Morris specimens are handwrought, there is little chance that the structures built on the parade at Fort Morris could be later than 1800. Fort Morris was not reconditioned until 1814-15 after handwrought nails were replaced by cut nails,<sup>96</sup> and there is no documentary evidence for the construction of buildings on the parade after the Revolution.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>96</sup>Hume, op. cit., pp. 252-253.

<sup>97</sup>The 1778 Campbell map illustrates a large structure on the parade at Fort Morris (see Figure 7).

## Provenience of Items from Plate 42

1. From N105 E200 at 7'10" B.D.
2. From N95 E175 at 7'5" to 7'8" B.D.



Plate 42

Iron spike from N105 E200 and found iron straps  
From N95 E175

Provenience of Items in Plate 43  
Nails

1. From N95 E180 at 7'9" to 8'0" B.D.
2. From N95 E180 at 7'9" to 8'0" B.D.
3. From N95 E180 at 8'0" to 8'3" B.D.
4. From N95 E185 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
5. From N95 E185 at 7'9" to 7'12" B.D.
6. From N95 E185 at 7'9" to 7'12" B.D.
7. From N95 E185 at 7'9" to 7'12" B.D.
8. From N95 E185 at surface to 7'3" B.D.
9. From N95 E185 at 7'9" to 7'12" B.D.
10. From N95 E180 at 8'0" to 8'3" B.D.
11. From N95 E185 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
12. From N95 E175 at 7'2" to 7'5" B.D.
13. From N95 E185 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
14. From N95 E175 at 7'5" to 7'8" B.D.
15. From N95 E180 at 8'0" to 8'3" B.D.
16. From N95 E185 at 7'9" to 7'12" B.D.
17. From N95 E175 at 7'5" to 7'8" B.D.
18. From N95 E180 at 7'9" to 8'0" B.D.
19. From N95 E180 at 8'0" to 8'3" B.D.





Plate 43

Nails

Provenience of Items in Plate 44  
Tacks and Other Hardware

1. From N95 E185 at surface at 7'3" B.D.
2. From N95 E180 at 8'0" to 8'3" B.D.
3. From N95 E180 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
4. From N95 E175 at 7'5" to 7'8" B.D.
5. From N95 E175 at 7'5" B.D.
6. From N95 E180 at 8'0" to 8'3" B.D.
7. From N95 E185 at surface to 7'3" B.D.



Plate 44

Tacks and other hardware

Other iron objects recovered in 1971 included an unidentified, extremely corroded metal strap with a riveted mid section consisting of three strips of iron (see Plate 42), a possible door hinge pintle with a spike arm flattened at the elbow (see Plate 44, object 6), and two hooks (objects 1 and 7, Plate 44).

Two brass tacks were also recovered (see objects 3 and 4, Plate 44).

#### Brick Fragments (Plate 45)

Several hundred marble sized pieces of brick were found in the excavations on the parade at Fort Morris. Larger brick fragments were occasionally found, but as a general rule these were rather rare. Most of the illustrated examples are indicative of types found by Kelso at Wormsloe.<sup>98</sup> These brick bats were reddish-orange to greyish-purple and contained, like Kelso's examples, "flecks of dark gray impurities fired to a cinder-like appearance."<sup>99</sup> Kelso was of the opinion that much of the Wormsloe brick was possibly from Mark Carr's brick works on Frederica.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup>Kelso, op. cit., pp. 134-136.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., p. 134.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid.



It could be that Noble Jones, on his frequent runs to Frederica, returned with bricks made by Carr. It also would have been fairly inexpensive to import some of the 100,000 to 300,000 bricks made in Charleston and reported to Oglethorpe as early as 1734.<sup>101</sup>

Mark Carr was responsible for much of the early growth at Sunbury as has been discussed in Chapter III. Whether brick from the Carr brick works has incorporated in structures at Fort Morris while the Carr kilns were still being operated, or whether brick like the cannon from Frederica were salvaged for Fort Morris structures are hypotheses that will have to be proven or disproven through comparative work with site material from Frederica.

Much of the brick in the Midway colony was apparently imported from England as ballast, and like the wall around the graveyard at Midway, the bricks at Fort Morris may well have been imported from England.<sup>102</sup> Alternatively, much of the brick at Sunbury and Fort Morris may have been made on or near the site. Brick was locally made in Georgia very early and several of the older geological surveys of clay deposits in Georgia have docu-

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<sup>101</sup>Ibid.

<sup>102</sup>Josephine Bacon Martin, Midway, Georgia In History and Legend, 1752-1867. Ashantilly Press, Darien, Ga.P.17.

nented some of the major producers. In describing the brickmaking activities of the Salzburgers at Ebenezer, a few miles above Savannah, Veatch states:

A colony of Salzburgers settled here in 1733 and in 1769, built a brick church, the bricks being made at this locality, which is at the present time in a state of tolerable preservation and is still used for religious services. The brick are a dark red, a little larger than standard size, and quite sandy and porous.<sup>103</sup>

Smith describes brick making on an early plantation:

Building brick were often made on the larger plantations in the early days. An annular pit about three feet deep and eight to fifteen feet in diameter was dug near a deposit of swamp or bottom-land clay on the plantation. A revolving post in the center of the pit supported one end of a pole that passed through the center of a disk shaped stone, like a mill stone. A mule fastened to the other end of the pole served as power for making the stone travel around the pit, tempering the clay to the consistency of paste. The bricks were fashioned in hand-made molds, air dried, laid in the form of a rough rectangular kiln, and fired with wood fires.<sup>104</sup>

Item 2 in Plate 45 is the largest single sample of three glazed brick fragments found in the '71 excavation. In Larson's 1952 survey of several coastal counties in Georgia he reported green glazed bricks from High Point on Sapelo Island. He states:

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<sup>103</sup>J.W. Veatch, "Second Report on the Clay Deposits of Georgia." Georgia Geological Survey Bulletin 18, p. 322, 1909.

<sup>104</sup>Rich W. Smith, Shales and Brick Clays of Georgia: Georgia Geological Survey Bulletin, 45; p. 3.

A number of glazed bricks or tiles were found at High Point on Sapelo Island which may well be Spanish in origin. These bricks have a fine red paste, and are coated with a thick green glaze. On the eastern side of the tip of Belleville Point, a number of thick glazed sherds were found in association with Altamaha complicated stamped. These sherds have a very fine cream colored paste and there is a light yellow glaze on one surface. They are much too thick to have been olive jar sherds, but that they are of definite Spanish origin is evidenced by the fact that identical sherds were found in the moat of the Castillo de San Marcos at St. Augustine.<sup>105</sup>

The author was not able to examine the glazed specimens from Sapelo Island, but glazed bricks were an item of construction for fireplaces and tile floors in coastal Georgia.

Larson's "thick yellow glazed sherds" on one side only from Sapelo may well have been floor tiles. Material close to Larson's description was found at Wormsloe by Kelso: ". . . Finally, corner fragments of square (?) orange brick floor tiles, 3/4" thick, were found in the well, the only other evidence (besides the mortar impressions) of the existence of a brick tile floor in room 1."<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>105</sup>Louie Larson. Georgia Historical Commission Survey of Supposed Spanish Mission Sites in Coastal Georgia. On file, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, State of Georgia.

<sup>106</sup>Kelso, op. cit., p. 135.

Provenience of Items in Plate 45  
Brick Fragments

1. From N95 E185 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
2. From N95 E180 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
3. From N95 E175 at surface to 7'2" B.D.
4. From N95 E180 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.
5. From N95 E175 at 7'2" to 7'5" B.D.
6. From N95 E175 at 7'8" to 7'11" B.D.
7. From N95 E175 at 7'2" to 7'5" B.D.
8. From N95 E175 at 7'2" to 7'5" B.D.





Plate 45

Brick fragments

It should also be remembered that the British occupied the Castillo de San Marcos at St. Augustine from 1763 to 1784. Not all material found in the moat therefore will be Spanish in origin.

Fired Mud Brick or Hearth Fragments and  
Associated Artifacts (Plate 46)

Prior to 1971 a bulldozer was backed into the case of the north parapet near the northeast bastion. The pothole created from this maneuver was examined by the survey in 1971. Evidence from a hearth-like area at the base of the parapet was found extending underneath this portion of the redoubt. Near the edge of the feature a quantity of what appeared to be very light irregular masses of fired mud were found. This material comes from an as yet unidentified feature that probably antedates the construction of the parapet. In association with the "mud brick" was one small portion of lead and a nail fragment. Future excavation in this area should produce important occupational and possibly structural data that will give dates for the construction of the fort. Note the leaf impression.



Plate 46

Fired mud brick or hearth fragments and associated artifacts

Marked Sandstone (Plate 47)

In Units III, IV and V on the parade occasional pieces of a hard sandstone like rock were found. Two small fragments were found in Unit III with what appear to be portions of an illegible inscription. Since the material would make a reasonable whetstone the markings could easily be sharpening marks. More extensive excavation will probably determine the function of this type rock at the site.

Altamaha Line-Block, Plain and Coastal Lamar  
Incised Sherds From the Guale or Sutherland Bluff Period

Found in the Humus Zone in Association with one  
English delft Sherd and a possible Kettle Fragment (Plate  
48).

Items 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 9 are Altamaha line-block, plain and coastal Lamar incised sherds found in the first six inches of soil in Unit II in association with items 4 and 8, which are respectively a small sherd of English delft and one probable kettle fragment of iron. The association of Indian and English artifacts is probably fortuitous.

The association of what Larson has described as Sutherland Bluff Period ceramics including Altamaha line-block with English delft was noted in the 1952 Historical Commission Survey of Coastal Counties. Larson states that:



## Provenience of Sandstone Fragments in Plate 47

1. From N95 E175 at 7'8" to 7'11" B.D.
2. From N95 E185 at 7'6" to 7'9" B.D.

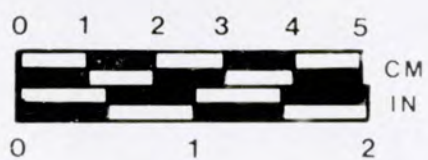
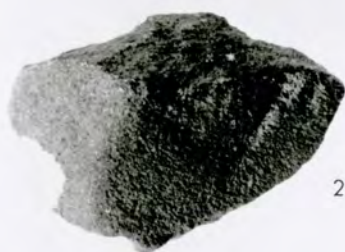


Plate 47

Marked sandstone fragments

On the Georgia Coast it is suspected that the Sutherland Bluff Period may have persisted for a short period after the Spanish retired south of the St. Mary's River. This is based on the association of Altamaha complicated sherds and English delft at the Sunbury site. (Lb-4).<sup>107</sup>

Recent work at St. Catherine's Island by the late Joseph R. Caldwell confirmed the existence of Spanish mission activity on St. Catherine's Island near the mouth of the Midway River. Larson's Sutherland Bluff materials were earlier recognized as contemporary with Spanish Majolica at Fort King George, near Darien, Georgia. In Caldwell's earlier research most of the Sutherland Bluff Period ceramics were known as the Fort King George series.<sup>108</sup>

Fort Morris at Sunbury, like the Fort King George site at Darien probably had early European occupations (Spanish) dating to the mission activity from 1650 to 1686 by the Franciscan monks. The short period of time between the abandonment of village and mission sites in

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<sup>107</sup>Louis Larson, Georgia Historical Commission Survey of Spanish Mission Sites on the Georgia Coast. Department of Natural Resources, permanent files, State of Georgia, Atlanta. P. 14

<sup>108</sup>Dr. Joseph R. Caldwell, 1968 class notes, Fort King George Series. Dept. of Anthropology, University of Georgia.



