

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

FORTEENTH SYMPOSIUM

ON THE

NATURAL HISTORY OF THE BAHAMAS

Edited by
Craig Tepper
and
Ronald Shaklee

Conference Organizer
Thomas Rothfus

Gerace Research Centre
San Salvador Bahamas
2011

Cover photograph – “Iggie the Rock Iguana” courtesy of Ric Schumacher

Copyright Gerace Research Centre

All Rights Reserved

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording or information storage or retrieval system without permission in written form.

Printed at the Gerace Research Centre

ISBN 0-935909-95-8

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AS IRREPLACEABLE RESOURCES:
THE CASE OF LOOTING AT PROSPECT HILL PLANTATION**

Jane Eva Baxter
Anthropology
DePaul University
2343 North Racine Avenue
Chicago, IL 60614

ABSTRACT

Each archaeological site is unique unto itself and the preservation and stewardship of the archaeological record is paramount in professional disciplinary practice. Archaeological sites are regularly subjected to other types of activity that endanger their preservation and diminish their research potential, including destruction due to development, organized looting for the antiquities market, and more casual collecting by people with an interest in a particular place or the past in general. Historic sites on San Salvador and elsewhere in the Bahamas are irreplaceable cultural resources that are also subjected to some of these same forces and practices. The site of Prospect Hill (often known colloquially as “Farquharson’s Plantation”) was recently studied by DePaul University for two archaeological field seasons, and the nature and patterning of artifact distributions at the site were indicative of casual collecting by site visitors that have resulted in a distortion of the archaeological record. This paper presents an analysis of artifact patterning from both the 1976 work at Prospect Hill by Kathy Gerace and the 2009-2010 seasons of fieldwork undertaken by DePaul University. Placed into broader contexts, the archaeological record of Prospect Hill shows clear signs of “collecting” and “looting” by visitors over time and presents a good case for the promotion of site stewardship in the Bahamas.

INTRODUCTION

Prospect Hill Plantation, often called “Farquharson’s Plantation” in reference to its historical owners, is perhaps the best known Baha-

mian Family Island Plantation. This notoriety is derived in part from the survival of the planter’s journal of Charles Farquharson from the years 1831-2 (Farquharson 1957 [1831-2]), and also from the archaeological work conducted on the plantation in the 1970s by Kathy Gerace (Gerace 1982, 1987). Prospect Hill is unique among most family island plantations as the planter family was in residence for multiple generations (see Burton 2006, Baxter and Burton 2011), but it is often used as the basis for reconstructing family island life during the period of slavery and post-emancipation in the 19th century (Craton and Saunders 1992, 1998).

For two seasons in 2009-10, DePaul University undertook additional archaeological investigations at Prospect Hill Plantation designed to create a basis for comparison between this historically-documented site, and other plantations on the island (Baxter and Burton 2007, 2011). Archaeological evidence recovered was inconsistent with the historical record of the site and with comparable archaeological sites elsewhere in the Bahamas. These results were suggestive, however, that the site of Prospect Hill had been subjected to artifact looting or collecting by site visitors sometime between its abandonment in the later 19th century and the archaeological work of the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

This paper presents an analysis of surface materials from Prospect Hill plantation, from both the 1976 and 2009-10 seasons. This analysis confirms the suspicion that the site was subjected to collecting by non-archaeologists. This determination is used to: (1) offer future archaeologists an understanding of how sites have been affected by artifact collecting, (2) demonstrate how even cas-

ual, opportunistic artifact collecting can affect the archaeological record, and (3) make a case for the stewardship of Bahamian archaeological sites by discouraging artifact collection by site visitors.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROBLEM OF LOOTING

The problem of looting recently has gained much popular awareness in relationship to military initiatives in Iraq and Afghanistan. Popular news agencies often report on the destruction of archaeological sites and thefts of museum collections in these war-torn nations. Archaeological looting is much more widespread and has a much deeper history than these recent events. Many people, for example, are familiar with the widespread looting of Pharaonic tombs in Egypt during antiquity that made the discovery of King Tutankhamen's tomb in the 1920s such a notable event.

