

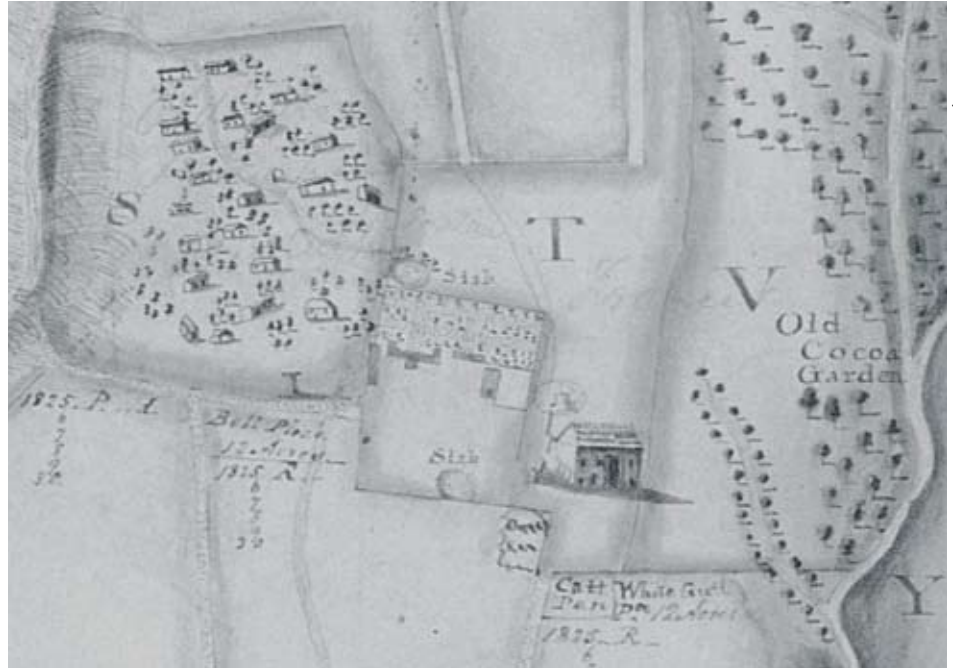
Monticello archaeologists join Nevis project

MONTICELLO archaeologists joined colleagues and students from the United States, United Kingdom, and Jamaica from May to July in an ambitious research project designed to advance understanding of slave lifeways on the eastern Caribbean island of Nevis.

The summer fieldwork focused on the sites of two slave villages associated with the New River and Jessups sugar estates on the smaller of the two islands that constitute the nation of St. Kitts and Nevis.

By excavating hundreds of shovel-test pits at both locations, the archaeologists were able to uncover thousands of artifacts dating to the 18th and early 19th centuries that, once analyzed, will offer insight into how slave life on Nevis was organized and how it changed over time. In addition to the fieldwork, the international team conducted extensive research in the island's archives to document the ownership of the two estates and collect information on the enslaved people who were the vast majority of their residents.

Funding for the Nevis project was provided by Transatlantic Digitization Collaboration Grants awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities in the United States and the Joint Information Systems Committee in the United Kingdom. The Monticello-based Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery received \$132,832 from NEH to support its involvement in the project. The participation of students from the Mona, Jamaica, campus of the University of the West Indies – which DAACS has worked with on archaeological research projects in Jamaica – was made possible by a grant from the Reed Foundation of New York.



Bristol (UK) City Council / Bruce Williams

An 18th-century map showing the extent of the Jessups sugar plantation, site of some of the Nevis project's archaeological fieldwork.

The Nevis project's primary investigators are Jillian Galle, the DAACS project manager; Fraser Neiman, director of archaeology at Monticello; Roger Leech, professor of archaeology at England's University of Southampton; and Rob Philpott, head of archaeology at National Museums Liverpool.

"The project has some urgency because recent house construction and grading of a new road have destroyed much of the Jessups site and continue to threaten what remains," said Neiman. "We made some exciting discoveries this summer. For example the owners of both estates moved their slave villages at the end of the 18th century to new sites more distant from their own houses and their sugar works. We are hoping to figure out why and whether the change on Nevis has any connection, mediated by the Atlantic economy, to a shift in

slave settlement at Monticello at about the same time."

All data collected by the researchers will be made available on the DAACS Web site (www.daacs.org), which contains standardized, downloadable data from scores of archaeological sites in Virginia (including Monticello), Maryland, South Carolina, and the

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COMMENTS?

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MONTICELLO

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Caribbean that once were home to enslaved Africans and their descendants. The team also will develop an online exhibition about the Nevis project, to be accessible through the Web site of the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool (www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/).

The overall goal of DAACS research is to advance the understanding of slavery and the critical role it played in the cultural, social, and economic development of Britain's American colonies.

The classification and measurement protocols and database structure developed by DAACS make possible the seamless analysis of data from different archaeological sites, and they are being adopted by other institutions.

For example, the archaeology department at The Hermitage, the home of Andrew Jackson outside Nashville, Tenn., received a \$285,855 NEH grant earlier this year to catalog and analyze approximately 800,000 artifacts from the enslaved community using the DAACS systems. In July, Hermitage researchers traveled to Monticello for two weeks to familiarize themselves with the DAACS systems before beginning their analysis of these artifacts.