Plate 48

Items 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 9 are Altamaha line-block, plain and incised sherds from the pre-English Guale or Sutherland Bluff Period (pre-1689). Item 4 is English delft; 8 is a probable kettle fragment



the late 17th century (1686) and the English occupations in the 1720's and 30's of these former mission sites along the Georgia coast easily explain why English delft and Sutherland Bluff ceramics would be mixed together in the humus of the site. Almost the entire bluff area where Fort Morris is located gave evidence of the Sutherland Bluff complex both inside and outside the fort. While the Altamaha line block, incised and other materials may at times have been traded to the English, the political facts of life regarding the enmity of Spanish and English colonization would seem to preclude this. While English delft was found in association with the Altamaha series, it is most probable that the association is fortuitous and merely the result of mixing in sandy soils that are slow to build humus.

Deptford Linear Check Sherds and Archaic Point from Unit II (Plate 49)

Eighty-three Deptford Linear check sherds were found loosely concentrated over a five foot square area in Feature 10 Unit II. All of these sherds are part of one partially restorable vessel, see representative sherds in Plate 49. A single quartz Savannah River type point was found about 10 inches beneath the concentration of sherds in Feature 10 (see Figure 24, Chapter V).



Plate 49

Deptford linear check sherds from Feature 10 in Unit II. Item 5 is an Archaic type point found below Feature 10 in Unit II

18th and 19th Century European Ceramics From a  
Surface Collection Made on the Main Sunbury  
Road Directly Behind the Town (Plate 50)

Most of the 18th century ceramics found on the parade at Fort Morris including delft, creamware, chinese porcelain, Staffordshire or slip ware and Stoneware were found on the Sunbury Road directly behind the town of Sunbury. Items 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 11, 14, 15, and 19 are all 18th century types found on the parade at Fort Morris. Missing from types found on the parade of Fort Morris in the 1971 excavations are such typical 19th century types as the banded semi-porcelains like items 16 and 17.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>109</sup>Malcolm C. Watkins, "Artifacts from the Sites of Three Nineteenth Century Houses and Ditches at Darien Bluff, Georgia." University of Georgia Laboratory of Archaeology Series Report, No. 9, Athens, Ga. P: 24-25.



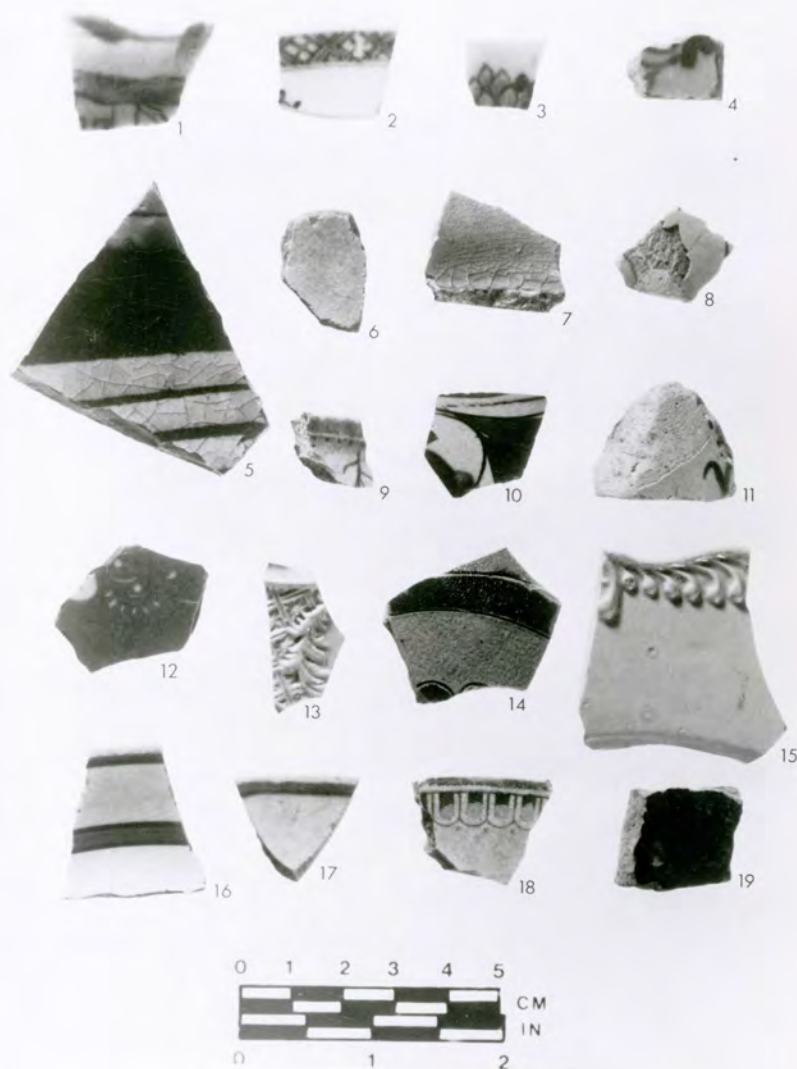


Plate 50

18th and 19th century European ceramics from a surface collection made on the main Sunbury road directly behind the town



## Chapter VII

### Conclusions

#### Summary Statement

The following conclusions resulting from combined historical and archaeological study of the existing fortifications at Sunbury are in agreement with C. C. Jones, Jr.'s original identification of the site with Fort Morris, a Revolutionary period earthwork constructed and occupied by American forces and later captured by British troops operating from a St. Augustine, Florida base during the Southern campaign of 1778-79. Artifactual and documentary evidence also indicates that Fort Morris was built on the site of an earlier Colonial fortification. Fort Morris was revetted during the War of 1812-15 with little if any alteration of the Revolutionary structure.

Following the War of 1812-15 during which time no hostile military action occurred at the site, Fort Morris, (renamed Fort Defense in 1814) was completely abandoned. The Fort was not involved in the American Civil War.

### Findings

In summary the findings indicated by this study are:

1. The best documentary evidence available concerning the locations of Fort Morris on the peninsula some 1000 feet south of Sunbury consists of three Revolutionary period maps. The Campbell, Stuart-Debrahm's and Bacon maps are conclusive proof of the location of Fort Morris when taken with the other evidence available.
2. The star-shaped fortification indicated on the Campbell map is consistent with the 1815 description of the site by Gadsen. From this correlation and the fact that the star fort pattern was a common Colonial-Revolutionary style of fortification it is concluded that the location and form of the existing structure is compatible with the form of the Revolutionary period structure.
3. Fort Morris and Sunbury came under but two hostile actions during its active existence. Both attacks were made by the British during the time that Fort Morris defended the town. During the final British attack in January 1779 Fort Morris underwent a substantial bombardment forcing the fort to surrender. The presence of bomb fragments (shrapnel) from Revolutionary period ordinance within the Fort Morris midden is conclusive evidence that the site was the target of the British bombardment in

January 1779.

4. The uniformity of the Fort Morris midden and the distribution of exclusively Colonial and Revolutionary period artifacts within it including hundreds of specifically identifiable military artifacts dating to the Revolution is conclusive evidence that the site was occupied during the Revolution.

5. The logistics of both the November 1778 and the January 1779 British attacks on Sunbury and Fort Morris as recorded in numerous military documents from both British and American sources correspond with the placement of Fort Morris on the south side of Sunbury in its present location. This correspondence extends to all three Revolutionary period maps of Sunbury and Fort Morris.

6. Revolutionary soldier, Hugh McCall's description of the Fort Morris location "opposite the marsh island" is consistent with the placement of the Fort in all three 18th century maps of Fort Morris.

7. On September 20th, 1776 General Robert Howe at Charleston, S.C. recommended fortification materials for Sunbury that strongly suggest a Debrahm type fortification similar to the fort on Sullivan's Island. Howe also recommended a dual fortification pattern at Sunbury and specified the location of a fort in the present location

of Fort Morris.

3. Debrahm's fortification concepts probably influenced both the Colonial and Revolutionary fortifications at Sunbury.

9. There is a probable correspondence between the 1760 report on the five bastioned fort that was being built at Sunbury and the outer fortification illustrated for Sunbury on the 1778 map.

10. The Campbell map, illustrating an outer and inner fortification, is compatible with both the Revolutionary and Colonial period documentation.

11. The logistics of both the November, 1778 and the January, 1779 British attacks on Sunbury and Fort Morris, including General Prevost's one night delay at "the gate" in the final attack, supports the idea of a fortification pattern that included an outer "line" of defense and the small "battery" known as Fort Morris.

12. There was continuity between the Colonial and Revolutionary patterns of fortification at Sunbury. Orders for entrenchments to be improved about Sunbury were in existence prior to Congressional approval in July 1776 for a "new" fort to be garrisoned by an artillery company at Sunbury.

13. The sand embankments at Fort Morris include organic midden and shell from prehistoric occupations. Prehis-



toric occupations were also encountered in the excavations on the parade. These prehistoric occupations were partially destroyed in the construction and revetment of Colonial and/or Revolutionary period fortifications. The organic soils and shell from these prehistoric occupations are partially responsible for the good preservation of the Fort's parapets.

14. Fort Morris was designed as a water battery for the purpose of defending the river approaches to Sunbury. Consequently, the embankments were probably much more substantially constructed than those surrounding the town.

15. The natural slope of the bluff in the present parade area inside Fort Morris was probably leveled during construction of the fort.

16. There were structures built and possibly destroyed by fire and/or explosions on the parade ground of Fort Morris. While the only documentary evidence for structural activity is the Campbell sketch of the fort, several hundred brick fragments were excavated at widely separate areas on the parade. Some nail alignments were found indicating planks that had either burned or decayed in situ. Proximity to the parapet and the southwest bastion indicates that some of the structural debris and possible plank outlines were associated with a collapsed casemate.

17. Historical records, the artifacts, and the deposition of the Fort's midden strongly suggest that the major occupations at Fort Morris were the first American and subsequent British occupations. The Fort Defense phase of the fort's history did not leave any evidence of occupation.