The term looting in archaeology refers most often to the undocumented excavation of archaeological sites, but can include a variety of activities from well-organized antiquities trading to casual, opportunistic collection (Hollowell-Zimmer 2003). Despite outreach, education, and legislation to protect archaeological and historic sites, undocumented excavation affects up to 50-90% of archaeological sites in certain nations (Brodie and Renfrew 2005:345) and is a problem that is getting worse globally (Hollowell-Zimmer 2003).

Archaeological concerns over looting are long-standing, and stem from the recognition that each archaeological site is unique and an irreplaceable cultural resource for understanding the past. The removal of artifacts, even in small quantities, alters the information contained at a site and therefore the accuracy of any resulting interpretation. Once artifacts are removed from a site without documentation, whether kept in private collections or in museums, the loss of associated information from its site of origin renders the artifact virtually useless for any meaningful study of the past.

Types of Looting

The concept of looting covers a continuum of activities that cumulatively damage archaeological sites and diminish the evidence we need to study the past. The most dramatic form is the highly organized looting of sites in local areas by local populations who then sell the items through middlemen into the international market in antiquities (Brodie and Renfrew 2005). While such trade is illegal, it is pervasive and results in the widespread destruction of archaeological sites. Not only are valuable materials removed from sites and ultimately their country of origin, but the artifacts and architecture deemed unsalable on the world market are destroyed and displaced with no concern for their condition or preservation.

Equally common is small-scale collection by those interested in owning relics of the past. These treasure hunters, artifact collectors, and hobbyists use a variety of techniques to find artifacts of interest to trade, display, and curate in their homes (Hollowell-Zimmer 2003, Labelle 2003). These collectors sometimes work as organized groups or clubs, while others are individual enthusiasts.

Perhaps the least well understood form of collection is the casual, opportunistic collection by site visitors, who do not typically or systematically collect items (Colwell-Chanthaphonh, Chip 2004). These individuals do not excavate at sites, employ technology to find artifacts, or even set out with the intent of collecting items. The decision to take an artifact is often spontaneous and opportunistic when it is encountered. While this type of looting may not seem particularly damaging, these events have cumulative effects that are equivalent to larger-scale collecting activities.

Motivations for Collecting

In recent years, as a way to improve education, outreach, and enforcement, archaeologists and cultural anthropologists have sought to learn why people want to collect artifacts in the first place, either through antiquities sales and auctions or first-hand acquisition through collecting and excavation (Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2004,

Hollwell-Zimmer 2003, Brodie, Kersel, and Tubb 2006, LaBelle 2003, Smith 2005). In his well-known book, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, Lowenthal (1985) notes that the archaeological origins of an item will make it more culturally valued than similar artifacts that have stayed in cultural circulation. "Like memories, relics once abandoned or forgotten may be more treasured than those in continued use... Artifacts of initially transient and diminishing value that fall into the limbo of rubbish are often later resurrected as highly valued relics" (Lowenthal 1985:286).

Other studies have identified several common themes that seem to inspire collecting (Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2004). These relate largely to local populations collecting at sites in their area of residence, and include:

- **Creating Connection:** Taking an object from a site gives people a personal connection to a particular place. (See also Smith 2005).
- **Preservation:** If the collector doesn't take a particular object, someone else will anyway, and the collector feels that they will care for the object and about the object where others may not.
- **Spirituality:** Artifacts from the past contain certain powers that can connect people in the present to other realms.
- **Aesthetics:** Certain items are attractive in an artistic sense and are acquired for their beauty or interest as a visual object.

Less attention has been paid to motivations of people who collect artifacts while traveling, although it is likely many of the same types of individual motivators noted for local residents come into play. Collecting while abroad is not dissimilar to purchasing a small relic or artifact as a souvenir when traveling to a particular site or region. These artifacts also create a connection to place, but offer the person acquiring the artifact an opportunity to purchase something that can serve as a souvenir of a particular experience, and also function as a lasting connection to a place that holds significance (e.g., Kersel 2006).

LOOTING ON SAN SALVADOR: THE PROBLEMATIC CASE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AT PROSPECT HILL PLANTATION

Evidence for looting can come in many forms, and in the case of Prospect Hill, it was the absence of particular types of evidence that gave rise to the hypothesis that looting had taken place at the site. Many would argue that it is not possible to make any sort of claim based on negative evidence, but the absence of evidence is the very outcome of looting, and such alteration of the archaeological record can be inferred using the appropriate contextual knowledge.

