

**INTERIM REPORT OF INVESTIGATIONS
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
2010 HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD SCHOOL:
KINGSLEY PLANTATION, (8DU108)
TIMUCUAN ECOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC PRESERVE NATIONAL
PARK, DUVAL COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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Management Summary

Between May 10 and June 18, 2010, The University of Florida Department of Anthropology conducted an archaeological field school at Kingsley Plantation (8DU108) located on Fort George Island, Duval County, Florida, within the Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve National Park. Although this work directly builds upon prior work completed by the UF archaeological field school in 2006, 2007, and 2008 under permit TIMU 06-001, this summer's field season is the second year of a new three year permit (TIMU 2009-02), that builds on previous field research, and expands to include new research questions.

Three areas received archaeological investigation – the east arc of slave cabins, with a focus on Cabin E-10; the tabby-walled Sugar Mill and adjacent areas; and a newly discovered burial ground -- an area along Palmetto Avenue adjacent to a large Live Oak tree, and formerly referred to as the Live Oak Tree Area. Archaeological techniques included surface collection, extensive horizontal and vertical excavations, shovel testing, and limited bucket augering.

During the 2010 field season we opened up a total of 33 new units (Unit Nos. 174 through 206), consisting of 12 1x1 meter units (some of these were partial units abutting architecture, within Cabin E-10), 20 1x2 meter units, and one 1x3 meter unit, each dug between 8cm and 100 cm below ground surface. Some previously defined excavation units in Cabin E-10 and the Sugar Mill were also the subject of further excavations. At the end of excavations, all units were lined with 6mil black plastic sheeting, and then backfilled.

During the 2010 excavations, thirteen features were defined and documented (Feature Numbers 36 through 48).

Major discoveries in 2010 were a previously unknown burial ground, believed to be a Kingsley era slave cemetery -- with aspects of five early 19th century human burials documented), a previously unknown water well associated with the east arc slave quarters, and a previously unknown tabby-floored structure north of the Sugar Mill.

This present report is preliminary in nature, with the final report of investigations for years 2009 through 2011 scheduled for completion in 2013.

Conclusions

The Importance of Discovery:

Before we began this endeavor, we knew intellectually that a slave cemetery existed on the island. Now that we have actually re-discovered the Kingsley-era slave cemetery, what has been gained? Simple knowledge of the location of the grave yard now affords it a protective status it did not have as a lost feature; any future improvements or construction directed within Kingsley Plantation by the parks service will now tread lightly in the location of the graves, offering a much greater assurance of protection than before.

This is especially important, given what we established to be the extreme shallowness of the graves; human bone varied in depth from just 51 cm to a maximum depth of 105 cm b.s. (or just one and a half feet to a little over three feet deep). The graves' extreme proximity to Palmetto Avenue, an historic road that still serves as the primary road for the park, is an important variable to consider, since the road is in active use, and is still maintained and may be expanded or surfaced over time. Further, there were plans in the spring and summer of 2010 to bury the electric transmission line -- currently on a series of poles -- alongside the eastern edge of the road. NPS-SEAC conducted a shovel test survey along the right-of-way for the proposed transmission line trench in the Spring of 2010, just weeks prior to the field school's arrival on site, and apparently gave clearance to proceed, declaring that there were no significant cultural resources in the right-of-way. Now that we have discovered the cemetery in its location adjacent to Palmetto Avenue, these plans are likely being re-thought or modified.

For lineal descendants and the greater African-American descendant community, the ability to know the actual place of burial for those African ancestors who endured enslavement, and who lived and died in a foreign land to create the landscape that is now Kingsley Plantation, is a potentially powerful and unique testament. To be able to know these anonymous men, women, and children as individuals once more, with insight into their very lives through a respectful viewing of their mortal remains, is an opportunity and a reward very rarely given.

For scholars of history, historical archaeology, and the African Diaspora, the rewards of the few key facts that were garnered in this briefest of windows into these lives are great indeed.

Insight into Creolized African and Euroamerican Burial Practices:

The idea of a formal cemetery separate from domestic space is not found in many West and Central African groups. For example, the Ibo and Calabar people of Southern Nigeria, who in 1812 made up the majority of the Kingsley's Africans with known places of origins, both practice domestic burial, interring their dead in house floors or in immediate yards of houses (e.g., Bosman 1705:232). While it is still entirely possible that some of Zephaniah Kingsley's slaves did practice domestic burial of the dead within

one or adjacent to any of the 32 tabby slave cabins (as seen in 18th century Jamaica; Armstrong and Fleishman 2003), with the discovery of the burial ground that appears to be of the Kingsley-era, the likelihood is arguably less.

