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# Crooked Island

*Submitted by Paul Farnsworth and Laurie Wilkie, Louisiana State University*

From June 7 - 30, 1995, the Louisiana State University field school under the direction of Paul Farnsworth and Laurie Wilkie excavated at Marine Farm and Great Hope plantations on Crooked Island in the Bahamas. During the course of fieldwork, forty-six meter square units were excavated at Marine Farm and seventy-three meter square units were excavated at Great Hope. In addition, the standing buildings of the plantations were recorded photographically and elevations were drawn, oral histories were collected and the artifacts recovered were identified, cataloged, photographed and illustrated. Both Marine Farm and Great Hope plantations are located on property owned by the Bahamas National Trust. The research was conducted in cooperation with, and partially funded by, the Bahamas National Trust and with the permission of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. All of the artifacts were deposited with the Bahamas National Trust in Nassau for permanent curation.

Marine Farm was the site of both a plantation complex and a military complex. Six structures, a barracks building, a kitchen, two storage buildings, a guardhouse and a gun battery with five cannons still present, were identified at the military complex. At the plantation portion of the site, four structures were located: the great house; the kitchen; a slave cabin; and a privy building. The privy was located late in the field season, and unfortunately, not test excavated this summer. All of the other structures were tested archaeologically.

Documentary evidence shows that the plantation was first granted to Joseph Hunter in 1791, but during the first two decades of the nineteenth century, it was owned by James Moss, President of the Bahamian House of Assembly. Archaeological evidence suggests that the military buildings were occupied from the early nineteenth century to the 1850s. Artifactual data from the plantation component of the site suggests a slightly earlier occupation from the late eighteenth century, but by the 1830s, however, the plantation buildings appear to have been taken over by the military. As with the military component, there is no evidence of occupation of the site after the mid-nineteenth century.

Great Hope plantation was first granted to George Gray in 1791, but was sold in 1792 to James Menzies, who became a member of the House of Assembly and Treasurer of the colony. He died in 1815, and the plantation was purchased in 1818 by Henry Moss, nephew of James Moss. Henry and his wife Helen were accused and convicted of the worst case of cruelty to a slave in the Bahamas as a result of an incident which took place in 1826 at Great Hope. Henry Moss owned Great Hope through 1847, based on ongoing documentary research.

The main compound of Great Hope Plantation includes an impressive two story great house, a kitchen, a standing chimney from a slave cabin, a structure known as "the guest house", a hurricane shelter, a stable, a privy, a gun battery and four storage buildings. Each of these buildings was tested archaeologically. Ceramic and glass artifacts indicate that Great Hope Plantation was first occupied in the last decades of the eighteenth century and up until the early twentieth century, a conclusion supported by oral history gathered during the project. Based on its architectural remains, Great Hope was a very prosperous plantation, however, no examples of

"status" ceramics were recovered. The lack of these ceramics may represent the nature of trade networks and ceramic availability on the island, one of the major research problems this project is seeking to address.

Numerous examples of ship drawings scratched into the walls are present at the kitchen and great house of Marine Farm Plantation and at the great house of Great Hope. The carvings were made after the buildings were complete and were etched into the building plaster with a sharp, narrow pointed object. The carvings at both sites demonstrate that the artists have a thorough understanding of ship rigging and sails. In two instances at Marine Farm, even the Union Jack can be seen flying from ships' masts. Single, double and triple masted ships are portrayed. At both sites, the ship carvings are most commonly found on building walls with a sea view. These carvings may have served as some form of recording system, but the purpose for recording the ships remains unclear.

This summer's research represents the first phase of a long-term research program on these sites as the Bahamas National Trust works to open these sites to the public as National Historic Parks. The first archaeological sites to be preserved in this way in the Bahamas.