Plantations in the Bahamas share many common features with those found elsewhere in the Caribbean and in the Southeastern United States. They are all sites that developed around the institution of slavery that created social conditions and economic relationships, which while highly variable, also retained some basic features. Plantations were places where social differences and economic inequalities between slaves, overseers, and owners not only shaped the dynamics of daily life, but also were marked in the layout of the plantation, architectural styles employed, and the material goods afforded to members of each population. Archaeologically, these differences are readily visible on the landscape and in artifact assemblages, and can be used to understand the variations that existed in this general form of social and economic organization.

One consistent dimension of plantations is the relative distribution of artifacts between the area of a plantation occupied by the planter and his family, and the area designated for residences of the enslaved population. Areas attributable to the planter family have higher quantities of artifacts, artifacts of higher quality, and a greater diversity of artifact types than those of slaves (Farnsworth 1996; Wilkie and Farnsworth 1999, 2005). These differences reflect the different social standings of the two populations, and the differential ability to acquire certain types of material goods. They also represent a logical relationship between historical understandings of slavery and the material record of a plantation.



Figure 1: Two artifact assemblages from Prospect Hill Plantation from the DePaul University work at the site in 2009-10. The top image represents a typical assemblage from the planter family area, while the bottom image represents a typical assemblage from the slave quarter. This relative distribution of artifacts represents an inversion in artifact patterning expected at a plantation site.

Prospect Hill posed a particular challenge to such understandings, as the archaeological record of the two site areas was reversed (Baxter and Burton 2011, Figure 1). The slave quarter at Prospect Hill had many more artifacts and a much more diverse artifact assemblage than the area of the site occupied by the Farquharson family. There is only one other example where this type of reversal has been identified in the archaeological record, and that is at the site of Promised Land Plantation on New Providence (Wilkie and Farnsworth 1999: 289). This reversal is very noteworthy, but has a ready explanation in the historical record: Plantation owner James Moss is known to have kept his primary residence in Nassau and not at the plantation. Even though the arti-

facts at the Moss residence at Promised Land were less abundant than those found at the slave residences, the artifacts found did bear a distinct cohesiveness that suggested a “tavern like” assemblage pointing to the occasional occupation of the residence, most likely for entertaining and social gatherings.

The artifact assemblage around the planter buildings at Prospect Hill did not have such a cohesive signature, and did not make sense in light of historical documentation. Comparative archaeology at another site on San Salvador shows that even a relatively short occupation by a planter family left a significant archaeological signature of a family in residence (Baxter and Burton 2007). Furthermore, Prospect Hill is distinguished by its multi-generational occupation by the Farquharson family (from 1803 into the 1870s), making it one of the most intensively occupied planter residences known in the Bahamas. Historical documentation from the pre and post-emancipation periods show the plantation was consistently being provisioned with goods from Nassau (Burton 2006, Baxter and Burton 2011). All of these lines of evidence suggest that the planter occupied areas of Prospect Hill should show a very robust archaeological signature of long-term occupation, but this is not the case.

The absence of a reasonable historical explanation for the artifact patterning at Prospect Hill makes it necessary to consider post-depositional events that may have altered the archaeological record at the site. Post-depositional events refer to changes that were made to the archaeological record between the time Prospect Hill was abandoned by the planter family in the late 19th century and the time archaeological work was undertaken in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Often natural conditions can alter the patterning of materials at archaeological sites, and wind, water, and animals have undoubtedly created some changes to the arrangements of artifacts on the site surface, but such conditions are island-wide and have not resulted in the virtual absence of artifacts at other sites on the island (Baxter and Burton 2007; Gerace 1982, 1987). Cultural activities, then, offer a more likely explanation for the

disparity between the historical and archaeological records for Prospect Hill.

