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**Ethan Freid**

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**Thomas A. Rothfus**



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# LEARNING FROM LANDSCAPES: UNDERSTANDING CULTURAL CHANGE AND PRACTICE AT POLLY HILL PLANTATION

Jane Eva Baxter, PhD
Anthropology
John D. Burton, PhD
American Studies
Sarah Frye
DePaul University
2343 North Racine Avenue
Chicago, IL 60614

## ABSTRACT

Archaeologists working in the Bahamas during the historic period are fortunate to have access to standing or partially-extant structural remains that date to different periods of the Bahamian past. These remains help us to reconstruct the landscapes that shaped people's everyday lives. Landscapes were in one sense a reflection of function, or how a space was developed to facilitate certain types of daily tasks and behaviors. Landscapes also were symbolic, designed to shape and reflect certain elements of the social order.

This paper explores the changing dynamics of landscape at Polly Hill Plantation, San Salvador, The Bahamas based on three years of interdisciplinary research by DePaul University. Plantation architecture provides insights to the original intentions of the Loyalist family who developed the land at Polly Hill, as well as the negotiations between Loyalists and their slaves on the nature and conditions of slave dwellings. Later modifications to original architectural designs and the location of various plant species give insights as to how the plantation was used, experienced, and altered once the planter family abandoned the plantation for a life in Nassau. These same lines of evidence also point to how emancipated populations reused Polly Hill over generations and developed the precursors of Bahamian vernacular landscapes visible on the island today.

## INTRODUCTION

Plantation ruins are one of the common features of many Bahamian out islands, and San Salvador has a particularly rich legacy in this regard. These plantation sites are an excellent way for twenty-first century visitors to find a direct connection with the island's past. With few written records, however, these sites are often difficult to interpret. Our purpose in this paper is to provide researchers with an interpretive guide to the landscape at Polly Hill Plantation specifically and to slave plantations more generally. Moreover, because many plantation sites have a dynamic history that spans slavery and emancipation, this paper examines the meaning of the landscape at Polly Hill, not only in the slave plantation period, but also over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

We have chosen to focus on the extent landscape since it is easily accessible to other visitors to the site, but many of the cultural trends we note here are also evident in the artifacts excavated at Polly Hill. Together these material sources have helped to expand our understanding of life on San Salvador in the period before World War II.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The American Revolution led to dramatic changes in the Bahamas. The settlement of the war forced American Loyalists to leave the newly-independent United States for other British colonies. The influx Loyalists and their slaves prob-

ably almost doubled the population of the colony, tripled the slave population, and increased the percentage of blacks in the population to about two-thirds. The Loyalists also created new settlements on previously-uninhabited out islands, including San Salvador. Initially the Loyalists tried to replicate the economy of the mainland and established cotton plantations. By the early nineteenth century, most Bahamian slaves were no longer working in staple-crop agriculture and instead were focusing much of their labor on subsistence farming—either on their own or along side their masters (Craton and Saunders, 1992).

We know many of the key elements of plantation life on San Salvador. The slave population was growing by natural increase, the sex ratio showed a similarly healthy population. Most slaves on the island lived on relatively small plantations; of the eight plantations extent in 1822, only one had more than 100 slaves, and five had fewer than fifty. Moreover, most of the slaves had little or no supervision from white planters. Missing on the island was a strong planter class (Gerace, 1982, 1987, Craton and Saunders, 1992: chapter 16).

By the 1830s, stock raising had largely replaced cotton as the chief export crop, although subsistence farming took up much of the effort on plantations. In spite of the declines in economic opportunity for the slave owners, slaves lived a relatively healthy lifestyle with significant demographic growth during the decade leading up to emancipation. Family formation and social bonds within the slave communities were relatively strong, but with a limited planter class, significant accommodation was necessary between planters and slaves to run the plantation effectively (Burton, 2004, 2005).