European or Euroamerican traditions seen in the Kingsley burials include the use of a discrete area for interment of the dead within an informal burial ground or formal cemetery, the use of wooden coffins, and burial in highly regimented rows, along the same alignment/orientation.

However, the use of sea shell, personal objects like the sad iron, and possible use of ceramics, are arguably core West and Central African traditions. While these creolized traditions are also documented in many other cemeteries in 19th and early 20th century America and the Caribbean, the fact that these were first-generation Africans (or the children of African-born people), demonstrates both how rapidly things changed in how the dead were treated (which gets to the core of cosmological and spiritual belief), but also demonstrates that some African-based traditions were maintained or demonstrated little relative change (e.g., the use of shell as markers).

The fact that the graveyard is more or less equidistant from each of the 32 tabby cabins, and yet is still contained within their half circle of domestic yard space, is very intriguing from a cultural and cosmological perspective, and does not appear accidental. It seems a good compromise for those that want distance from the dead, and for those groups who believe that the dead should be contained within the greater domestic sphere. That is, it allows for physical and psychological separation for those African groups who practiced burial or placement of the body outside the domestic sphere (e.g., the Bakongo and related groups), and yet the burial ground is still contained within the greater domestic space of each of the cabins, within the half circle of the arc, for those groups, such as the Ibo, Yoruba, and the Ga people that practiced burial within houses and yard space (Ellis 1894:158; Harris 1930:303; Adjei 1943:92).