The looting or collecting of materials by visitors to Prospect Hill is a reasonable explanation for the absence of materials in the areas of the site once occupied by the Farquharson family. This area is also the section of the site that is most accessible from the Queen's Highway, and is the area where the path from the road brings visitors into the site (Figure 2). The area has well-trodden paths and architecture that is clearly visible above and through the vegetation. It is relatively easy to move around the three main planter family buildings. Beyond this area in every direction, paths diminish, and heavy vegetation makes moving around the area very difficult if not impossible without site clearing equipment such as machetes and hacksaws. No other buildings are visible from this vantage point, and the slave quarter is located approximately 200 yards away through the dense vegetation. The visibility and accessibility of the planter buildings relative to the slave quarter, and the clear pattern of visitation to the most accessible parts of the site, made the explanation of artifact collecting an attractive possibility to explain the archaeological findings at Prospect Hill. No evidence of large scale looting is present at the site, which suggested that such collecting would have been more like an opportunistic and casual variety of artifact collecting.

COLLECTING ARTIFACTS ON SAN SALVADOR

Exploring the possibility of artifact collecting as an explanation for the artifact patterns at Prospect Hill required two steps. First, was to consider the question of when such collecting would have taken place and by whom. Second, was to consider what collecting would "look like" in the context of San Salvador and to develop a methodology to test the idea that artifact collecting had taken place at Prospect Hill.

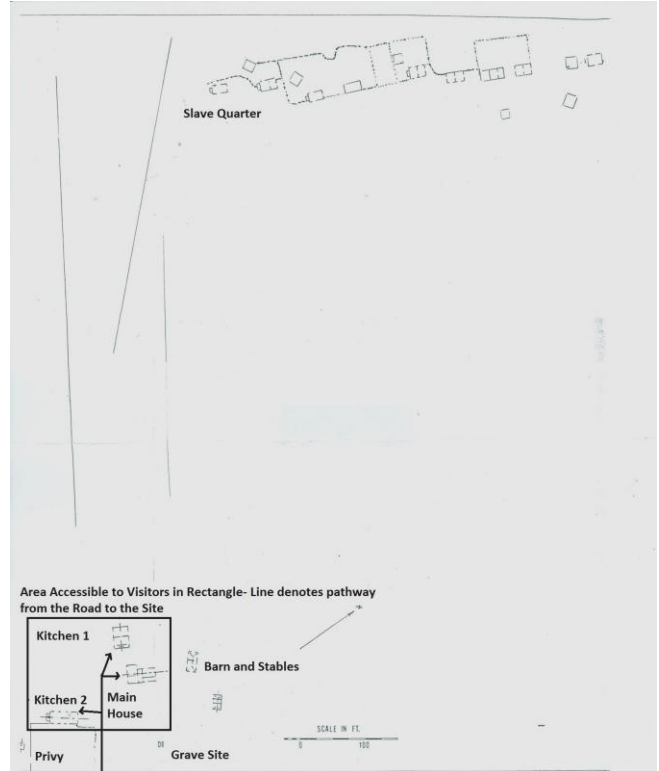


Figure 2: Site Map of Prospect Hill made by Kathy Gerace and modified to show the point of access and areas of accessibility to site visitors. The rectangle shows the area that is clear enough to enable movement around the site. Beyond the rectangle, progress is impeded by the absence of cleared paths and dense vegetation making further exploration nearly impossible by a casual visitor.

A History of Collectors and Collecting on San Salvador

One does not have to look very far to find evidence of archaeological collecting at historic sites on San Salvador. This collecting seems to be an activity restricted to visitors to the island, as local residents generally do not consider "slave sites" a place to acquire objects of curiosity for their homes or to sell to visitors.

After years of relative isolation, San Salvador became the focus of outside interest when the United States military built three installations on the island beginning in the 1950s. American military personnel built the road around the island known as the Queen's Highway. They also popu-

larized the name of Watling's Castle for Sandy Point plantation, and extracted large amounts of limestone rock from the quarry at the base of the path to Prospect Hill Plantation (Baxter and Burton 2006). It is certain that the soldiers were well aware of many of the island's historic sites, and in the mid-2000s one soldier returned a box of artifacts he had collected from Sandy Point plantation to the Gerace Research Centre. The box contained a variety of ceramics and glass that he had taken from the surface of the site while visiting during his tour of duty. While this box of artifacts was the collection of a single individual, it is likely he was not the only member of the military who took souvenirs home from his time on San Salvador. At the same time the military was most active on the island, Ruth Wolper was establishing the New World Museum (Baxter and Burton 2006). The collections of the New World Museum, now in the Gerace Research Center Repository since the museum's closure, were comprised of artifacts that were collected without documentation from around the island. These materials are both prehistoric and historical and represent surface collecting and excavation with no documentation or reporting. These collections and the returned box of artifacts indicate that artifacts were being removed from sites on the island as early as the 1950s.