After emancipation, San Salvador began to undergo a series of transitions to solidify an Afro-Bahamian culture. Emancipation brought significant internal migration within island. Cockburn Town, on the west side of the island, was laid out in the late 1830s, creating another type of community, the township. Cockburn Town provided small freeholds along with "squatting" on neighboring properties to grow crops. Some residents decided to remain on the older plantations as sharecroppers. Although erosion during the cotton plantation period had reduced the soil quality of the old plantation estates, they probably remained more fertile than the western lands, making sharecropping more attractive for some than squatting in Cockburn Town. Moreover, a proprietor class, made up largely of the former planters, continued to exist on the island, although by mid-century, they were be eclipsed by newer, local elites made up of government officials (Burton, 2006, Craton and Saunders 1998:49).

The population of San Salvador grew during these decades, from 315 in 1845 to 634 in 1871, although significant out migration probably also occurred. Although relatively remote, in 1872, 73 local residents reported being able to read and write. Most—149—residents were still tied to the land as "laborers and servants," there was also the beginning of a proto-bourgeoisie including three government officials, one professional (the schoolteacher), four traders and clerks, twelve mechanics and craftsmen, and four "planters and farmers," residents who probably owned and worked their own property (Burton 2006, Craton and Saunders 1998:58).

By the late nineteenth century, San Salvador residents struggled to participate in commercial agriculture, trying coconuts, citrus fruit, pineapples, Indian corn, and cattle raising, but in most years, inadequate boat service to Nassau made shipping crops to market difficult. Sisal seems to have been the only successful crop. Although economically challenged, records also suggest a relatively strong, self-governing community. Without any resident proprietors, local residents served on road committees and the resident magistrate distributed aid to the poor and handled minor criminal infractions. There was some local trade as ships stopped at the island for provisions, and in turn, customs duties were collected on any items imported (Burton, 2006).

Life in the early twentieth century may have been more difficult for islanders than it had been just decades earlier. Although islanders had a cash crop in sisal, poverty led them to overharvest the plants regularly, reducing long-term

yields. Moreover, world prices for sisal fell after World War I, reducing the economic benefit of the crop. Drought was a regular problem and several times each decade residents required food aid from Nassau to avoid starvation. Although San Salvador had regular mailboat service in the early twentieth century, mailboats were small, limiting the ability of islanders to ship their crops to market and reducing their access to products from Nassau (Burton, 2006).

Although the population remained stable at six to seven hundred, many young people left the island for work elsewhere in the Bahamas, or in Florida, and South America and rarely returned. Married men also left, looking for work; one small settlement on the island only had one adult male living there (Burton, 2006).

Most island residents lived largely on subsistence. The typical house was small, 12 feet by 23 feet, constructed of stone and plastered inside and out. A low wooden platform on one side of the house was probably for sleeping. Cooking and much of the day-to-day living could be done outside. Communities were close-knit and bartered for goods and labor among households (Baxter and Burton, 2006c).

## POLLY HILL PLANTATION

The site we call Polly Hill Plantation today is located adjacent to the contemporary settlement of Polly Hill, one of five modern communities that make up United Estates. The plantation site is one of at least eight, and probably more, plantations established on San Salvador between 1780 and 1834. Dozens of land grants were made on the island during this time, but most never became established plantations.

There is a historic Polly Hill plantation. By the 1820s, a Polly Hill plantation was owned by the Storr family along with Sandy Point plantation to the south; neither was occupied by the owner. In 1833, the two plantations were supervised by a slave overseer, Prince Storr (Burton, 2004, 2005). At least part of these lands came to the Storrs through the marriage of John Storr, Jr. to the heiress, Eliza Almgreen. Her father, Nicholas Martin Almgreen, owned 220 acres of land on San Salvador and over 1000 acres in the Exumas. Eliza Storr inherited land and slaves on San Salvador upon her father's death in 1792. Either John Storr, Senior or Junior, received another 320 acres just north of the Almgreen tract. Both tracts were located between Storr Lake and the ocean, just south of the excavation site, but neither grant included the plantation inner yard. The Storr family also acquired a number of properties on the northeast side of San Salvador in the early nineteenth century, some directly from the crown and some apparently through purchase; much of the land in the area was attributed to them on early nineteenth-century land maps. Although there may have been another plantation yard established south of the current excavation site on the original Almgreen/Storr grants, it has not been discovered to date, and the location, between the beach and Storr Lake, would have been poorly suited (Baxter and Burton 2006a).