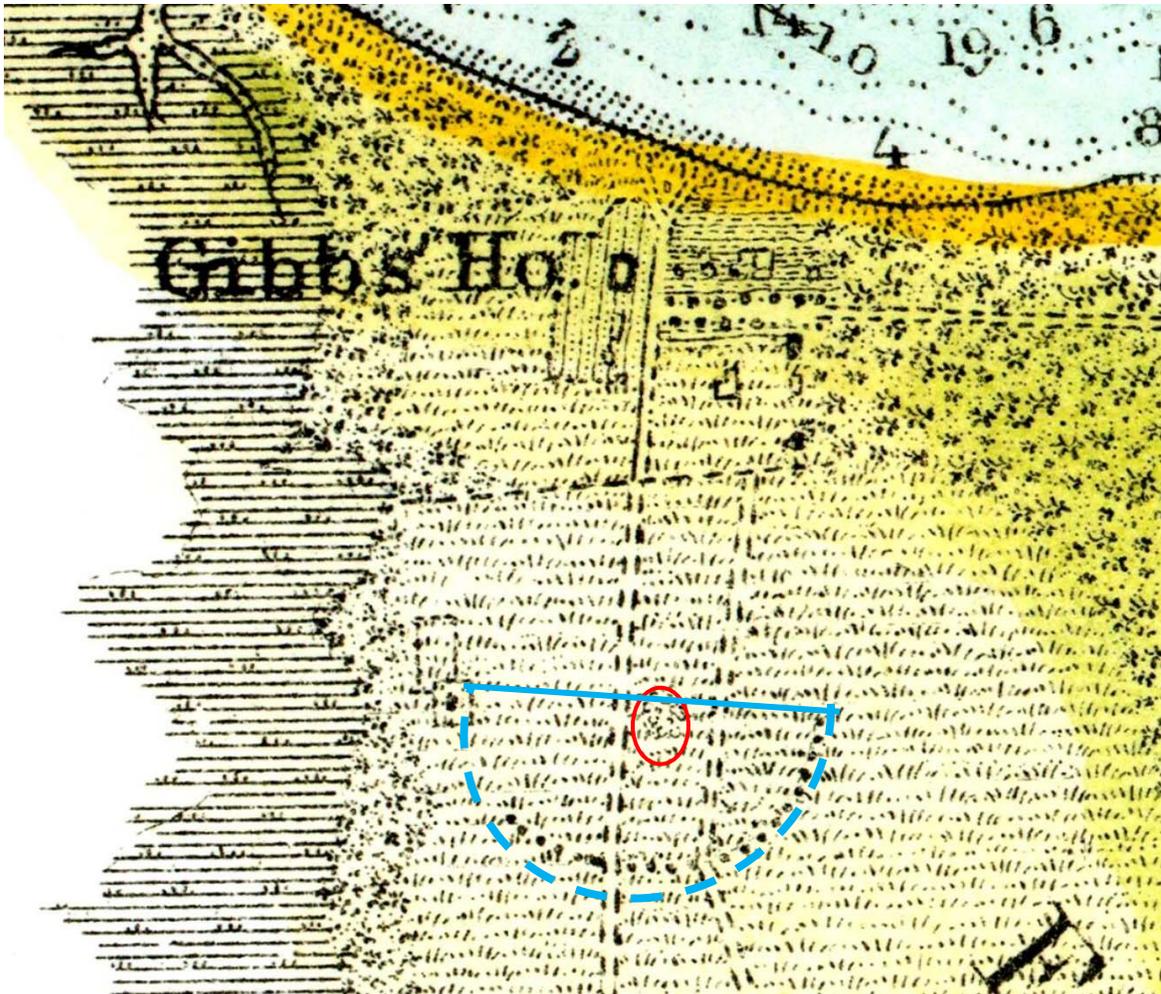


Figure 60: Cultural Landscape of the enslaved Africans, encompassing both the living and the dead (cemetery in red circle).

Future Work:

Now that we have established the existence of the Kingsley-era slave cemetery and its general location on the landscape of Kingsley Plantation, the next logical step would be to attempt to define the spatial limits of the graves, in regard to the cardinal directions of north, south, and east. As for the western extent, since the current road in the park – Palmetto Avenue – at present forms the western boundary of the cemetery, and appears to have served as that cultural boundary in the 19th century (given the anomaly on the 1853 and 1855 Coastal survey maps (Figures 48 and 49), the likelihood of this being a formal boundary is good. While this is speculation, it is at least grounded in some key facts.

Although portions of Palmetto Avenue seem to date at least as early as the 1790s (a road in the same general location is depicted on a map dated to 1791; see Anonymous

2004:16), and therefore likely predates the establishment of the cemetery, it is certainly possible that the width and position of Palmetto Avenue has changed over the years and may have been extended to the east, which might have caused it to now overlie 19th century graves. Burial 5, the grave of a child aged between 2 and 3 years at death, lies approximately 4.2 meters (or about 14 feet) from the east edge of the current road.

Another possibility to consider is that the cemetery is not entirely a Kingsley-era grave yard, but rather, was begun in the Second Spanish Period by John McQueen, maintained and extended by John McIntosh, who took possession of the island in 1804 or was founded by McIntosh between 1804 and 1812, during his tenure on Fort George Island.

Given the high mortality rate of the 18th and 19th centuries, especially among an enslaved population in a sub-tropical environment (e.g., Haines 1979; Lambert 2006; Handler et al. 1986; Davidson et al. 2002), it is a foregone conclusion that some African slaves owned by McIntosh and McQueen did die in the years between 1791 and 1812, and that a slave cemetery associated with these two planters by necessity was established on the island. When Zephaniah and Anna Kingsley arrive on the island in the spring of 1814, with over one hundred enslaved Africans, they may have chosen to maintain and extend an existing cemetery, rather than create a new one.

If this is the case, and the cemetery actually pre-dates Kingsley, its location, relative to the adjacent Palmetto Avenue, may have been a crucial landscape element that in part influenced or help determine the orientation and placement of the tabby slave cabins when they were conceived of and constructed by Zephaniah Kingsley, likely in the spring or summer of 1814.

Coda

Over the course of the past five years I have directed five archaeological field schools at Kingsley Plantation, with many different goals. When I personally would think of this place, I most often envisioned the people who inhabited these cabins, not their broken plates and buttons and beads, but imagined as they were, the sum of their lives, their amazing ability to maintain African identities, and to wrest dignity from oppressive and brutal times. Kingsley Plantation *is* a peopled landscape, but its inhabitants are ghostly residents of a now vanished time and place.

For the living, Kingsley Plantation is not simple green space but a symbol and vital link to these people and this time -- for the African-American community and the country as a whole, regardless of ancestry or familial ties. Without any other visible reminder of their former presence on the modern landscape, the standing tabby slave cabins have often been viewed as the de-facto memorial for these Africans and later African-Americans who once lived within their walls. Now that the lost location of the Kingsley-era slave burial ground has been newly rediscovered, the final resting places of the mortal remains of these men, women, and children can begin to serve as their own memorial. As such, the cemetery as a whole should be marked in such a way as to form a permanent reminder of these lives, and in the process -- to remind us of their struggles, their perseverance, and of the wrongness of slavery itself.