Continued outside interest in the island's historical sites came with the establishment of the College Center of the Finger Lakes Bahamian Field Station in 1971, which to this day (as the Gerace Research Centre) brings many student groups to the island. Students regularly visit historic sites as part of their time on the island. Tourists from resorts such as the Riding Rock and Club Med also frequent historic sites. Beginning in the 1980s, guidebooks to the island mention plantations, particularly Prospect Hill and Watling's Castle, as places to visit during a stay on San Salvador. Tourist and educational interest has resulted in pathways to major structures at plantation sites being maintained to insure access for visitors. Images posted online show that even supervised student groups from the Gerace Research Centre do not engage in behaviors conducive to site preservation (Figure 3) and graffiti etched into

the buildings by students and tourists alike show a disregard for the integrity of these plantations by some visitors. While casual and opportunistic collecting by individuals is not documented (and it is unlikely it would be), the abundance of visitors over the years and the existence of evidence that some individuals and groups do not show concern for site preservation suggests that such collecting may well be a part of many student and tourist experiences at sites on San Salvador.



Figure 3: Students from Wittenberg University sitting and standing on the main house at Sandy Point Plantation. Climbing on historic ruins is generally prohibited at managed sites, as such climbing can increase the physical, chemical, and environmental stress on already compromised structures. Such flagrant mistreatment of historic sites in an unmanaged setting is indicative that archaeological sites often are not viewed as requiring the same concern for preservation and conservation as natural resources. Photo from www9.wittenberg.edu/bahamas

The collecting of items from plantation sites in the 1970s is mentioned in a recent guide to the island (Leicester, Riley, and Williams 2007), "From the number of broken bottles around the island it seems the Loyalists certainly liked their "wee drap". Many square, olive-green Dutch Blankeheim and Nolet gin bottles were found in the islands interior along with whisky, medicine (Swamp Root), wines, beer, syrup bottles, and an

old ink bottle. In 1974 finding such bottles necessitated hacking through the haul-back to the ruins of a Loyalist's building. After locating where the front door would have been, one calculated the spot where a tossed empty bottle might have landed. In the piles of broken bottles, one or two perfect antique specimens might be found." This book basically offers site visitors a description of past artifact collecting, and a "how to guide" of how to find a "perfect antique specimen" when visiting the island in the 21st century.

There is both direct and circumstantial evidence for casual and opportunistic artifact collecting at San Salvador plantations by island visitors over a period of 60 years. Additional evidence comes from the repository of the Gerace Research Centre where a collection of unprovenanced material from historic sites that has been brought back to the field station by student groups and researchers from their travels around the island. These items are undocumented and therefore hold no interpretive potential, but they do provide direct evidence both for collecting and for the types of artifacts people collect when visiting sites. An inventory of these items includes (nb: all measurements are of the largest measurement on any given artifact):

- 44 whole bottles
- 3 intact stoneware jugs
- 88 large identifiable bottle pieces- average size 15.6 cm
- 122 Pieces of glass bottles- average size 7.9 cm
- 7 large identifiable metal objects- average size 17.7 cm
- 4 ceramic sherds- average size of 9 cm

The repository also contains a box of artifacts that bear evidence of a single episode of collecting by a single collector. Nothing is known of the particulars of the origins of this collection, but the box is labeled "Glass and Ceramic Sherds from Harbour Yard, San Salvador, collected February 1993 by Lars Jorgenson." While the other repository materials are the accumulation of materials after years of collecting by unnamed collectors at unknown locations, this collection represents an

individual collecting event. While the site of "Harbour Yard" is uncertain as it is not a formal site name on the island, we do know that Mr. Jorgenson collected:

- 1 whole bottle
- 24 glass objects with an average size of 8.1 cm, including 15 highly identifiable bottle fragments such as bases and finishes
- 35 ceramic objects with an average size of 5.8 cm, including 21 highly identifiable pieces such as rims and bases and a rate of 87% decorated versus 13% undecorated sherds.