The most likely residents at the historic Polly Hill plantation were Eliza Storr's slaves, originally inherited from her father in 1792. By 1822, she owned forty slaves; thirty-one were domiciled on San Salvador. These slaves could be grouped into three family units in 1822, two households headed by two parents and the other by a single mother. Two of these households were extended families, with older daughters who had children of their own. Only one slave seemed to have been single. Eighty seven percent of Eliza Storr's slaves were born in the New World. Forty-two percent were under the age of twenty. By 1834, Eliza Storr's slaves had formed four family units, while only two adult slaves seemed to be outside these family units. At least some of these slaves, however, resided at the other Storr plantation, Sandy Point. (Burton 2004, 2005).

The identification of our excavation site as the historic Polly Hill is made more difficult because at least two sites in the area are referred to as "Polly Hill" by local residents. In the early twentieth century, the current excavation site was referred to as "Big Polly Hill" and another site, west of the current Queen's Highway on one of the western hills was called "Little Polly Hill."

It may prove impossible to determine whether the excavation site is the same plantation that the Storr family identified as Polly Hill Plantation in the 1820s and 1830s. Because of the complexity of land transactions and the lack of a precise date for the initial construction of the site, the persons who built the original plantation also cannot be determined. Because our interests are in long-term cultural change for both San Salvador and the Bahamas in general, rather than the histories of specific plantations, such attributions are unnecessary.

## DIMENSIONS OF SPACE AND TIME: LEARNING FROM LANDSCAPES

Historical archaeology is an inherently interdisciplinary endeavor, which combines excavated materials with documents and often extant landscapes to interpret the more recent past (Yamin and Metheny 1996). Archaeological studies of the built environment are plentiful, and have been used to understand complex dimensions of social life in the past including class (eg., McGuire 1991, Rotman and Nassaney 1997, Delle 1999), gender (eg., Rotman and Nassaney 1997) and cultural interactions and influences (eg., Groover 1994). Archaeological studies of enslaved and emancipated Africans and their descendants also have relied heavily on evidence from architectural design and landscape construction to understand the internal and external dynamics of plantation and post-plantation life ways (Orser 1988, Ferguson 1992, Delle 1999, Epperson 1999, Barka 2001, Farnsworth 2001, Armstrong 2003).

Archaeologists working in the Bahamas during the historic period are fortunate to have access to standing or partially-extant structural remains that date to different periods of the Bahamian past (Otterbein 1975, Farnsworth 2001, Baxter and Burton 2006b). These remains help us to reconstruct the landscapes that shaped people's everyday lives. These landscapes were in one sense a reflection of function, or how a space was developed to facilitate certain types of daily tasks and behaviors (Rapoport 1990). These landscapes also were symbolic, designed to shape and reflect certain elements of the social order (McGuire 1991).

To understand this built environment, it is important to understand that landscapes have both a spatial and temporal component. Buildings are located and constructed in ways that reinforce existing social arrangements. In the case of slave plantations, building placement suggests social hierarchies of the master and slaves and the differentiation of work activities. These relationships can be further delineated through different building techniques that provided visitors clues to a building's function, occupants, and its role in the overall hierarchy of the plantation.

Plantations are not static sites, however. Although buildings capture the original intention of the slave owner, often mediated by the slaves themselves, their abandonment and reuse, along with new construction, create a dynamic landscape with shifting meaning in different time periods.

Buildings connected to the planter that reinforce social stratification may be abandoned in later periods or expropriated for other uses, shifting the original meaning embodied in them. Work sites on the plantation can change, creating new meaning to the landscape for new residents. It is crucial when interpreting landscapes to consider these temporal shifts and consider how spaces may have different meanings to residents and visitors at different points in time.

