

Grant Report for the Associated Colleges of the South Teaching with Technology Fellowship, Summer 2006

Title: Integrating Historical Archaeology into the Curriculum: material culture at the Ames Plantation

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Project Description:

During the funding period, I began developing a photographic database of the surface artifacts at several 19th century plantation sites at the Ames Plantation land base in Fayette County, TN. The Archaeology Program at Rhodes will conduct excavations at this location beginning in 2007. Thus, this photographic survey is being integrated into a website that can be used as a launching point for faculty and students who are interested in historic archaeology and plantation life. Once completed the database will be linked to the Rhodes Archaeology Program web page (<http://www.rhodes.edu/academics/1712.asp>). After using the funding to purchase a quality digital camera, I spent several weeks recording the extant building and other material culture remains associated with the big house, slave cabins, root cellars, out buildings, church sites, and cemeteries at several plantation sites that have been selected as potential excavation sites for the upcoming excavation field seasons. During the summer of 2006 I also supervised 3 research projects at the Ames Plantation land base. The research papers provide very helpful background to the site and can be used as examples of the type of student research that can be conducted at Ames. A research project by Lora Terry examined the location of slave cemeteries on the 19,000 acre area (see the full paper at: http://www.rhodes.edu/images/content/Academics/Lora_Terry.pdf).



L. Terry and J. Evans at Jones Slave Cemetery



Planter's cemetery at Ames Plantation (partially restored)

Through the efforts of Mr. Jamie Evans, a firm foundation has already been established in the collection and indexing of archival documents and maps. Utilizing archival records in the form of land grants and deeds, a complete land ownership record has been established at Ames Plantation (Evans 2000), thus the locations of the plantations on the modern landscape have already been established. Another Rhodes student, Jay Jordan, used this research to consider changes in land ownership patterns after emancipation (see his full paper: http://www.rhodes.edu/images/content/Academics/Jason_Jordan.pdf). Allison Brown also used this database to consider the activities of female plantation owners prior to 1860 (http://www.rhodes.edu/images/content/Academics/Allison_Brown.pdf).

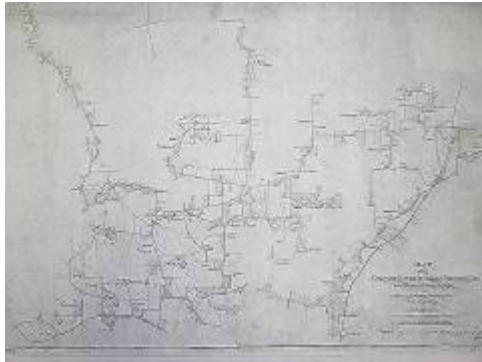


Rhodes students interview local historian from Fayette Co.



Cemetery site at Ames containing slave and planter burials.

In addition, a GIS database of land plat maps generated from deeds has been developed. Therefore, with the assistance of Mr. Evans, I am in the process of developing a photographic survey in which we can locate and record the relevant historic remains of the excavated plantations, plot these on the land plat map, and integrate this material into a well notated website.



Union Army map from 1860s showing buildings in the area of Fayette Co. that became the Ames land base.

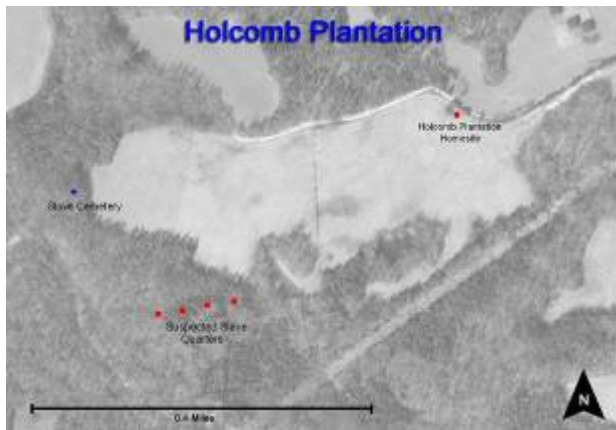
Applications for Teaching and Learning Outcomes:

Integrating archaeology and material culture studies into the classroom is a valuable way to introduce undergraduate students to primary research opportunities in Archaeology, History, African-American Studies, Human and Wildlife Ecology and Cultural Geography. This database will allow faculty and students the opportunity to become familiar with several of the research opportunities at the site. Once completed, the website will include annotated photographs, scanned historic documents related to the site, and plot maps that will be linked to the photo database. The website will lay the groundwork for future excavations, and encourage the involvement of interested faculty members from Rhodes and other ACS schools in the development of future research projects and field school seasons at the Ames Plantation.



Pres. Troutt, Provost Borst and 3 Rhodes Faculty discuss undergraduate research at Ames with J. Evans

This project has great potential to immediately contribute to several existing and planned courses. The key components of the project are the desire to establish field school and research opportunities for undergraduate students, and the need to introduce material culture into the curriculum. This photographic survey and the resultant website will help facilitate the integration of the material culture at the Ames Plantation into courses such as Archaeology 220 (cross-listed as Art 220): “Archaeological Methods,” and Archaeology 210 (cross-listed as Anthropology 250): “Introduction to Material Culture.” A variety of courses in the History Department will be able to take advantage of this website: Hist. 243: “Slavery in the US,” Hist. 247: “The American South,” and Hist. 249: “Black and White Women in the History of the American South.” Additionally, the planned field school at this site (Archaeology 450) will be enhanced by this survey and the website.



Example of GIS project linking aerial photo with data from Civil War map

Collaboration and Dissemination:

The long term goal of establishing an archaeological field school at the Ames Plantation is a project that will open up research opportunities for interested faculty and students from all ACS schools. With the development of a website that illustrates the types of research that can be done at this huge land base, it is hoped that other faculty will take advantage of the archaeological and historical material, and that students will see opportunities for original research in one of the many disciplines related to archaeological field work. Collaboration with at least eight other faculty members from five departments at Rhodes who are interested in this site and/or this historical period will be immediately forthcoming. The website will be a launching point for familiarizing oneself with the cultural resources at Ames, and this material can be used in several courses in Anthropology, Archaeology, Art, GIS, Chemistry, and Religious Studies. It is also hoped that this project will enhance the relationship between the Rhodes Institute for Regional Studies and the new Archaeology Program.

References

- Allen, Dan S. IV, 1999 *Historical and Archaeological Investigations of the Postbellum Tenant Plantation Phenomena as Expressed on the Ames Plantation, Fayette and Hardeman Counties, Tennessee*. DuVall & Associates, Inc., Franklin, Tennessee. Submitted to the Hobart Ames Foundation, Grand Junction, Tennessee, 1999.
- Evans, Jamie P., *Patterns and Processes of Antebellum Land Tenure Change on Selected Portions of Fayette and Hardeman Counties of Tennessee*. M.A. Thesis, University of Memphis, 2000.
- Hobart Ames Foundation, "Welcome to Ames Plantation." <<http://www.amesplantation.org>>, August 2.