APPENDIX I

FORT MORRIS, A PRELIMINARY REVIEW

by

Steven Baker

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## Appendix I

Notes from Interview with Bessie  
Lewis, Pine Harbor, Georgia. July  
1, 1970.



## LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1: View of east curtain and moat of Fort Morris looking south. June 1970
- Figure 2: View of northwest corner bastion looking west from northeast corner. June 1970
- Figure 3: East curtain wall and parade, looking southeast. Note embrasures.
- Figure 4: Location Plan of Fort Morris, Sunbury, Georgia.

### Opening Comments on Fort Morris:

Fort Morris historic site, a small earthen fortification, was originally constructed as a "water battery" in the pre-Revolution Period to protect the small sea port city of Sunbury on the Georgia coast. The site was acquired by the Georgia Historical Commission in 1968 for developmental purposes and is located at the now "dead" town of Sunbury (circa 1750-1850) (Jones 1878:140-223), Liberty County, Georgia on the Midway (originally Medway) River, approximately 50 miles south of Savannah and 10 miles east of Midway, Georgia (Figure 4).

The fort's remains presently consist of the well defined and preserved ramparts of a rectangular, four bastioned (corners) redoubt, which was in all probability casemated (Figures 2, 3, 4). Embrasures are still visible in the earthen curtain which faces the river (Figure 3) and what may be collapsed casemates appear as gentle slopes leading into the corner bastions (Figure 3). Only the partial outline history of the site is now known and virtually nothing has yet been learned about the original appearance and structural evolution of the fort.

Current planning by the Georgia Historical Commission involves interpretive development and the opening of the

site to the public by 1975. It is anticipated that funding to accomplish this goal will be provided by the National Register of Historic Places, under the auspices of Public Law 89-665.

Present indications are that funding will be made available during 1971 and that final development will hopefully tie-in with nationwide planning for the celebration of the Bicentennial of the American Revolution.

The writer, while certainly not a historian, has thus far been responsible for planning the research preceeding the actual development itself, and has only begun to discharge this responsibility. I will soon be leaving the Historical Commission and offer this report as summary of my work to date. Brief and incomplete as it is, it is felt that the thinking outlined in the present report, if considered by the Commission, can bring important benefits to them.

Fort Morris History: Introductory Outline

The earliest known mention of a fort at Sunbury is in 1757 (Ellis 1757 from source no. 1:22) which indicates that by 1757 the citizens of Midway and Sunbury had erected fortifications to provide protection from Spanish and Indian threats. These preparations included construction of an enclosure, probably a wooden palisade, around the Midway Church, and the erection of a battery of eight guns at Sunbury in a position which would provide defense of the Midway River below the town. The presence of a fort at Sunbury is further indicated, although there is no indication of its physical appearance, as early as 1760 by the following quote (Georgia 1760: XVIII, 412 from source no. 2:11): "In the spring of 1760, the legislature voted to the Commissioners of the Parrish of Saint John for the use of the fort erected at Sunbury and for the use of the fort erected at Midway in the said parrish a sum to each not exceeding twenty-five pounds."

Governor Ellis wrote to the Lord Commissioner in August of 1760 that efforts were being made to erect good defenses in the area that that "a very good log fort is built at Sunbury (Ellis 1760 from source no. 1)." In 1761, one-hundred pounds were made available for construction of a lookout and battery on the Midway



River, as well as for the erection of a fort and battery on Cockspur Island at Savannah (Georgia 1761:472-474 from source no. 2:11). This information probably implies that previously existing defenses were revetted or expanded. The fortifications at Sunbury were known to be from secondary sources only, with primary listings given in poor condition at about this time because "In 1762 the stockade fort at Sunbury" was reported fallen down and a sum of money was voted for repairs (no primary reference, from source no. 1:22). Until original records are investigated, these last mentioned details, although slightly separated in time, are considered to concern themselves with the same situation regarding the Sunbury fortifications.

There is no information presently available which again makes mention of a fort at Sunbury until the 1770's, and even William Bartram (Bartram 1792 from source no. 2:12) does not mention any fort at Sunbury during his visit there in this period. He does, however, mention that the proceeded from Midway to Fort Barrington, which may indicate something about the role of Fort Barrington in the history of the region in this period.

The Revolutionary Period opens with renewed defensive works being constructed by the Council of Safety (Council of Safety 1776: 136 from source no. 2:18): "In June of

1776 a number of negroes were employed to finish in a more proper manner the entrenchments about Sunbury: This included the building of a fort just below the town at the point where the high ground ended and the broad impracticable marshes between the main and Colonels Island began." This reference is slightly contradictory with others because it has apparently been established that a fort at this point was already funded by 1761 (page 3 this report). It is possible that any fort already here was again simply strengthened or expanded. It is also possible that the wording of these points will lead to recognition of a major question to which archaeological and further historical research could be oriented. Was another fort built or was an old one simply revetted at this time? Is there an earlier fort located at a different point in Sunbury's defenses than Fort Morris. Perhaps the earlier fort mentioned consists of a simple palisade line surrounding the town itself. Fort Morris was probably only one element in a more elaborate fortification system at Sunbury, although the location mentioned for the building of "a fort" in 1776 is probably the site of the present Fort Morris.

Another slightly different quote referring to this event in 1776 is as follows from the Revolutionary Re-

cords of Georgia (from source no. 1:22): "In June 1776, Colonel Baker was ordered to hire a number of negroes (sic) to finish in a more proper manner the entrenchments about Sunbury (meaning what?): and Colonel McIntosh to reinforce the present detachment now there with as many of the battalion as well make a company."

In 1776, Sunbury was the rendezvous for the forces of General Charles Lee in his punitive expedition against east Florida (Coulter n.d.: 15-37 from source no.2:19)."

By 1778, British activities in the general area had begun to perpetuate some alarm among the citizens of the area and the Executive Council ordered "the persons appointed on December 11, 1776 were to 'be required with the utmost expedition to complete the battery and other public works in Sunbury. . .'" (Candler 1908:II, 65 from source no. 2:19)."

By April (?) of 1778, "it appeared that there is reason to apprehend an attempt by sea is intended against the town of Sunbury," and "hasty measures, accordingly were adopted for the defense of the town site and was left to the discretion of the commanding officer in Liberty County whether he would march the militia under his command with the Continental Troops or keep them for the defense of Sunbury, in either case keeping enough men at the town to man the gallies (comment could add another dimension to research orientation at Sunbury) there; it

was ordered, too, that twelve 9 pound shot be delivered from the arsenal for the use of Sunbury (Candler 1908:II, 72-73 from source no. 2:20)."

Late 1778 saw Fort Morris being held by Colonel John McIntosh and 127 Continental troops together with some militia and citizens of Sunbury which numbered less than two hundred men (no primary source available, n.d. from source no. 222). This number of men, while not large by even 18th century standards, is in reality rather a sizeable force and indicates something of the military commitment in the area.

In November of 1778, British land and sea forces under the command of Colonel L.V. Fuser laid seige to Fort Morris, but after some heated correspondence between the commanders and also some important strategic considerations, which are well summarized in Holland's report (1937), the British Commander raised his seige and retreated. In the next few weeks the entire tide of the war turned in Georgia, Savannah fell and Fort Morris was then ordered evacuated (Holland 1937:24).

Fort Morris was then under the command of Major Joseph Lane and he refused to evacuate the fort and Sunbury. British forces under the command of General Augustine Prevost, numbering roughly 2,000 men (unbelievable) beseiged and attacked Fort Morris on January 9, 1779 and demanded the



unconditional surrender of the American garrison.

"Major Lane at first refused and attempted a defense, but soon finding his position untenable in opposition to superior numbers and armament, he was compelled to make unconditional surrender of the entire garrison of seventeen commissioned officers and one-hundred and ninety-five non-commissioned officers and privates, together with a considerable quantity of stores and ammunition. The American losses were one captain and three privates killed and seven wounded; those of the British, one private killed and three wounded. (Georgia Historical Society n.d.: IV, 195-96 from source no.2).

It is possible that we can obtain important information concerning the appearance of Fort Morris at this time due to potential content of a letter from Brigadier General (apparently he got promoted) Prevost to General Sir Harry Clinton on January 19, 1779 which included a return of arms and stores in Fort Morris on 13th of January. A copy of this letter is apparently available in the Public Records of America and West Indies.

After the capture, the British apparently garrisoned the fort and appropriate to circumstances, renamed it Fort George (no primary reference available, n.d. from source no. 2:25). Other than normal garrison duties there

was little activity at the fort for the remainder of the war; "matters there continued in an exhausted and comparatively quiet condition." (Midway Church n.d.: Vol. IV from source no. 2:25).

The period following the revolution is virtually unknown in the fort's history and it is not until the War of 1812 that mention is again made of it. It can be assumed, as is typical of fortifications in this period, that Fort Morris, now named Fort George was allowed to fall way after the Revolution. C.C. Jones mentions that the Fort was renamed Fort Defense and was revetted by the Committee of Safety during the War of 1812 (Jones 1878: 218). This was apparently done by the students of the Sunbury Academy, but no reference is currently available for this. We have no further information concerning it at this time and any work done at the Fort can be expected to be in the nature of basic revetting of the old structure, although we must consider the opposite possibility that an entirely new fort was built. The nature and degree of this work, in the writer's opinion, is a wide open question which deserves considerable attention in future research.

By the middle of the 19th century Sunbury was badly declining as a population center and probably so was the condition of Fort Morris. It is expected that the Fort

was allowed to fall into disrepair after this period, other than C. C. Jones' personal observation on Fort Morris and Sunbury made in 1875 (Jones 1878:22): Mr. Jones found that "Sunbury's squares, lots, streets, and lanes have been converted into a cornfield. Fort Morris is enveloped in a wild growth of cedars and myrtle."

Jones and others have consistently referred to the present fortification (Figures 2, 3, 4) as the original Revolution Period earthwork. The present writer would not agree with this point of view due to known construction activity during the War of 1812 and probably activity during the Civil War, as well as the map of Josiah Powell 1786. We have no reference to the fort during the Civil War, but it is unlikely that in times of patriotic fervor, such as occurred in the American Civil War, that no effort would be made to place Fort Morris in some form of defensible condition (even if only token), notwithstanding the fact that Sunbury was no longer strategically important. Gun batteries sprang up all along the coast, and the Midway River, being reasonably close to Savannah, should be no exception. Records of this period and particularly those of the local militia units should be closely checked in this connection.



Direct Comments and Recommendations for Archaeology:

When one begins to think in terms of archaeology as part of the planning for a site such as Fort Morris, several considerations become apparent, particularly regarding thinking of an archaeologist. The present writer has had opportunity to reflect on future archaeology at Fort Morris for a number of months now and has arrived at strong and definite feelings on the subject. The singly most important point that has come to bear on my mind is CAUTION and restraint coupled with deliberate constructive planning.