## CONSTRUCTING THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT: ANALYZING STRUCTURAL REMAINS AT POLLY HILL

Archaeological research at Polly Hill has identified the remains of nine structures that likely date to the original plantation (Figure 1). There are three distinct types of construction that were used in the building of Polly Hill: tabby, plastered stacked stone and dry-stacked stone construction.

Three tabby buildings date to the plantation period. Tabby is a form of concrete that uses crushed limestone, shell, sand, and water that is poured into a series of wooden molds that outline

the form of a structure. The extensive use of tabby at Polly Hill is a distinguishing feature of this site's architecture as only one other tabby manor house, that at Fortune Hill, is known on the island (Gerace 1982, 1987).

The use of tabby construction is one of the important material links between the Bahamas and the Southern colonies. James Edward Oglethorpe, first governor of Georgia, popularized the domestic use of tabby construction in the settlement of Savannah. Knowledge of tabby construction probably came with the Loyalists and their slaves from the mainland, and its widespread use in building construction in the Bahamas paralleled a similar renaissance in the technique on the mainland. Techniques similar to the construction of tabby are found in West African traditions along the Guinea Coast (Jones 1985:199). The mixing of burnt lime with seashells to make a hard lime plaster was a common technique in this region, suggesting the use of tabby-like construction had roots in African traditions as well.

The choice of which plantation buildings were made from tabby is significant in the interpretation of the plantation landscape. The three tabby structures at Polly Hill are those most closely associated with the planter and his family.

The manor house was an imposing structure located on the highest point of land on the plantation (Figure 1). This position gave the home a commanding presence on the landscape, its occupants a panoptical view of the surrounding lands, and its rooms and porch a steady breeze from the prevailing eastern winds. The house had a veranda facing the sea, and an entry at ground level. Unlike other manor houses on the island, the main house at Polly Hill would have had two fully functional stories of rooms.

The second tabby building was the plantation kitchen where the meals would have been prepared by slaves for the residents of the manor house (Figure 1). This structure is located in close proximity to the manor house, and excavations revealed it was situated over a natural "pot hole" or "solution hole" that was considerably deep (.7 meters) and that could have acted as a root cellar for cool storage. The kitchen structure also had a cut limestone block chimney and fireplace that has since toppled over.

The final tabby building was what is thought to have been an industrial structure associated with the processing of plantation produce that also may have housed the plantation office (Figure 1).