These artifacts in the Gerace Research Center collection reflect many of the known dimensions of choice employed when non-archaeologists collect materials from archaeological sites. These include (1) Expediency: People collect things they readily encounter on the surface (2) Color Contrast and Size: People collect things that they are able to see easily, and (3) Recognition: People select items that they can recognize as old and/or "exotic" to their own life experiences. Therefore, artifacts that are recognizable, are identifiable as "old" by a non-expert, and can be easily seen against the ground surface are those most likely to be picked up by site visitors. For example, many visitors would not pick up shards of bottle glass because they look (to the untrained eye) similar to broken bottles they might see on the street at home. Intact bottles or large bottle fragments, however, will look different than those currently in use and will be preferred by collectors. This means that archaeological collecting practices not only involve the removal of artifacts, but also that certain types of artifacts are preferred over others.

TESTING FOR LOOTING AT PROSPECT HILL

This information can be used to develop a strategy for identifying the effects of looting at Prospect Hill, even when the outcome of looting is a lack of material or negative evidence. Based on what is known about collecting, it is possible

to surmise that (1) heavily traversed areas of the site would show greater evidence for looting and collecting than those areas that are less accessible. (2) There should not only be a reduction in the overall quantity of artifacts, but also an absence of large and identifiable objects in areas that have been subjected to surface collection.

In order to test for looting, materials collected from the surface during both Kathy Gerace's 1976 work and the DePaul 2009-10 field seasons were analyzed. The decision to use surface remains comes from the suggestion that most looting on San Salvador does not represent well organized excavations, but instead is in the form of casual collecting by site visitors. This type of collection by definition is confined to surface remains that can be expediently and opportunistically collected.

While the materials from Prospect Hill were collected to learn about site use in the 19th century, the surface collections were regrouped based on areas of relative accessibility to visitors. Materials from around the three planter buildings (Kitchen 1, Kitchen 2, and the Main House) were grouped together as these three buildings are the ones cleared for visitor access. Other areas of the site were retained in their analytic units as they are all inaccessible to casual visitors and represent discrete spatial areas of the site.

Artifacts were placed into one of three categories: intact/complete, recognizable, and fragmentary. Intact objects were those that were 100% or nearly 100% complete and represent the largest and most identifiable artifacts encountered on the surface. The category of identifiable referred to artifacts that were from a portion of a vessel (glass or ceramic) that could be identified as a particular portion of a vessel and therefore had a higher degree of being recognized by a site visitor. These include bottle finishes and bases, and ceramic rims and bases, as these all have unique characteristics that are more identifiable and visually interesting than broken fragments of vessel bodies. The final category was fragments that had no discernable place in a vessel or vessel shape. The

artifacts in the identifiable category and fragment category were measured in centimeters using the longest dimension available for each artifact. While this approach made some artifacts seem larger than they were and others smaller, it provided an effective and expedient way to characterize the size of the material in each surface assemblage. Average artifact size was calculated for each area using the latter two categories of artifacts, but not the intact objects.

The results of this analysis show a clear relationship between the accessibility of a particular site area and the nature of the artifact assemblage found on the surface (Table 1). The area leading up to the site from the quarry had few artifacts, no intact/identifiable artifacts and very low average artifact sizes for both glass and ceramics (Figure 2). This result is exactly what one would expect for an area with a high level of artifact collection. Only 13 artifacts were found on the surface of the site in the area occupied by the planter family, with small fragment sizes and only one intact, and one identifiable artifact being recovered. It is also noteworthy that all the surface remains from this part of the plantation came from the 1976 work by Kathy Gerace, with no surface finds being made in 2009-10. The areas of the "Field Adjacent to Kitchen", "Between Manor House and Stables" and "Stables" are significant because they show how quickly the number and size of artifacts increase along with the number of identifiable artifacts present when moving into the areas of the plantation that are covered in vegetation and not traversed by most site visitors. The contrast between the planter yard and buildings and the slave quarter shows the inverted nature of the artifact assemblage between the two areas along all three variables: quantity, size, and the presence of intact/identifiable artifacts. The numbers from the slave quarter also show that the types of artifacts that tend to be selected by collectors were not being removed from this area and were available for archaeologists to recover and record for analysis.