It is not now feasible to consider potential archaeology at this site due to a complete lack of any problem orientation arising either from historical research or developmental planning. We have not even yet begun to seek the answers to basic questions apparent from the sparse historical research done thus far, and certainly we can not justify archaeology until purpose has been demonstrated through historical research and developmental planning. We simply know nothing about the site.

With the substantial potential Federal funding that will probably be made available for this site's development, it is certain that historical and perhaps archaeological investigation will have to be conducted. Con-



sidering that this work must be of a high level of professional competence and completion, the following direct comments and recommendations are offered to the administration and research staff of the Georgia Historical Commission.

Direct Recommendations:

1. Immediate attempts must be begun to determine the detailed history and historical description of this site. Someone should begin this work immediately. A final historical report dealing with the PHYSICAL ASPECTS of the site must be compiled before any archaeological planning can be done and should be designed for use by an archaeologist as well as other individuals. Descriptive physical data will prove decisive in the success of any coupling of historical and archaeological research for a final presentation, whether it be for the sake of "pure research" of general site development. A report dealing only with the events surrounding the forts history will be of little help in studying it as a physical historical artifact. Research will of necessity become involved with the town of Sunbury and a fulltime effort of at least a year will probably be necessary for obtaining sufficient data.

2. Immediate and positive steps must be taken to acquire as much additional land adjoining the site of the

fort as possible. The amount and distribution of the Commission owned land at the site is not sufficient for development or archaeology.

3. Begin compiling a summary of sites of related temporal and historical significance which have been researched and/or developed in other areas. Such a summary will provide valuable information to be used, not only in direct interpretive research, but final site development as well. This must be comprehensive. Integrate your work with others.

4. As soon as possible a detailed topographical map should be completed for the general site area (6" contour interval). A general contour map relating Fort Morris to the dead town of Sunbury must be prepared. This map could be made to a contour interval of 2', but must cover all of the general Sunbury, Fort Morris area. Features will possible be found that will physically tie-into the Fort itself and these must be recorded.

5. Ground surface surveys must be begun to locate features and activity areas in the general Sunbury area.

6. Very cautious and limited stratigraphic test excavations should be conducted at the site prior to further archaeological planning.

7. Interpretation wise, Fort Morris will be considerably more involved and historically and physically in-

tricate than most Commission owned sites, and the problems with New Echota must be kept in mind. New Echota, although offering different problems, is considerably less complex and more readily interpretable than the defenses at Sunbury will be. Fort Morris cannot be treated as a homogeneous entity. Let the problems of New Echota and the reasons for them serve as a warning light for future work. In essence, do not make the same mistakes twice, there will be enough new ones to work out.

8. Remember that Fort Morris and the Sunbury constitute one of the best, if not the top, Revolutionary and Colonial sites in this state and even on a National level, while not large, are in extremely good condition. They deserve the best work possible, and probably deserve to be left untouched for another one-hundred years.

9. After consideration and/or completion of the previous points, it will be necessary to establish research/developmental frameworks in the following areas.

a. Archaeology

1-interpretive problem orientations based on historical research.

2-subsidary research aims deriving from necessary excavation; involving artifact studies for direct "on site" interpretation and theoretical academic studies as well.



- 3-public relations and education by utilizing the project as a basis for widening knowledge of and public support for archaeology in Georgia.
- 4-publication of historical and archaeological data.
- 5-probably one of the most essential considerations is the placement of present research in a cohesive, yet tentative long-range program of research. The information obtained from the research must be Progressively contributing to other related sites and projects.
- 6-recruitment of personnel qualified to plan and carry out these various points.

b. Site Development

- 1-this subject is outside of the present writers scope of interest and qualification. A program designed to bring the previously mentioned endeavors, coupled with additional programs and projects which will result in a quality development, will, needless to say, need to be established.

General Comments Concerning Potential Archaeology:

From what we now know of Fort Morris, it is possible to raise some questions which may in varying degrees, depending on information obtained from archival research etc., prove to be points of consideration in planning for archaeology. In summary form these are:

1. The earliest evidence we have for the fort's construction and physical appearance are mentions of palisading at Sunbury (enclosures mentioned page 3 of this report), and the mention of a "stockade fort" at Sunbury which was in poor condition in 1762 (page 3). By 1776 there apparently were more extensive works surrounding Sunbury (page 4). It is probable that this could indicate palisading or other defensive works on the landward side



of the town, as well as the battery and lookout (page 3) previously mentioned. It is again probable that these works were not large nor extensive in comparison to what we suspect of the Fort's appearance at a later date. It is known that the fortifications were sizeably expanded during the Revolution by the Continental Forces and it is highly conceivable that the British made improvements also. This was often done by garrisons during periods of war. We do not have any information on by whom, what, or how any improvements were carried out in this period. The only illustration of Fort Morris in this general period is dated 1786 (Josiah Powell) and simply indicates a "V" shaped feature pointing towards the river, and could indicate an earthen bulwark (described on the map as the "angle of forts bulward") with an open landward side enclosed by a palisade.

Although we know that the fort was revetted during the War of 1812, we have absolutely no indication of its' appearance after 1786, and it is probable that the present fortification is of a post 1800 or even an 1860 vintage. With these thoughts apparent, the most logical step will be to attempt to determine structural sequences in the fort's construction by both documentary and archaeological research. Such work will involve archaeology intended to pick up very subtle and discreet information through meticulous and highly selective excavation, and will probably need to be concentrated in areas of the fort which will be "less interesting" in terms of artifacts and specific structures. An archaeologist with good experience in fortifications will be essential to this undertaking, which will probably be crucial in arriving at any "in depth" understanding of Fort Morris.

2. Information pertaining to the direct occupation of the fort will possibly be limited at the redoubt itself. This is due to the fact that often in the case of a water battery such as this, when located at a town or village, the officers and often the bulk of the troops in the garrison were billeted in private homes or other quarters within the town. There would have to have been some troops in constant duty at the redoubt, but extensive living quarters are not now expected to be found within the fortification. At the least, casemates serving as limited quarters and storage space, guardhouse, perhaps some barracks, magazine, water storage system, and defensive features such as gun platforms can be expected to occur within the redoubt itself.

Work shops (ie: armorer, blacksmith, etc.), kitchens, stables, and other logistic support facilities are normally associated with defensive fortifications of the period, but may well be located outside of the redoubt of the fort itself. I do not yet know what to expect in the way of outworks and supporting establishments, but much of the activity concerning the garrison may have been centered at the town itself and Fort Morris may have few logistic support structures directly associated with it.

With these and similar points in mind, the STRUCTURAL EVOLUTION of the fort should be the major orientation of archaeology at the site.

3. Fort Morris is directly related to, and is, in actuality, a part of the town of Sunbury and this will considerably involve the research concerning the site. It will not be possible to separate it from the town, either in research or in developmental interpretation.

4. During the Revolution, Georgia was a border colony and Fort Morris will not reflect the general trends in construction and logistics that many other sites of the period which were located closer to the areas of more intensive military activity nearer the "heart of the Revolution" itself. This could be a strong point in research and interpretation, if questions are poised which will compare this site to more "classic" features of the Revolutionary Period. This could imply many things, including the structure itself, the logistic support evident through artifact analysis etc. and the chain of historical events surrounding the fort.

5. Pertaining to this last point, were Fort Morris and the Sunbury defenses designed by a military engineer, or by local non-professional talent.

6. Fort Morris was actually attacked on two occasions and was ultimately lost to the enemy. In theoretical terms this is not the case in a successful defensive work, which is designed to avoid such. Fort Morris was a failure militarily and this can add a most interesting and important aspect to the history and development of the site. Theoretically it could pose some limited, yet intriguing considerations for archaeology. Are weak points in design evident in the construction of the fort?

Concluding Comments:

Fort Morris is presently scheduled to receive considerable matching funding for development from the Federal Government. This funding, if it materializes, will entail a heavy professional responsibility for the research involved in the project. Fort Morris is a "good site" and of a kind very rare in Georgia, and must become an endeavor and subsequent development that will reflect the acceptance and surpassing of this responsibility. It can provide a quality undertaking that will serve as an example of what can and should be done with the resources and research technology available in an atmosphere of 1970+. It is the writers desire to see this begin with the archaeology and continue through additional work.

The decision to develop Fort Morris has been made and the Federal funding involved removes it from the usual project range of the Georgia Historical Commission, which are usually more "local developments," and places it in a framework of National concern and subsequent professional responsibility.



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APPENDIX II

A STUDY OF THE FORTIFICATIONS  
AT FORT MORRIS  
IN  
SUNBURY, GEORGIA  
FROM THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR TO THE WAR OF 1812

by  
Tom Agnew

Georgia Department of Natural Res.  
Historic Preservation Section  
Submitted January 11, 1974

## INTRODUCTION

Sunbury, Georgia was fortified during the American Revolution. A part of the defenses constructed in or near the town was called "Fort Morris." C. C. Jones, Jr., in Dead Towns of Georgia, "Sunbury," identifies the ruins of a still-existing earthwork near Sunbury as the Revolutionary War fort, "Fort Morris." This assumption is the basis of the present research problems related to the planning of the present site called "Fort Morris."

There are several descriptions about events that took place in Liberty County during the Revolution. The county not only had its share of military significance in the Revolution, but was also the home of two of the signers of the Declaration of Independence; one of them, Lyman Hall, lived in Sunbury at one time. The area around this town has been known traditionally as Georgia's "Cradle of Liberty," and according to Jones, Sunbury and Liberty County were the nave or center of Georgia's entrance and entanglement into the cause of American liberty.

## SECTION I

Sunbury and the Revolution

During the American Revolution, Sunbury and its vicinity were attacked at least three times. The first attack, April 21, 1776, was a raid from the British ship Hynd commanded by Captain Henry Bryne.<sup>1</sup> The Hynd, anchored off the "Sunberry" River, sent a tender along with other small craft to a creek near Sunbury.<sup>2</sup> In the ensuing attack, the British burned two vessels, a ship supposedly being outfitted as a privateer, and a brigatine (sic). On the return to the Hynd, the British were attacked by rebels on St. Catherine's Island.<sup>4</sup>

After the initial British raid, the State and Continental Governments began to issue orders and adopt resolutions for the defense of Sunbury, including the construction of fortifications.<sup>5</sup> One of the 1776 orders mentions existing "entrenchments" around Sunbury.<sup>6</sup>

From the beginning of the Revolution, one of the primary aspirations of the Georgia rebels was the destruction of British East Florida. Between 1776 and 1778, three Florida expeditions were attempted; all ended in failure. Sunbury was both an outpost and/or headquarters for all three planned invasions.