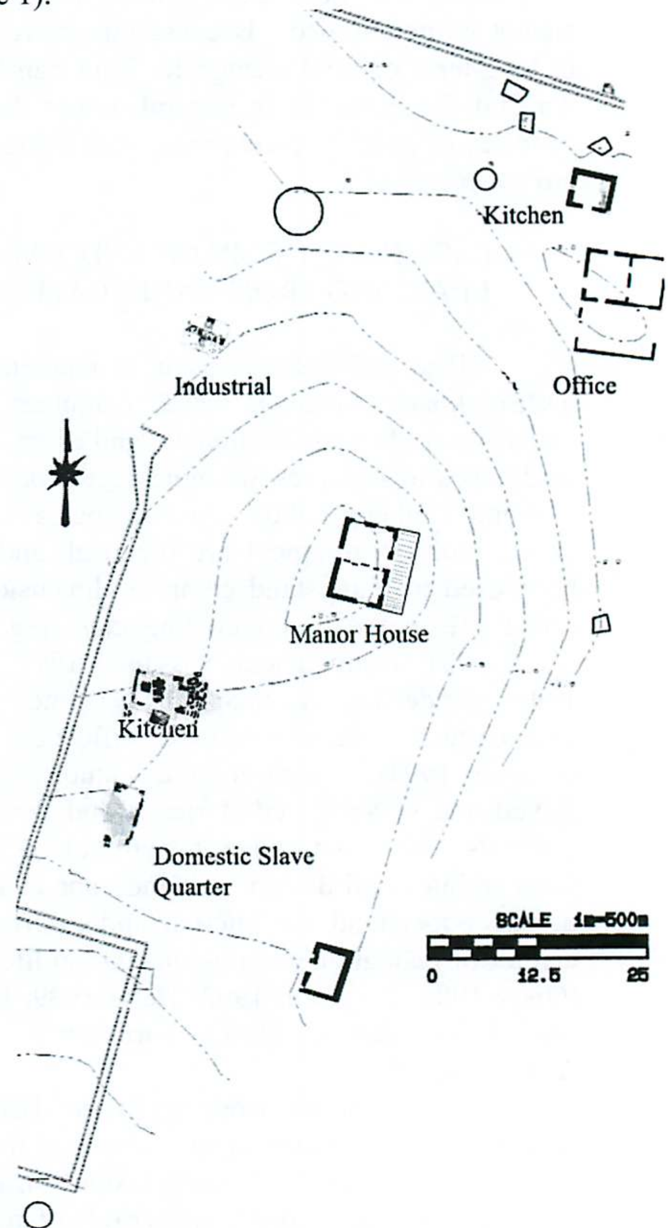


*Figure 1: Site Map of Polly Hill Plantation Showing the Location of Buildings and Site Topography*

This structure was a single story with an enclosed outdoor workspace containing an elevated platform and an internal partition that created two rooms. One room had a wide doorway off of the enclosure suggesting it was used as a point of access for larger loads of goods, while the other room had doorways with widths more typical of the other domestic structures at the site and elsewhere on the island. Both rooms had windows suggesting the structure was not designed for long term storage of perishable crops. This building was located just down slope to the north of the manor house and would have been in easy view and earshot of the manor house and would have had clear view of much of the lower yard and northern fields.

There are two other forms of limestone construction present at the site that are clearly distinguished from the tabby structures. Dry stacked stone buildings are present at the site, but have largely collapsed to mere footprints on the ground. Other dry stacked stone buildings were plastered on the interior and exterior, which provided a bit more stability to these structures. A final use of dry stone construction was in the making of a platform that likely served as a foundation for a waddle and daub structure that has since decomposed.

The buildings made of stacked stone were those associated with plantation labor and production. These buildings were used both as domestic structures to house slaves, and also as storage and work buildings relating to the processing and storage of plantation crops. These buildings are significantly smaller than those made of tabby. Stacked stone structures, such as these at Polly Hill, are an example of a uniquely Bahamian house form that combines construction techniques from Britain with house designs from West Africa (Farnsworth 2001:268-9).

The use of two distinctive forms of construction at Polly Hill during the initial construction of the plantation speaks to the original intentions of the planter family. When one compares tabby construction to dry stacked stone or stacked stone and plaster construction the differences are quite clear. Tabby construction, including the need to prepare molds and make and pour concrete, would have taken much more time and involved more specialized labor than the stacking of bedrock cobbles readily found on the surface. The appearance of the buildings, once completed, also would have been distinct. Tabby structures are molded to have perfect joins and junctures and result in smooth surfaces that can be painted and treated to heighten their appearance. Stacked stone structures, even those with rough plaster, would only approximate the precision of a well molded tabby building.

The original construction of the plantation was designed to underscore the social distinctions inherent in the British plantation systems. Economic investment in the comfort and apparent social standing of the planter family was more important than the appearance and durability of the structures used by slaves in the day to day operation of the plantation (Epperson 1999). Distinctions between slaves and their owners were emphasized with the relative size of, investment in, and appearance of their residences. Homes of slaves would have looked not like the residence of the planter family, but rather like the buildings used to store the crops and equipment also owned by the planter.