Site Area	Glass Totals	Ceramic Totals	Glass Average Size	Ceramic Average Size	Intact Artifacts	Identifiable artifacts (including other finds)	Description of Other Finds
From Quarry to Site	2	11	2.5 cm	1.1 cm	0	0	none
Planter Yard and Buildings	6	7	4 cm	1.7 cm	1	1	1 button
Field Adjacent to Kitchen	202	25	2.75 cm	1.9 cm	0	4	1 gun flint
Between Manor House and Stables	18	18	5.6 m	4.9 cm	0	3	2 pipe stems, 1 metal piece
Stables	60	85	7.65 cm	2.4 cm	0	8	3 pipe stems
Slave Quarters	251	92	8 cm	4.6 cm	19	30	2 pipe stems

Table 1: Summary of the artifact analysis from Prospect Hill Plantation. Data for each site area (See Figure 2) include number of glass fragments and ceramic fragments, the average size of each artifact category from the identifiable and fragment categories and the number of intact and identifiable objects present. Non-glass and ceramic artifacts are noted in the final column. The planter yard area and slave quarter are highlighted to facilitate comparison of these two areas.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AS IRREPLACABLE RESOURCES

This analysis from Prospect Hill Plantation demonstrates a clear correlation between the accessibility of a site area, and the nature of the artifact assemblage present. Parts of the plantation that have been accessed regularly by visitors show fewer artifacts, smaller artifacts, and an absence of identifiable and intact items. Areas that are rarely accessed due to distance, vegetation, and the absence of a clear path of access have notably more artifacts, larger artifacts, and more identifiable and intact artifacts. This patterning is not a reflection of the historic occupation at the site, but rather that the site has been subjected to looting, perhaps over many decades. The impact of this looting is very simple to state: *it is now impossible to interpret accurately the life of the Farquharson family at Prospect Hill using the archaeological record because of the practice of artifact col-*

lection by site visitors. Too many artifacts have been removed to have a clear picture of how the family lived at the plantation. It is still possible to learn about life in the slave quarter, however, because this portion of the site has been spared the level of collection activity that is evidenced in more accessible parts of the site.

Casual and opportunistic collecting is a largely invisible event in any particular instance. People don't plan to pick up an artifact to take along with them, and the decision may be spontaneously motivated by any number of circumstances. The event would generally be undocumented in any type of source. The removal of any one artifact also does not drastically alter the archaeological record of a site, but the casual collecting of artifacts over many years ultimately has the same type of dramatic effect as a large-scale looting effort. This type of collecting is similar to the removal of shells from the Bahamas. Any one visitor's collec-

tion may not pose a threat, but that process multiplied by thousands of visitors can have adverse effects on the island ecology.

While damage to archaeological sites on San Salvador has been ongoing over many years, it is possible, as with any conservation effort, to make simple changes in behavior that can improve the preservation environment for the irreplaceable archaeological resources of the Bahamas. One thing that would benefit these efforts in conservation would be for the Gerace Research Center to include a statement on the care of the island's historical and archaeological resources in its orientation materials alongside the extant statements on the care of the island's marine and terrestrial natural resources. Individual instructors can also help in preservation by doing the three simple things:

- 1) Discourage students from collecting items they find while visiting archaeological sites, and explain why taking artifacts is a destructive process. It is also worth noting that removing artifacts from the Bahamas is a criminal act under international law. Photographing artifacts at the site is, however, perfectly legal.
- 2) Do not let students climb on buildings. Use the same standards of behavior you'd expect to find at a national park in the United States. Climbing on buildings helps to hasten their demise. Not only could a building that seems sturdy collapse during a student visit, but these same ruins have to withstand future hurricanes and other harsh weather events- there future is precarious, not certain.
- 3) Do not allow students to carve graffiti into the sides of buildings. These scratches can allow

chemical and biological agents to penetrate into the structure and destabilize the architecture.

These small changes and informing visitors about the importance and fragility of cultural resources can help protect the sites of the Bahamas for future generations to enjoy and to study to develop a richer, more complex understanding of the Bahamian past.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The work at Prospect Hill Plantation during the 2009-10 seasons was a part of the DePaul University Study Abroad Program to the Bahamas. I am thankful to the students and teaching assistants who worked on the project, and particularly thank my co-director, John Burton and our laboratory supervisor, Susan Wiard for all of their assistance and support. I also extend my thanks to Morag Kersel for her advice and encouragement with this project, and for the recommendations of some initial literature to review. I also want to thank Ron Shaklee and Craig Tepper for their work in organizing the Natural History Conference and to thank the conference attendees whose interest, comments, and questions helped to improve this written version of the work presented. As always, I wish to thank the GRC staff, the AMMC, the Department of Archives and the people of the Bahamas for making this work possible.