The first Florida expedition, summer of 1776, was led



by Major General Charles Lee. In this expedition, according to the British governor of East Florida, Patrick Tonye, the main body of the American troops did not get past Sunbury.<sup>7</sup>

In the spring of 1777, another Florida expedition was attempted.<sup>8</sup> This second expedition, at first led by General Lachlan McIntosh and Button Gwinnett and later led by Colonel Samuel Elbert, also ended in failure.<sup>9</sup> Sunbury was a focal point of embarkation and headquarters during the 1777 expedition.<sup>10</sup> One result of this failure was more emphasis placed on the defense of Sunbury. In December, 1777, Colonel Elbert ordered the following:

Orders to Captain Defau of the Artillery

Head qrs., Savannah, 5th Dec., 1777

You are to proceed immediately to the town of Sunbury in this state, where are a corps of Continental Artillery posted, which you are constantly to be employed in teaching the perfect use of artillery, particularly in the field. Both officers and men are hereby strictly ordered to attend you for the above purpose, at such times, and in such places as you may direct; and the commanding officer of the troops in that place, on you showing him these orders will furnish men to do the necessary duty in town & Fort so that there will be nothing to prevent Capt. Morris, with his company from being perfected in the business for which they were raised. Such pieces of artillery, as you approve of, have mounted on field carriages; and for this purpose, you are empowered to employ the necessary workmen, and procure materials. Your drafts on me, for every necessary expense, accompanying the vouchers, will be duly honored. I am, sir,

Your most obedt. servt.  
(signed) S. Elbert, Col. Com.<sup>11</sup>



Ultimately, in March of 1778, the Georgia Executive Council issued this order pertaining to Sunbury's defense:

Minutes of the Executive Council. Tues., March 25, 1778

Ordered. That the persons appointed by resolve of the Convention dated the Eleventh day of December, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-six be required with utmost expedition to complete the Battery and other public works on Sunbury pursuant to the directions of the said resolve.<sup>12</sup>

The defenses of Sunbury were still not completed following the failure of the third Florida expedition, led by General Robert Howe in the summer of 1778.<sup>13</sup> A Colonel Graves, in August, 1778, applied to the Executive Council for "money out of the Treasury for the Fort, Barracks and other works in Sunbury." Action on this proposal was postponed until a meeting of the Georgia Assembly;<sup>14</sup> however, the Executive Council did order the Lee Gally to Sunbury for its defense on August 27, 1778.<sup>15</sup>

The first major British incursion into Georgia occurred in November, 1778. General Howe received intelligence relating to the attack via a letter of John White of Savannah:

Extract of letter of John White to General Howe, dated Savannah, Nov. 21, 1778

D-r General.

(telling of invasion)

. . .The number of the Enemy, by every intelligence I have been able to collect, appears to be about 1,100, five hundred of which chiefly horsemen, are come by land; and their party now acting against us waging a most abominable and (neferious) war. They kill, burn and destroy every thing they meet in their way. They have burnt all the House on the other side off Newport Ferry, within 4 miles of Sunbury-our present stand is at Medway Meeting-House where we have entrenched and broke up the Causway leading to it. The Enemy have 4 pieces of artillery with the, and march with Colours flying and Drums beating in a formidable manner. They are to be joined by 600 Red-Coats who are coming inside by water-with a Galley mounting two 18 P<sup>s</sup> and a large Flat, under convoy of the Ship George and a Brig of 10 Guns called the Spitfire, with her tender; which is all the Naval Force they could muster in St. Augustine.

I have manned the Congress Galley with volunteers out of the (French?) Merchantmen, & ordered her south to Sunbury to join the two other Gallies in order to operate with (men?). . .<sup>16</sup>

Sunbury was attacked late in November, 1778, by a large British force (600) men under Colonel Lewis V. Fuser; however, Fuser was neither able to capture the fort, nor join Lieutenant Colonel Mark Prevost's detachment near Midway, Georgia, and was obliged to withdraw.<sup>17</sup> General Benjamin Lincoln, in writing to Henry Laurins, President of the Continental Congress, mentions Fuser's attack on Sunbury.

Extract of letter by General Benjamin Lincoln, dated Dec. 10 (could be 19)1778. Written to Henry Laurins, President of the Continental Congress.



. . .The enemy from St. Augustine lately made an excursion into the heart of Georgia. They demanded the Surrender of a Small fort at Sunbury, but (supplied) with the spirited answer given their summons they left that neighborhood and on the approach of some of our troops retreated and recrossed the Altamaha, carrying with them a number of negroes, cattle and other valuable articles, but much less than was at first represented. Whether they left that State or no is uncertain. I expect every moment a more particular account. If the included deposition is a (just) relation of the enemies designs they may mean the reduction of Georgia:. . .

(signed) B. Lincoln<sup>18</sup>

Immediately after Fuser's attack on Sunbury, further orders from General Robert Howe were issued for the defense of Sunbury<sup>19</sup> (e.g., a detachment was sent to Colonels Island<sup>20</sup> and a small detachment from Sunbury was sent to protect the Newport Ferry<sup>21</sup>). A Major Lane, commanding "Fort Morris" and Sunbury, was issued orders to report on his ordnance and supplies.<sup>22</sup> General Howe was trying to establish some order and strategy for defending Sunbury, but with the capitulation of Savannah to the British in December of 1778, Sunbury was cut off from the main force of the Continental army (refer to Howe's testimony below).

Sunbury and "Fort Morris" fell to the British on Jan. 10, 1779.<sup>22</sup> It was the last coastal post of any significance to surrender to the British. The following are two accounts relating to the fall of Sunbury.

General Robert Howe's testimony at his own court martial:

. . .Mr. Wereat's evidence proves this fact. I have confessed that I ordered the garrison at Sunbury to evacuate the fort, and I will add that I was so anxious to have it done, that my first order was written with a pencil, on horseback, in the field, and on retreat. Fearful that this order might miscarry, and still anxious for the fate of the garrison, upon a halt we made about eight miles from the town, I, in another letter more explicit in its contents, repeated the order for evacuation, and directed, that if the stores could not be removed they should be destroyed, and the cannon spiked. This letter, and another to the same purpose not an hour afterwards, were dispatched by officers. Some, if not all, were received, but the major who commanded there delayed obeying the order until he heard from me again, in consequence of which he and his party fell into the enemy's hands a few days afterwards. How this order, had it been wrong in itself, since it was not obeyed, could contribute to sacrifice the capital and the State, let those who framed the charge explain. I think it appears plain that nothing very erroneous in my conduct has happened, When, notwithstanding a strong desire to have me censured, charges so futile and ill-grounded are exhibited against me. It would have been horrid in me to have suffered a garrison to have remained in a work too extensive for five times the number of men, ill-constructed, unfinished, without casemates, and without the least probability of relieving it. Had I done so, and been arraigned for that, I should have stood in this presence with very different sensations than now I do; nor would I so justly incurred the censure of my own heart to please the executive authority of the whole world, though every individual which composed it had been a Colonel Commandant of Militia. Major Lane, who commanded the fort, had recently been in it second in command, when an attack upon it by the enemy had been gallantly repulsed. The Magistrates cited, implored, and beset him to remain in it. Combined with these, he was in the bloom of youth, and in the hey-day of blood and spirits-an enthusiastic ardour for fame, which it is better for an officer sometimes to be misled by than never to feel, and which, tho' it may now and then induce excess, it is at worst by the excess of a good quality. All these prevailed upon him to delay an execution of his orders, and he had his punishment in his fault. The crossing Savannah river very early after the retreat I have also confessed. Some of the reasons



that operated upon me must be my defense; half of them, I pledge myself, will be a sufficient justification. . .<sup>23</sup>

An account by Gen. Augustine Prevost concerning the surrender of "Fort Morris":

Savannah 19, January, 1779

Sir

The many difficulties attending the progress of his Majesty's Troops from Florida such as the impracticability of the Roads, the deficiency in point of Boats and craft to convey the Troops and Artillery, the total want of Provisions have not prevented our progress to this place, these difficulties were surmounted with Patience and Cheerfulness-

On the 7th Instant the Troops that came by Water landed seven miles from Sunbury, just at the very time when the parties of Horse and Rangers had arrived to the neighbourhood of that Town, Lt. Col. Prevost who had marched that night, with the loss of one man only expected the Surrounding of the place and did not quit his station notwithstanding the fire of two galleys an armed Schooner and the Fort, until the rest of the Troops arrived; the Artillery could not come the same way the Troops did, as it was necessary to march under cover of the night close under the Fort, the Artillery therefore was sent round to New Port River and with great difficulties and (8) Inch howitzer and two Ryals, were brought on the 9th and begun to fire the next morning; before evening the same day the Fort was obliged to surrender at discretion being then only a hundred-forty yard from the Body of the place; their intended retreat on board their Galleys being prevented, we had possession of the gate and entered the Fort next morning, twenty-one pieces of Artillery with stores of Provisions two pair of Colours, and two hundred & twelve Prisoners

including-

To  
 His Excellency - Sir Henry Clinton -  
 General and Commander in Chief of all his  
 Majesty's Troops in North America  
 (Salutation is at bottom of first page in  
 original documents.)

including the officers fell into our hands; the Galleys had made Their escape but thinking from some preparations on board of some vessels that we had taken and a number of boats that they saw manned, that we intended to attack them, they set fire to them and made their escape to sea-the Crews are since brought Prisoners into Savannah having been and by an armed vessel.

Our want of any kind of assistance from the Naval department prevented us from taking them and made us loose four or five days in Sunbury as we were oblidge for the security of our Boats to send them a great ways around and had no horses or Carts till afew days after to bring the stores and baggage.

The Troops marched to this place and reached it on the 17th and as soon as they can possibly be provided with afew necessaries of which they stand in the utmost need-I shall endeavor to improve they advantages his Majesty's Troops have hither to obtained-for the particulars of Lt. Col. Campbell's success of I beg leave to refer your Excellency to his own account of the same as well as the disposition he had made for the security of the Posts formed on Savannah River previous to my arrival; the enemy having since collected about 500 men in Burk's County I have already given orders to intercept them and sent a party of harse well acquainted with that part of Georgia to endeavor to surprise them.

Major General Lincoln is encamped in force on the Carolina side of Savannah River at Purisburgh, under Protection of which two Galleys are stationed and prevent navigation of the river-from the numbers already collected there and those said to be going to their assistance, every Possible advantage might be expected from an attack on the Coast, particularly if the inhabitants of the Frontiers evince by joining us the Loyalty and zeal which they profess for government.

I transmit

I transmit herewith to Your Excellency the returns of the Troops collected from East Florida- the Return of the ordinance and Stores taken in Sunbury and the state of the Rebel Garrison in Fort Morris now-Fort George and a Memorial sent by Lt. Col. Dickson of the 16th Regiment-

I have the honor to be with the Greatest Respect.