Although the planters deliberately created a home for themselves at Polly Hill, archaeological evidence suggests the manor house was occupied for only a few years at best (Baxter and Burton 2005a and b, 2006b). Similarly, the kitchen, designed to prepare the meals for the manor house residents, seems to have been abandoned shortly after its construction (Baxter and Burton 2006a and b). This archaeological evidence for a short occupation supports a general historical trend for family island planters to abandon their plantations for a life in Nassau where they could pursue other mercantile activities while retaining the status of a planter with lands (Farnsworth 1999). Planters did not, however, take most of their slaves with them to Nassau, and these individuals were left to live on the plantation lands and largely fend for themselves. It is likely that this departure of the planters for Nassau, rather than the formal eman-

cipation of slaves in 1834, was the time of greatest change for the people left at Polly Hill.

There is no evidence that the manor house at Polly Hill was used as a domestic structure after the planter family left. Instead, the building is nearly devoid of artifacts, with the notable exception of an intact seabird skull that was found at the south end of the building. People who had lived at Sandy Point in the early twentieth century informed Kathy Gerace that they did not live in the manor house there, but instead used it for religious and community gatherings (Kathy Gerace personal communication). Perhaps the manor house at Polly Hill served a similar function for its residents after its abandonment as a planter residence.

Archaeological investigations of the kitchen also yielded a low artifact density, suggesting most cooking and serving vessels were either moved back to Nassau with the planters, moved elsewhere on the site by the remaining residents, or both. One interesting feature of the kitchen building was noted during investigations that points to the reuse of the structure after the planter family left the island. The northwest exterior corner of the fireplace shows signs of intensive localized burning as if it was used for a windbreak for an outdoor cooking fire. This pattern of deliberate fire use outside the building may point to the reuse of the kitchen by the African and African-descendant populations who would have favored outdoor cooking techniques, rather than those facilitated by a Euro-American style kitchen (see Ferguson 1992 for a discussion of African-derived cookery at plantation sites). As this corner of the building was the closest to the manor house and in a direct sight-line from the structure, it is assumed that such outdoor cooking would not have transpired when the planter family was still in residence.

It appears that the dry stacked stone structures that would have been used for slave residences and storage purposes continued to be used later into the nineteenth century. Buildings that likely functioned as original slave residences demonstrated artifact concentrations indicative of a much longer occupation than the manor house or kitchen, but do not show much in the way of artifacts that suggest there was a replenishment of material goods from off the island. One of the structures shows the construction of an outdoor fire pit that likely used the exterior of the building as a wind break to facilitate outdoor cooking.

This pattern suggests that slaves and perhaps recently emancipated peoples continued to live in these structures after the departure of the planter family, and continued to use the vessels left for them by the planters. The absence of later artifacts at these locations suggests the residents eventually moved elsewhere on the island away from the central plantation yard: either to structures located in closer proximity to the fields where they were share cropping or to Cockburn Town (Burton 2006).

The building that shows evidence for a complex series of occupations is the tabby structure likely built to originally house the plantation office. It appears that this building was abandoned along with the manor house and kitchen with the exodus of the planter family. This abandonment is suggested by abundant graffiti in the original tabby and the relative absence of any eighteenth and early nineteenth century artifacts in or around the structure.

This period of abandonment seems to have ended in the late nineteenth through the first half of the twentieth century when the building was turned into a two-room domestic structure. Walls were covered with pink painted plaster; an internal window was cut in the partitioning wall to allow for a breeze to flow through both rooms, and an abundance of period artifacts were identified in and around the structure. These artifacts included ceramic plates and bowls, a variety of beverage and medicinal bottles, and faunal remains representing both marine and terrestrial species. The only post-emancipation structure at Polly Hill, a kitchen made of plastered stacked stone construction was erected immediately behind the tabby building and a series of features, including two shallow privies and a series of trash pits were constructed around the building. These features are typical of yard features in use on the island throughout the twentieth century.

Artifacts suggest a mid-twentieth century abandonment of this residence and it appears that the building subsequently was used to support more casual agricultural use of the area. Doors and windows were blocked using stacked stones suggesting the building was used for the storage of agricultural produce or housing of livestock. Several small trash piles consisting primarily of liquor bottles dating to the later twentieth century were recovered around the structure. Later graffiti etched into the pink painted plaster may date from this last period of building use.