REFERENCES

- Baxter, Jane Eva and John D. Burton. 2006. *Historic Sites on San Salvador, Bahamas: A Field Guide for Teachers and Students*. Gerace Research Center, San Salvador.
2007. *DePaul University Excavations at Polly Hill Plantation: A Report of the 2006 Season and a Summary of Three Seasons of Field Work*. Report submitted to the Gerace Research Center, San Salvador and the Antiquities, Museums and Monuments Corporation, Nassau.
2011. *DePaul University Excavations at Prospect Hill Plantation: A Report of the 2009-10 Seasons of Field Work*. Report Submitted to the Gerace Research Center and Department of Antiquities.
- Brodie, Neil and Colin Renfrew 2005. Looting and the World's Archaeological Heritage: The Inadequate Response. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34:341-61.
- Brodie, Neil, Morag Kersel, and Kathryn Tubb (editors) 2006. *Archaeology, Cultural Heritage, and the Antiquities Trade*. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.
- Burton, John. 2006. "A Terra Incognita": Life on Post-Emancipation San Salvador. *Journal of the Bahamas Historical Society* Volume 28.
- Colwell-Chanthaphonh, Chip 2004. These Obscure Objects of Desire: Collecting Cultures and the Archaeological Landscape in the San Pedro Valley of Arizona. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 33:571.
- Craton, M and G. Saunders. 1992-1998. *Islanders in the Stream: A History of the Bahamian People*, 2 vols. University of Georgia Press, Athens
- Farnsworth, Paul 1996. The Influence of Trade on Bahamian Slave Culture. *Historical Archaeology*. 30(4):1-23.
- Farquharson, Charles. 1957 (1831-2) *A Relic of Slavery*. Ormond J. McDonald, translator and editor. The Dean Peggs Research Fund, Nassau.
- Gerace, Kathy. 1982. Three Loyalist Plantations on San Salvador, Bahamas. *The Florida Anthropologist* 35(4):216-222.
1987. Early Nineteenth Century Plantations on San Salvador, Bahamas: The Archaeological Record. *Journal of the Bahamas Historical Society* 9(1):22-26.
- Hicks, Robert 2001. Time Crime: Protecting the Past in the United States. *Culture without Context* <http://www.mcdonald.cam.ac.uk/projects/iarc/culturewithoutcontext/issue9/hicks.htm>
- Hollowell-Zimmer, Julie 2003. Digging in the Dirt- Ethics and "Low -End Looting" In L. Zimmerman, K. Vitelli, and J. Hollowell-Zimmer (eds.). *Ethnical Issues in Archaeology*. Alta Mira Press, Walnut Creek, California pp. 45-56.

Kersel, Morag. 2006. *The Legal Trade of Antiquities in Israel*. PhD Dissertation. University of Cambridge, UK.

Labelle, Jason 2003. Coffee Cans and Folsom Points: Why We Cannot Continue to Ignore the Artifact Collectors. ” In L. Zimmerman, K. Vitelli, and J. Hollowell-Zimmer (eds.). *Ethnical Issues in Archaeology*. Alta Mira Press, Walnut Creek, California. pp. 115-128.

Leicester, L. Anthony, Sandry Riley and Chris Mc Laughlin 2007. *San Salvador An Island Guide: Island Tales, Tid Bits, Truths and Untruths*. Williams and Company Book Publishers Hong Kong.

Lowenthal, David 1985 *The Past is a Foreign Country*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.

Smith, Kimbra 2005 Looting and the Politics of Archaeological Knowledge in Northern Peru. *Ethnos* 70(2): 149-170.

Wilkie, Laurie and Paul Farnsworth. 1999. Trade and the Construction of Bahamian Identity: A Multi-Scalar Exploration. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 3(4):283-320.

Wilkie, Laurie and Paul Farnsworth. 2005. *Sampling Many Pots: The Archaeology of Memory and Tradition at a Bahamian Plantation*. University Press of Florida, Gainesville, FL.