Sir

Your Excellancys

Most Obedient and Most Humble Sevt.  
Prevost

P.S. Captain Donald McDonald of the (3rd Battn. 60) regiment died Sunbury the 11th instant.<sup>24</sup>

After the capitulation of Sunbury, the British held the entire coast of Georgia. The Continental and Militia forces in Sunbury resisted overwhelming British arms on two occasions, the last proving futile. There is some speculation with reference to events in Sunbury during British occupation, and we will attempt to obtain more information concerning the British in Sunbury in later reports.



Return of Brass & Iron Ordnance of Ordnance Stores in  
Fort Morris/now Fort George at Sunbury in Georgia, 13th  
January 1779

Brass	7 Inch Mortars	1
	10 Pounders	2
	12 . . . .d	6
	9 . . . .d	1
	4 . . . .d	7
	3 . . . .d	(8)
Iron Guns	10 P <sup>s</sup>	2
	12 d	6
Garrison (carriages)	9 d	1
	4 d	4
	3	7
	10 P <sup>s</sup>	227
	12 d	204
Round Shot	9	29
	4	220
	3	144
	10 P <sup>s</sup>	4
	12 d	(8)
Case of Grape Shot	9	3
	4	45
	3	40
	10 P <sup>s</sup>	2
Ladles of Wad Hooks	12	7
	9	1
	4	3
	3	5
	Musquet with Bayonets	100
Small Arms	Rifles	12
	Fuses of Carbines	40
	Wall Pieces	4

Return Contined (on next page)

Empty Shells	4 2/5	30
	Ball	50
Cartriges	Hand Granades fixed	3000
	Musquet	500
Powder	Carbine	20
	Barrels	1150
Lead	Musquet Ball (etc)	1000
	Pigs (etc)	400
	Musquet	80
Flints	Carbine	150
	Cartridges Boxes	72
(not decipherable)	Pouches with powder horns	30
Capt. L.R. (Arlidy)	Claw Handspikes	





## SECTION II

Defense of Sunbury  
Prior to, During and After the War of 1812

The substance of this section contains letters, reports, and orders of U.S. Army Engineers pertaining to the coastal defenses of Georgia, ca. 1808 to 1815. The following are letters and/or extracts of letters dealing with the defense of Sunbury prior to, during, and immediately after the War of 1812.

Extract of letter from Alex Macomb to Secretary  
of War, dated November 1, 1808

November 1, 1808

Sunbury

On inspecting the Town and Vicinity of Sunbury I could not discover any one position that was advantageous for the Battery proposed in my instructions: Indeed the only proper defense is some heavy pieces mounted on traveling carriages, so as to enable the artillery to take such positions as might be best adapted to frustrate any attempts which and enemy's vessels might take for insulting or injuring the Town or its neighborhood. And I be leave to offer, for the security of Sunbury the following defense, with which the Inhabitants have expressed a perfect satisfaction. Two eighteen pounders Mounted in like manner-also one hundred stand of arms-One small arsenal to contain the arms and one powder magazine and an artillery shed; the whole to be inclosed with a wall to which might be added Barracks for 30 or 40 men...<sup>25</sup>



Extract of letter dated 16 August 1812  
Report on Sunbury from Captain W. McRee to Colonel  
Swift

Savannah  
16 August 1812

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 24 July...I have had some conversations (and the subject of your letter) with Mr. Elliot of Sunbury a gentleman of information and representative of that place in the State Legislature. He informs me, ---the inhabitants are erecting two batteries and have two mines and some other pieces of smaller caliber either mounted or (moving)---but no ammunition.

The town is open to the sea (---which is) about seven miles distant, it is the healthiest spot in its vicinity and is the resort of the neighboring planters during the sickly months--It is situated on a sand bluff about 20 feet higher than the water---of earth batteries may be erected in abundance and (hopefully) cheap. If fixed an permanent works might be built, two at least are necessary one at (south) end of the town; as a vessel that would succeed in approaching would be at liberty to lay secure from the fire of any single battery.

I recollect a final hammock or island between the town and bar--which Col. Macomb and myself examined in 1808 and found to have an excellent command of the channel which is here very narrow--But is a site for an open battery--the objection against it is conclusive. It has only a water communication with the mainland and is quite beyond the reach of either protection or support.

For maritime defense--when (---) will act out their use. I am decidedly in favor of the use of using artillery on traveling carriages to be protected earth (---) at the different proper points of action: and I am acquainted with no sites uniting advantages, better (situated) to ensure success to this descrip of defenses than Sunbury. . . 26

(signed) W. McRee

Extract from letter dated June 1, 1815  
 Lieut. James Gadsen (?) reports the conditions of  
 certain fortifications in South Carolina and  
 Georgia to General Swift

Charleston, South Carolina  
 June 1, 1815

.....

### Sunbury

The situation and importance of Sunbury is not such as would warrant the reconimendation of expensive fortifications. As a Town it is only the resort of the neighbouring Inhabitants in quest of health during the sickly season of the year. It is not commercial, therefore it cannot excite the cupidity of an Enemy; but as it possesses a safe, and deep harbor; admitting of nineteen feet water on the bar, it may be necessary to secure it. By the voluntary labor of the neighboring planters, a work has been commenced the last fall and very nearly completed on the return of peace. It stands on a commanding position enfilading the channel surrounded on two sides by a marsh in the third by a ravine, and approachable by a land force on the rear only. I would recommend that it be completed and its profile strengthened by widening and deepening the ditch and forming with earth a high glacis.

Its figure is irregular, (an attempt at a star Fort) and though not approved of, yet is the fort is so near being completed any additional strength gained by an alteration would not only render it necessary to build a new work, but to fill up the ditch, and level the parapets of the old one. This Fort with six heavy pieces of ordnance and two field pieces will effectually secure the Harbor and with a resolute garrison may be maintained against a superior force until relieved by reinforcements. It would also serve to protect the planters on the Midway River from the predatory visit of barges and maybe a rallying point in times of alarm for the Militia of Liberty County.

(signed) James Gadsen 27  
 Lt. Engineers



## CONCLUSION

The documented evidence that we have procured indicates that the "Fort Morris" site that the State of Georgia holds may not be the entire fortification or may not be the original fort of the American Revolution. However, there are still many enigmatic questions that must be acknowledged, such as: when was "Fort Morris" given its name, who was in command of "Fort Morris" when Fuser attacked Sunbury, how many men were garrisoned in Sunbury prior to its capture, and to what extent was Sunbury used during the Civil War? These inquiries, hopefully, will be answered in due course of time by further research. The culminating question still remains: Was the present "Fort Morris" constructed during the American Revolution?

Was the original "Fort Morris" a larger work than is prevalent now? General Robert Howe describes the fort at Sunbury as "a work too extensive for five times the number of men, ill-constructed, unfinished, without

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The first mention of "Fort Morris" in a primary source is the "Order book of John Grimke," The South Carolina Historical Magazine, Vol. XIII, p. 203.

The first documented evidence referring to "Fort Morris" is General Augustine Prevost's letter and his "Return of Ordinance. . ."

casemates, and without the least probability of relieving it."<sup>28</sup> The present "Fort Morris" site would be crowded if it had 200 men,<sup>29</sup> much less than 1,000 men. Lt. Col. Prevost stated the following relating to the capture of Sunbury: "We had possession of the gate and entered the Fort next morning, twenty-one pieces of Artillery with stores of Provisions two pair of Colours, and two hundred and twelve Prisoners."<sup>30</sup> If Prevost captured the entrance of the present "Fort Morris," he would not have waited until morning to take the remainder of the fort, he would have captured the entire fort. There is a strong probability that there may have been a palisade around Sunbury when it capitulated to the British.<sup>31</sup> (Refer to Campbell's map following the "Conclusion."

"Fort Morris" today has been classified as a coastal fortification.<sup>32</sup> Its primary function by location would have been to protect Sunbury from attack by sea, not from land. During the Revolution, Sunbury had several gallies stationed near for defense from naval attack.<sup>33</sup> The fort may not have been necessary during the Revolution.

The most "damning" evidence concerning the construction date of the present "Fort Morris," and that



which indicates that the site may not have been a Revolutionary War fortification, is revealed in the engineering reports concerning coastal fortifications prior to, during, and after the War of 1812. Two of the reports, Macomb's (1808) and McRee's (1812) do not mention any fortification existing near Sunbury.<sup>34</sup> Finally, Lt. Gadsen, on reporting on conditions of certain fortifications in South Carolina and Georgia in 1815, states:

. . .By the voluntary labor of the neighboring planters, a work has been commenced the last fall and very nearly completed on the return of peace. It stands on a commanding position enfilading the channel surrounded on two sides by a marsh in the third by a ravine, and approachable by a land force on the rear only. I would recommend that it be completed and its profile strengthened by widening and deepening the ditch and forming with earth a high glacis.

Its figure is irregular, (an attempt at a star Fort) and though not approved of, yet is the fort is so near being completed any additional strength gained by an alteration of its form, would hardly warrant the consequent increase of expense. . .<sup>35</sup>

Lt. Gadsen's report reveals that the inhabitants of the Sunbury area built a small fort in the fall of 1814. Gadsen's description, location and form indicate that the present "Fort Morris" was constructed during the War of 1812.

From the evidence pertaining to "Fort Morris" that we have, I have drawn the conclusion that "our" site is not a Revolutionary War site.

## FOOTNOTES

1. William James Morgan (ed.), The Naval Documents of the American Revolution, Vol. 5, American Theatre: May 9, 1776-July 31, 1776(Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970), p. 197, vide infra p. 367.  
n. On page 197, Letter of Captain Henry Bryne R.N. to Vice Admiral James Young, May 21, 1776.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Allen D. Candler (compiler), The Revolutionary Records of the State of Georgia (hereafter referred as RRG), Vol. I, Compiled and published under authority of the Legislature (Atlanta: The Franklin Turner Company Printers, Publishers, Binders, 1908), pp. 125, 136, 137, 141, 142, 169, 197, 205. n. on RRG, Vol. I, p. 197. In Congress on June 5, 1776, a resolution, "it will be necessary that two forts be erected in said Colony, the one at Savannah and the other at Sunbury." Congress further stipulated that an artillery company of 50 men be stationed in Sunbury.  
n. on RRG, Vol. I, p. 169. The Council granted 100 pounds for "erecting a battery" in Sunbury.
6. RRG, Vol. I, pp. 136-137.  
n. on July 8, 1776, the Council of Safety ordered that "Col. Baker to hire a number of negroes to finish in a more proper manner the entrenchments about Sunbury."
7. William Moultrie, Memoirs of the American Revolution, So Far as it Related to the States of North and South Carolina, and Georgia, Vol. I (New York: Printed by David Longworth for the Author, 1802; Reprinted in 1968 by Arno Press, Inc.), p. 185.