## CONSTRUCTING THE "NATURAL ENVIRONMENT": ETHNOBOTANICAL RECONSTRUCTIONS OF LANDSCAPE

A common component of many historical archaeology studies is a survey to identify patterns of vegetation that may reflect past human interactions with the environment. Humans have used plants for subsistence purposes and incorporated them into their social and symbolic systems throughout history and prehistory. With domestication, people cultivated certain plants for various purposes and could deliberately select their placement on the landscape. How plants are juxtaposed with other elements of the built environment can add to our interpretations of life in the past and yield important, independent evidence for interpretations of archaeological remains.

A preliminary vegetation survey was carried out during the 2006 field season at Polly Hill. Research was conducted by Sarah Frye, an honors biology student from DePaul University (Frye 2006). The study was designed to identify distributions of plant species across the plantation yard with an emphasis on those plants that are known to have had particular utilitarian functions (food or medicine) or various social or symbolic functions in Afro-Bahamian traditions. Seven five by five meter grids were placed non-probabilistically across the plantation yard. Two units were placed away from the plantation buildings for control purposes, while the remaining five units were situated around the buildings that comprised the inner, active yard of the plantation.

Twenty five plant species were identified during this preliminary survey, and distributions across the plantation yard show significant variation. The social significance of some of these distributions can be very telling about how enslaved and later emancipated African-derived populations deliberately chose to shape the landscape around particular utilitarian functions and symbolic meanings.

Seven known species used traditionally in the treatment of various medical conditions were identified in the survey including: *Bryophyllum pinnatum, Cassytha filiformis, Coccoloba uvifera, Guaiacum officinale, Leucaena leucocephala, and Caesalpinia vesicara* (Halbertstein et al. 1978, Hanna-Smith 2005). One of these plants, *Coccoloba uvifera*, was also identified by older, local residents as serving other functions during their youth including the use of the leaves as dinner plates and as writing surfaces when etched with a sharp implement. Two of these plants also displayed interesting distributions across the landscape at Polly Hill. *Bryophyllum pinnatum*, or Life Leaf, was found exclusively adjacent to Building 4, thought to be a former slave dwelling. Similarly, *Cassytha filiformis*, or Love Vine, is found only in the small walled garden plots directly to the south of the former slave dwellings, known as Buildings 3 and 4. These isolated distributions of two significant medicinal species may point to the presence of remnant vegetative landscapes at Polly Hill.

A final interesting distribution of plants at Polly Hill was that of Lingum Vitae or *Guaiacum officinale*. Lingum Vitae is clearly non-randomly distributed across the plantation yard, as older trees are found only directly adjacent to four plantation buildings: the former manor house, kitchen, office, and platform structure. These buildings include the three tabby constructed buildings most closely associated with the planter family and the platform with the waddle and daub superstructure that likely served to store provisions for the planter family. Planting Lingum Vitae directly outside of structures has a link to Obeah traditions. Seeds of *G. officinale* are buried in a bottle close to the home to "preserve the life of the owner"

(Olmos 2003:138). The close juxtaposition of selected structures and Lingum Vitae trees point to an interesting socio-symbolic construction of landscape. The particular meaning of this relationship is not clear, however, as the buildings made distinct by their tabby construction and use by the planters are the same buildings being demarcated by an African-derived tradition. This unlikely confluence of symbols may point to a deliberate reconfiguration of landscape by slaves after the departure of the planter family for Nassau.

