Report on Historical and Archaeological Survey of Ashleytowne Landing Development

by

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AREA: The area encompassed by the proposed Ashleytowne Landing subdivision lies on the south side of the Ashley River, southeast of the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad and northeast of Route 61. This area, which involves about 65 acres, includes three historic sites:

1 - Fort Bull, a civil war fortification at the intersection of Route 61 and the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad.

2 - Ashley Ferry Town, Shem Town or Butler Town, an eighteenth century town, most of which was north of the area of interest.

3 - St. Andrews Town - another eighteenth century town.

1 - Fort Bull: The civil war fortification located at the intersection of the railroad and Route 61 is the least important of the three sites. The fortification apparently was constructed to protect the intersection of two roads - one going across to the Ashley Ferry and the other to Bacon's Bridge. The location must have been of very little military importance, for there is no mention of it in the index of the South Carolina Historical Magazine, and surely, if it had been featured in any battle or skirmish there would have been some mention.

2 - Ashley Ferry Town, Shem Town, or Butler Town: The southern edge of this community is included in the area under consideration. The bulk of the town which included a total of 18 blocks and 102 lots lies to the north where the present-day subdivision of Drayton-on-the-Ashley is situated.
Plan of Ashley River Ferry Town in St. Andrews Parish on the south side of Ashley River being part of a tract formerly granted to Mr. Shem Butler deceased by whose desire the said town was laid out into lots and streets . . . . September,
Lots sold to Benjamin Whitaker by Joseph Butler, 1749
Lot sold to Charles Pinckney by Elizabeth Bellinger, 1743
Lot sold to John Haydon, cordwainer, by William Cattell, 1733
Lot sold to Jane Monger, widow, by William Cattell, 1736
Lots sold to Elizabeth Fuller by Charles Jones, 1737

Map of Ashley Ferry Town and St. Andrew's Town (from Smith, 1913) showing lots in the Ashleytowne Landing area for which individual owners could be established.
Ashley Ferry Town was situated on part of the original land grant to Shem Butler in 1703 and 1704 totaling 2450 acres. The town apparently was laid out by Butler before he wrote his will on Oct. 9, 1718 leaving his estate to be divided among his wife and children (PC Record of Wills Vol. 1, p. 168).

Butler's widow sold part of the land south of the ferry path, which is of interest to this study, to her daughter, Elizabeth Bellinger, in 1742 (RMCO Book CC, pp. 517-22). Lots in town were sold from 1732 to 1745 (Smith 1913, pp. 203-5). Those that are of interest here are lots 8 and 9 which were released to Benjamin Whitaker in 1745 (RMCO Book BB, pp. 224-7), and lot 4 which was released to Charles Pinckney in 1743 (RMCO Book AA, p. 71). Another lot adjacent to lot 4 was left to Charles Cotesworth Pinckney by Elizabeth Bellinger Elliott in her will (PC Record of Wills, Vol. 7, pp. 63-6).

Ashley Ferry Town must have been a fairly busy community with a blacksmith, a chair maker and several other occupants in the 1730's (Smith 1913, p. 205). Earlier, in 1723, the legislature passed an act establishing a fair twice a year and an open market twice a week (Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. 3, p. 217). Smith (1913, p. 207) reports that the General Assembly of the colony met there in 1760.

The ferry across the Ashley River, no doubt an important influence on the location of the town, was first established in 1703 and reaffirmed periodically at least until 1821 (Statues at Large of S.C., Vol. 9, Act Nos. 218, 562, 678, 778, 914, 1033, 1693, 1835, 2040, 2272). There was at least one building associated with the ferry. Elizabeth Bellinger Elliott will of 1745 (PC Record of Wills Vol. 7, pp. 63-6) mentions a house at
Plat of lots 1 and 13 in Shem Town northwest of the road leading to Ashley Ferry and showing the ruins of a brick house southeast of the road. Taken from Survey March 22, 1806.
Ashley Ferry in "which Mrs. Sureaw keeps a tavern". In 1783 Edmund Bellinger left his son William 49 acres of land at the ferry with a brick house on it (PC Record of Wills Vol. 22, pp. 159-63). A plat made in 1806 shows the ruins of a brick house which may be the same structure on the south side of the road leading from the ferry. Smith (1919, p. 84) suggests that it was destroyed by the phosphate mining in the nineteenth century, but it appears that it may have been in ruins before that.

3 - St. Andrews Town: This town is a more important community since most of it lies within the tract under consideration. It was laid out in the eighteenth century just south of Ashley Ferry Town and north of St. Andrews Church. The area on which the town was located was part of an original land grant to Francis Fileling in 1701 (RMCO Book O, pp. 126-8; Book PP, p. 148). Shortly thereafter the property was sold; the section closest to the river going first to Thomas Rose, then to Thomas Dynes and in 1734 was purchased by William Cattell (RMCO Book U, pp. 166-8). A small section in the middle went to Joseph Williams. The area farther west was transferred in part from Thomas Rose (PC Record of Wills Vol. 2, p. 234) and part from Abraham Waight (RMCO Book PP, p. 148) to Charles Jones. In August 1727 Charles Jones left his plantation and house where he lived to his son, also named Charles Jones (PC Record of Wills Vol. 2, p. 234).