8. The daily course of the expedition can be followed in Col. Elbert's Order Book, Collections of the Georgia Historical Society (Savannah: The Morning News Print, 1902).
9. Kenneth Coleman, The American Revolution in Georgia, 1763-1789 (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1958) p. 104.
10. Elbert's Order Book, Collections of the Georgia Historical Society, Vol. V, Part II, pp. 8-9, 21, 48-49, 73-74.
11. Ibid., p. 76.
12. RRG, Vol. II, p. 65.
13. Concerning defense of Sunbury, Minutes of Executive Council, dated April 7, 1778, RRG, Vol. II, pp. 72-73. Concerning Howe's failure, Coleman, op. cit., p. 108.
14. RRG, Vol. II, pp. 90-91.
15. Ibid., p. 92.
16. John White, Savannah, Ga., 21 Nov. 1778, Letter to General Howe, Papers of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789, National Archives, Item #160. Found in National Archives Micro-film Publications Microcopy #247, Roll 178, Item #160.
17. Frank Moore (compiler), Diary of the American Revolution from Newspapers and Original Documents, Vol. II (New York: privately printed, 1865), pp. 107-109.
  - n. Account of Fuser's attack on Sunbury under title of Pennsylvania Packet, Jan. 30, 1779.
  - n. See also, "Order Book of John Faucher and Grimke," The South Carolina Historical Magazine, Vol. XIII, p. 203; and "The Trial of Major General Howe, Dec. 1781," Collections of the New York Historical Society, 1880), p. 286. See George Walton's testimony in Howe's court martial.

18. General Benjamin Lincoln, Charleston, S.C.,  
10 (could be 19) Dec. 1778, Letter to Henry Laurins,  
President of the Continental Congress, Papers of  
the Continental Congress, 1774-1789, op. cit., Roll  
177, Item #158.
19. These orders can be followed in "Order Book of  
John Faucherand Grimke," The South Carolina Histor-  
ical Magazine, Vol. XIII, pp. 203-212, and Vol. XIV,  
pp. 44-57.
20. Ibid., Vol. 13, p. 210.
21. Ibid., Vol. 13, pp. 210-211.
22. Ibid., Vol. 13, p. 209.
23. General Augustine Prevost, Savannah, 19 Jan.  
1779, Letter to Sir Henry Clinton, General and Com-  
mander-in-Chief of all his Majesty's Troops in North  
America, Historical MSS Commission of Great Britain.  
Microcopy found in Carlton Papers in South Carolina  
Archives, Columbia, S.C. (Photocopy in Historic  
Preservation Section files).
24. "The Trial of Major General Howe, December,  
1781," Collections of the New York Historical  
Society for the Year 1779, Vol. XII (New York:  
printed for the Society, 1880), pp. 298-299.
25. General Augustine Prevost letter to Sir Henry  
Clinton, op. cit.
26. Alexander Macomb, 1 Nov. 1808. Report in letter  
to Secretary of War. Buell Collection of Historical  
Documents Relating to the Corps of Engineers, 1801-  
19. Item #184, National Archives. Found in Nation-  
al Archives Microfilm Publications Microcopy #417,  
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n. This was a typescript in Collection.
27. Captain W. McRee, Savannah, Ga., 12 Aug. 1812,  
Letter to Col. Swift, Buell Collection, op.cit., Roll  
II, #344 (Photocopy in Historic Preservation Section  
files).

28. Lieut. Gadsen, Charleston, S.C., June 1, 1815, Reports by letter to General Swift, Buell Collection, op. cit., Roll II, #559 (Photocopy in Historic Preservation Section files).
29. "The Trial of Major General Howe, Dec. 1781," op. cit., p. 299. See also RRG, Vol. I, p. 136-137.
30. General Alexander Prevost letter to Sir Henry Clinton, op. cit.
31. Ibid.
32. See Archibald Campbell's 1780 map. Copy in Historic Preservation Section files.
33. Discussion with Alston Waylor and Billy Townsend, et. al.
34. RRG, Vol. II, p. 65. See also John White's letter to General Howe, op. cit.
35. Macomb and McRee letters, op. cit.
36. Gadsen letter, op. cit.



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### Map

#### Archibald Campbell Map

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### APPENDIX III

Route 2, Box 246  
Leesburg, Fla. 32748  
August 2, 1971

Mr. Gordon M. Midgette  
State and Staff Archaeologist  
19 Springdale Street  
Athens, Georgia 30601

Dear Mr. Midgette:

Thinking back to our very pleasant conversation on July 8 at Fort Morris, I have hunted up what information I have been able pertaining to possible use of the fort during the Civil War.

The 20th Battalion, Georgia Cavalry, Companies A, B, C, D, E, and F were stationed at Camp Palmyra during a part of 1863. The older order book in my possession is much obscured by paste-ins, and the earliest readable date is September 18th, 1863, on page 29 of the book.

The headquarters was moved from Camp Palmyra to Riceboro at some time between November 9 and November 14, 1863, and all orders subsequent to November 14 are dated at Riceboro. The last entry in the order book, on page 62 is dated January 23, 1864.

The first order after removal to Riceboro, dated November 14, 1863, is a lengthy detailing of locations of pickets. Pickets were to be located at "the causeway" (from Colonel's Island), "at Screven's" (about where Seabrook now is), at Sunbury, and at Myrtle Grove. Myrtle Grove I cannot locate for you, but believe it was at a point on the Midway upstream of Sunbury. Seabrook was the name of my grandfather's plantation which included Fort Morris.

The only record found pertaining to action by these troops was action around Darien when the Federals took that place, but seems to have been rescue of civilians rather than combat.



At some time after the beginning of the year 1864, all or part of 20th Georgia Cavalry was moved to the north and became a part of the army opposing the Federal's advance on Richmond. In a delaying action of Fitzhugh Lee's Cavalry a skirmish took place at Haw's Shop, Virginia, in which action Company B, 20th Georgia Cavalry, took part, and the captain of Company B, Benjamin Smith Screven, my grandfather was wounded in the throat. He never fully recovered his health, and spent the last years of his life in Athens, where his father-in-law, William Jones, published The Southern Cultivator.

So far as I am able to learn, any Confederate plan of action for the region in the neighborhood of Fort Morris, consisted of the stationing of cavalry troops primarily to guard against invasion, cavalry being used in order to provide mobility, which troops stationed in the fort would not provide.

Please be kind enough to let me have anything you may have pertaining to George Galphin. I have verbatim transcripts from the journals of both Bartrams, which provide excellent insight and history. And, of course, I shall communicate with Bruce Galphin.

Let me say again how pleased we are that something is at long last being done to preserve Fort Morris. Entirely too little is known generally of the history of that immediate area which was so important to the final success of the Georgia colony following Oglethorpe's failure.

I hope that there will be forthcoming a report on your findings at Fort Morris, which we shall be most pleased to see.

With very best wishes,

Very sincerely yours,

Ben S. Burton



## APPENDIX IV

### Reminiscences of the Past

It is but natural for a person to wish to be remembered after death and not to let his name perish from the earth; and besides this, generations yet unborn will be anxious to know what has transpired in and around their own localities: For this reason I now give a history of my own native town of Sunbury from the time of my earliest recollection.

Nothing occurred to disturb the quiet of the village until the commencement of the war with Great Britain in the year 1812.

Previous and up to that time our Navy consisted principally of gun boats and barges. These were stationed in all the seaport towns. Among others, old Sunbury had nine of the latter sent for her defense.

I shall never forget the commotion that their arrival occasioned among the inhabitants. They had no intimation of their coming and as the barges of the British frigate, *Lacedemonian*, that lay off Cumberland Island were often seen in Saint Catherine's Sound sometimes robbing our coastal vessels and setting them on fire (I have seen two on fire in one night) the conclusion naturally was that they were the enemy coming up and, to confirm this belief, there were no colors displayed.

The citizens of the place some of them had their valuables hid in the woods back of the old Presbyterian church, and a few others took to flight. One family never returned until the war was over. The Hon'ble John A. Cuthbert in command of the citizens formed a line on the Bluff and on his right the larger scholars (with " ") under the command of Chas. Floyd. The barges came to anchor in the front river (just outside the old wreck) when at a given signal the American Jack was run up at masthead by each barge. Such cheering and shouting you never heard before in all your life.

These barges continued to guard the place for six months. It was a beautiful sight of a clear day to see them sailing down to the sound and back again. They were anchored at night opposite each wharf and every hour would pass

down the watch word, "All's Well!" It was very cheering and inspiring to the youthful minds.

They were a very dissipated set both officers and men and kept the little village in a continual ferment. One afternoon when I was along with some of the boys and girls gathering jessamine in the woods back of the old church we heard the report of two pistols in quick succession. In coming out to see what was the matter we found one man lying on his back and the other standing over him. It proved to be Bush and Jones, the two highest officers in command of the barges. They had quarreled over their cups and had come out there behind the church to settle it in a duel. Bush was shot in the thigh. The citizens hearing of it came out and had him conveyed on one of the church doors to their headquarters in a building under the bluff. Jones went in the next morning to see Bush when he fired at him on his entrance into the room (He had his pistol concealed in his bed), the ball passing just a few inches over his head. Bush I understand survived until after the war and eventually died from the effects of the wound. Jones died in the Marine Service of the U.S. whilst on a cruise in the Mediterranean Sea.

Having made mention of the Lacemedian frigate that lay off Cumberland Island I must relate a laughable circumstance that occurred on her sending some of her head officers on that island for provisions. (Capt. John Fraser the 2nd officer in command related it to me) Capt. Bering the head officer accompanied the expedition, and landing on the south end went up to Mr. Sams' house and inquired for him. He was told that he was at his boat house and would be up immediately. On his making his entrance Old Burney accosted him as "Sams" and shook hands with him, and then told him that they were all thirsty and wanted a drink. Mr. Sams then put out his decanters and invited them up. They then threw off their cloaks and displayed their British uniforms. They then told him that he was their prisoner and to have all his teams geared up and loaded with provisions, and to follow them.

On their march through the Island they then came up to an old Frenchman's residence and gave him the same orders, taking all of his poultry along and making him fall into line. Mr. Stafford living on the north end of the Island



was on horseback when he discovered the dust rising and men and teams approaching. He was too near to retreat so waited for them to come up. They then ordered him to dismount and fall into line. He said that he was very much put out but to save his life he could not help laughing to hear to old Frenchman cursing them and threatening them with Bonaparte. Says he "You teif my turk and chicken. If Bonaparte was here he would give you de Tevil."

The enemy landed only on the outer islands. They induced many negroes to leave their owners; Capt. Fraser said they were the rough scruff of the British Navy. They never attempted to come up on the main but once and that was to burn Clark's Mills on the St. Marys River. On their return they were intercepted by Capt. William Cone with a handfull of men at the different turns in the river, and firing down upon them from the bluffs in their open barge, killed on half of their men. Capt. Fraser in command said it was the tightest place he was ever in during his whole life.

The school in Sunbury continued to flourish during the war. At one time Uriah Wilcox presided over the Academy. I think that there must have been over one hundred scholars.