## CONCLUSION: POLLY HILL FROM PLANTATION TO VERNACULAR LANDSCAPE

Construction methods from the plantation period appear to have had a strong class bias suggesting a conscious construction of social roles and meanings into the plantation landscape. Tabby construction was used in the three buildings most closely connected the planter: the Manor House, Office/Industrial Building and Kitchen. The planter's place of residence, business, and food preparation were demarcated by the use of a particular building technique. Secondary buildings, including those connected to slave residences and labor (such as storage buildings) were constructed of rough plastered stacked limestone. These material differences in architecture would have served as a daily symbolic reminder of the social distinction between the planter family and their slaves, and reinforced the position of enslaved peoples as property, particularly for members of the planter family and their guests.

The arrangement of these structures focused on the highest point on the landscape crowned by the planter family's home and the immediately surrounding structures associated with the maintenance and provisioning of the planter family, both socially and economically. Away from this center were the residences of slaves, storage structures, and a network of walls, fields, and passageways. The result of this configuration was a hierarchical, centrally-focused landscape designed to reinforce the dynamics of class and race operating during the plantation period.

The reuse of buildings in the post-emancipation period suggests a pronounced shift in both landscape function and meaning. The buildings associated with the planter family, particularly the manor house and kitchen, appear to have been abandoned before emancipation and were not reused as originally intended by the later residents. Rather than selecting the manor house (the largest and most advantageously positioned building on the landscape) as a residence, it appears that the remaining people at Polly Hill consciously chose not to reside there. Instead, it seems they may have remained in their smaller dry-stacked stone homes that would have had internal dimensions much more consistent with houses in Africa, and which emphasized the use of outdoor living spaces. The use of the exterior of the kitchen as a wind break for an outdoor cooking fire is one such example of this emphasis on outdoor domestic space that also underscores a rejection of European lifestyle in favor of more traditional African life ways.

Eventually, the population at Polly Hill dissipated, with many people migrating to Cockburn Town (Burton and Baxter 2006a, Burton 2006) and others to the nearby Polly Hill settlement. Individual families, and later extended families, occupied portions of the plantation and farmed the adjacent lands, either as independent farmers or as sharecroppers. The former plantation office was a large single-story building located towards the more productive "blacklands" to the north. This building appears to have been reused over many generations as a family residence during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. While not identified yet in archaeological survey, one local resident told us that her aunt lived in another structure on the former grounds of Polly Hill as a sharecropper agent in the early twentieth century.

This shift in population away from the plantation center represents a reconfiguration of the landscape into a less-hierarchical, decentralized series of residences. The choice of building reuse at the margins of the former plantation core

facilitated the reuse of the former plantation fields in a series of smaller-scale agricultural endeavors. It is likely that many families residing in separate houses worked cooperatively towards shared economic goals, thereby extending the definition of household beyond a single domestic structure and creating a decentralized or scattered village settlement (Anderson 2004). Abandoned features such as the manor house may have served as places for collective community activities, both civic and religious, but no longer served as a focal point in peoples' daily lives. This type of decentralized or scattered village settlement that emerged in the post-emancipation period at Polly Hill (and likely elsewhere in the Bahamas) represents the beginnings of a uniquely Bahamian vernacular landscape that has persisted over generations.

Throughout the twentieth century, people living on San Salvador resided in similarly decentralized settlements on the eastern side of the island. Small house lots featured homes that share many architectural similarities to the stone-built slave residences at Polly Hill and these houses were surrounded by functional out buildings and small kitchen garden plots similar to the landscape surrounding the former plantation office. People used lands away from settlements for agricultural purposes with informal systems of "ownership" giving people the rights to farm a particular piece of land. The need for infrastructure to support these agricultural activities, such as existing walls and structures, were often met by the reuse of former plantations like Polly Hill.

The post-emancipation use of Polly Hill and the later settlements on the eastern side of San Salvador stood in contrast to the settlement of Cockburn Town, which saw significant influence from the British Colonial administration of the island. Grid-based town planning and several central religious and civic structures and features, such as cemeteries, were built in the central part of town and residences developed around this central core. The scattered village settlements on the other side of the island emerged out of a rejection of these British ideals for centralized hierarchical community, and a movement towards more practical and meaningful configurations of space as defined by emancipated slaves and their descendants.

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