One day after the barges had left and the town left without any protection, a schooner was noticed approaching the village pursued by a sloop. The citizens were again thrown into consternation, and the school dismissed. The old Customhouse boat Trickum was launched and John Webb with some others went to see what was the matter. Both vessels had grounded within a few hundred yards of each other. It proved that the schooner had mistaken the sloop for a British barge and she was making for port. They were both trading vessels.

The citizens or rather the planters of the county were called upon to send a certain portion of their male slaves to work upon the Old Fort and put it in thorough repair. Several of the old cannon were scrubbed up and mounted on new stocks. I remember well the carriages on which the cannon were to be placed passing my father's plantation. They were built by Jonathan Gaulden on Taylor's Creek. Before the fort was finished a company was sent on from Point Peter near St. Mary's to occupy it. They came round in two vessels and there being a Swedish brig

in port at the time taking in cotton it gave the old place quite a commercial appearance.

On landing of the company at Carter's Warf the school boys were all there and perfectly delighted. Capt. Warley had the company formed in line with ten drummers and fifers ahead, when they struck up

Don't you hear what your Captain say,  
Strike your tent and march away.

This is the way the school boys interpreted it. They then marched to an old yellow house near the fort and pitched their tents around it.

The smallpox broke out at the barracks soon after the arrival of the company and the old drummer Hutchinson and several others died with it. There was a general vaccination among the citizens at this time, myself among the number.

During the war the old village would be enlivened occasionally by the Volunteer companies of the county. Among them the old troop, two infantry companies and sometimes by the militia of the county.

There was no period of the war but what Sunbury was garrisoned by troops. Towards the close of it state troops were sent to it.



## APPENDIX V

Darien Timber Gazette. September 17, 1875

An extract from "Dr. Bullie's Notes," which were published from time to time in the Gazette. Dr. Bullie was Dr. James Holmes, who practiced medicine in Darien for many years. He was born and reared in Sunbury, educated at Yale, and then came to Darien.

An extraordinary duel which took place in the quiet little village of Sunbury, Liberty County, towards the close of the War of 1812, and also the consternation and confusion of the people on approach of a fleet of gunboats.

During the embargo our government sent out a fleet of barges to patrol the inland navigation between Charleston and St. Mary's, and six of them had headquarters at Sunbury, it was commanded by Commodore C. G. Grandenson, and it was the arrival of their vessels that disturbed the people of the village, there was a regiment of militia at the fort, and the Colonel charged up and down the bay, taking a bird's eye view of the supposed enemy, giving orders, and sending his aides full tilt here and there, hurrying off the women and children, and two of them ran against each other in turning a corner, both unhorsed and one much injured, all the fighting men were ordered to the front; the school boys went up into the third story of the academy. . . soon, however, the foremost barge being within gun shot of the fort, rounded to, and ran up the stars and stripes and came to anchor. This movement was followed by all the others. The flag was saluted at the fort by a volley from a dozen of large caliber, that shook the houses to their foundation, the windows in the academy were shattered and fell with a crash; the boys thinking the house was coming down, rushed downstairs and out, tumbling over each other in their flight. One poor fellow had his arm broken, and this with the injury to the Colonel's aide were the only accidents of the day.

When the real character of the fleet was known, the inhabitants returned to the village, and the officers received every attention. . .

## APPENDIX VI

1824

### An Account of the Hurricane of the Above in and Around Sunbury

I have a very distinct recollection of the hurricane that took place on the 8th day of September of this year and what was remarkable is that the one in 1804 took place on the very day of the same month, being exactly twenty years apart. As I was born three months after the big hurricane (as the Negroes termed it) I had no recollection of it, only from hearsay. From what I could gather its effects were similar to that of 1824 only that the water was much higher in 1804. It came up to the public road at Springfield and a large trout and smaller fish were picked up at the Big Gate at that place.

The morning of the latter storm was ushered in by a gentle wind from the N.E. At midday it increased to a gale. The sea birds flying very high and screaming as they made their way. I looked for trouble that night and we had it.

I was at Palmyra with my Father and family. The wind increased as night advanced, and the tide rose higher and higher. At midnight the wind got round to the south and caused the water to come over the bluff. My Father and



self were up all night barricading doors and windows. The only thing that he could find to drive the nails with was a smoothing iron. The rain came through the floor of the parlor of the old house and in the morning early I found myself lying on it along with my Sister Caroline, Sarah White, the children, and a half dozen little Negroes. So soon as daylight came we were all up chasing marsh hens.

I went over early to see how my old neighbor Dr. McWhir fared. He said that he had been up all night shutting doors and windows and had taken through the night six drinks of brandy and water.

I had no idea that the face of the country could be so thoroughly changed in so short a space of time. It looked to me that the trees in the forest would never be righted again. On a piece of hard marsh near the house were to be seen the morning after the hurricane dead hogs and cows, pumpkins, peas and dead sea birds brought over St. Catherines and Cob Islands.

I started on horseback for Colns. Island to see what had become of my relatives and friends there. But before getting out of the avenue I had to return and turn my horse loose as the trees had fallen so along the road that I could not proceed. I then took my gun and knap-

sack and started on foot. As I came near "Cedar Point" I met up with my old friend and neighbor, Parson Dunham. He told me that he was ruined, that all of his fencing had been swept away and his fields all exposed to the cattle and hogs and that he did not know what to do. He said thank God, however, he and his were all alive. That he thought at one time that they would all be crushed as the upper floor of his house was so tight that it held water, and that he had to bore auger holes through it to let the water out.

I then proceeded on. Passed Coln. Law's avenue to see if Mr. Audley Maxwell's house was standing and seeing that it was turned back and went up to Woodville. I found that Coln. Law and family had abandoned their dwelling during the night and gone into an outhouse. To save my life I could not keep from laughing as I entered the kitchen to see the plight that the Old lady and her two daughters, Ann and Marcey, were in. They had been crying and the soot coming down the chimney during the night had completely blackened their faces, that they were perfect frights.

During the day the two Miss Bacons came over in great distress, having ascertained that their brother Philip and their Cousin Edmond Bacon together with a Negro boy had been drowned. They were seen at midday in the



marsh between their home and Harris Neck trying to get ashore, but no one went to their assistance. They might have been rescued with some little risk by those on Harris Neck as they were seen by them from that place and they had a boat.

The body of Philip Bacon was recovered the following day, and that night old Mr. Audley Maxwell and myself sat with it. It was very offensive and much swollen, so much so that we had a grave dug near the house next morning very early and sent for Rev. Jacob Dunham to hold funeral services over it. The bodies of the other two I do not think were ever found.

Mrs. Chalmers (who was afterwards) and her sister Jane remained at Col. Law's for some days. The old Coln was very much distressed on account of his brother Nat who had passed there the Sunday previous to the hurricane with a boat load of Negroes to pick cotton on Bulls Island. The storm caught them there and he and the Negroes had to get on the top of the only house there and providentially the only tree on the Island fell across the house and kept it down or they would all of them have been swamped. Over in McIntosh County there were several lives lost; especially around Baisdens Bluff and Darien.

After remaining several days on the Island, I returned home and afterwards went to Sunbury to see what had befallen them there. They had suffered very little, only some of their chimneys topped and outhouses and pailings blown down. Mr. Wm. Ward slept through the whole of it and was surprised next morning to see the destruction of things all around and wanted to know the cause of it.

J.S.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

APPENDIX VII

Atlanta, Georgia

DATE:

March 26, 1973

Interdepartmental Correspondence from Gordon Midgette,  
Staff Archaeologist, Georgia Historical Commission, to  
Mary Jewett, Director, March 26, 1973.

As I understand the land acquisition program now underway at Fort Morris, the only area to be acquired will be in the immediate area of the Historical Commission's currently held acreage. The part of my report that should prove helpful in the current acquisition program concerns the historical development of the fortifications in Savannah.

Steven Baker's preliminary research indicated that there wasn't any documentation available concerning the actual structure and layout of the fortifications at Fort Morris during the Revolution or in the period just prior or after the conflict (page 15, General Comments concerning Potential Archaeology), with the exception of a "Y" shaped feature pointing towards the river on the 1786 Powell map.

I have located conclusive data in the form of a micro-illustration of Savannah and the Fort now held by the Commission that Savannah was a walled or palisaded town at the time of the Revolution and that the outer works enclosed both the town and water battery that we know as Fort Morris.

The enclosed photograph from my report is an enlargement of a sketch probably executed by Lieut-Col. Campbell, the British officer in charge of the Occupation of Savannah. The scale is not very reliable and without an intensive ground survey outside the fort on the landward side between Fort Morris and the outer works the features indicating an outer wall would be hard to pinpoint.

Since the land that Mr. Wood is currently trying to buy could theoretically take in part of the town wall, I would strongly recommend that as much area to the northwest of the existing fort as possible be included in the purchase. Existing topography suggests that this outer palisade and/or entrenchment skirted just above the swampy area of low-lying ground encountered on the road approaching the Fort.

There are a number of very nice trees in that area and it would make a nice addition to what we already own.

# GEORGIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

A DIVISION OF THE OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF STATE BEN W. FORTSON, JR.

116 MITCHELL STREET, S.W.

ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303

422

## INTERDEPARTMENT CORRESPONDENCE

OFFICE: Atlanta, Georgia

DATE: March 26, 1973

Gordon Midgett

Mrs. Mary G. Jewett, Director

SUBJECT:

As I understand the land acquisition program now underway at Fort Morris, the only area to be acquired will be in the immediate area of the Historical Commission's currently held acreage. The part of my report that should prove helpful in the current acquisition program concerns the historical development of the fortifications in Sunbury.

Steven Baker's preliminary research indicated that there wasn't any documentation available concerning the actual structure and layout of the fortifications at Fort Morris during the Revolution or in the period just prior or after the conflict (page 15, General Comments concerning Potential Archaeology), with the exception of a "V" shaped feature pointing towards the river on the 1786 Powell map.

I have located conclusive data in the form of a micro-illustration of Sunbury and the fort now held by the Commission that Sunbury was a walled or Palisaded town at the time of the Revolution and that the outer works enclosed both the town and water battery that we know as Fort Morris.

The enclosed photograph from my report is an enlargement of a sketch probably executed by Lieut-Col. Campbell, the British officer in charge of the Occupation of Savannah. The scale is not very reliable and without an intensive ground survey outside the fort on the landward side between Fort Morris and the outer works the features indicating an outer wall would be hard to pinpoint.

Since the land that Mr. Wood is currently trying to buy could theoretically take in part of the town wall, I would strongly recommend that as much area to the northwest of the existing fort as possible be included in the purchase. Existing topography suggests that this outer palisade and/or entrenchment skirted just above the swampy area or last low ground encountered on the road approaching the Fort.

There are a number of very nice trees in that area and it would make a nice addition to what we already own.

GM:rh



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