St. Andrews Town was mapped by Hinny Young, surveyor, in May, 1734. By that time the streets and lots were laid out, lots 1 to 34 being owned by William Cattell and 1 to 15 by Charles Jones. On the plat we note that two lots were set aside for school land and one for the Market Place.
Map showing 25 acres which Charles Jones released to Elizabeth Fuller on March 6, 1755, bordering to the northwest on a street in St. Andrews Town (RMCO Pook PP, p. 148).
How much of the town was actually developed and occupied we do not know. There are records which indicate Charles Jones conveyed lots 1, 14, and 15 to Elizabeth Fuller in 1737 (RMCO Book X, pp. 127-36) and an unnumbered lot to her in 1742 (RMCO Book X, pp. 136-7). She also acquired three acres from him bordering on her lots and on High Street and extending to the King's Highway in 1747 (RMCO Book DD, pp. 148-51), and an additional 25 acres south of the platted section of town in 1755 (RMCO Book PP, p. 148).

William Cattell sold lot 30 to John Haydon, a cordwainer or leather worker, in 1735 (RMCO Book O, pp. 126-8) and lot 2 to Jane Monger, a widow, in 1740 (RMCO Book U, pp. 207-11). He left the lands set aside for use of a school to the church wardens of St. Andrews Parish in 1752 (PC Record of Wills Vol. 7, pp. 13-18). The rest of his land he left to his children. In 1838 his heir Col. William Cattell, a planter, left all unsold lots - 1 to 34 on the plat of H. Yonge - and the adjacent pasture land to the vestry and church wardens of St. Andrews Parish.

It would appear that the town had few occupants other than members of the Cattell and Jones families and Mrs. Fuller. No record could be found of what happened to the land acquired by Mrs. Monger and Mr. Haydon; it must have reverted to the Cattell family. Mrs. Fuller's property was left to her grandchildren in 1758 (PC Record of Wills Book 13, pp. 898-9).

Post-Revolutionary Occupation: There is no record of what happened to either of the towns located on the south side of the Ashley River. Ashley Ferry Town seems to have been the bigger and more active community and it lasted at least until after 1760 when the legislature met there. Freazer's deed dated 1794 putting his property in trust for his wife (RMCO Book K6, pp. 369-74) mentioned both St. Andrews Town and Shem Town by name.
Scale 10 chains per inch.

Surveyed in 1802.

ASHLEY RIVER

Town but no

A. 2.24 acres.

B. 2.24 acres.

C. 2.24 acres.

D. 2.24 acres.

E. 2.24 acres.

F. 2.24 acres.

G. 2.24 acres.

H. 2.24 acres.

I. 2.24 acres.

J. 2.24 acres.

K. 2.24 acres.

L. 2.24 acres.

M. 2.24 acres.

N. 2.24 acres.

O. 2.24 acres.

P. 2.24 acres.

Q. 2.24 acres.

R. 2.24 acres.

S. 2.24 acres.

T. 2.24 acres.

U. 2.24 acres.

V. 2.24 acres.

W. 2.24 acres.

X. 2.24 acres.

Y. 2.24 acres.

Z. 2.24 acres.
Flat copied in Sept. 1828?, showing area referred to as Shepherd's buildings and cleared land to southeast.
A Plan of
a tract of land Situate at Ashley Ferry
on the South West side of Ashley River
in St. Andrews Parish, Charleston District
State of South Carolina
about to be conveyed by
James W. Gray, Master in Equity to
Dr. Edward North
Drawn from a Survey made in March 1856
(signed) W. Henry Mallard

Note houses along river northwest of Ferry and cleared land southeast of Ferry.
Although there are several references which mention both British and American forces using the ferry in 1779 and 1780 (McCrady 1900, pp. 355, 453-4) no mention was made of either of the towns, so presumably they were not important by that time.

There is a plat copied in September, 1828 from earlier plats in 1771, 1786, and 1802 which mentions an area called Shemtown, owned by Mr. John Fraser, but shows no buildings, only cleared land. It also indicates cleared lands in the area south of the Ashley Ferry close to, if not including where St. Andrews Town should have been. Another map made in 1856 describes the area both east and west of Ashley Ferry Road as cleared land, although it indicates a few buildings along the marsh at what would have been the edge of Ashley Ferry Town. No mention is made of either town on that map.

The information on the ownership of the land gleaned from the Register Mesne Conveyance Office records (See Appendix) indicates the property was in private hands until 1868 (RMCO Book M4, p. 330) when it was acquired by Charleston Mining and Manufacturing Company for use in the phosphate mining industry. There is no record of what use was made of this tract during that period. It was owned by the company until 1937 when it was sold to David K. Bruce of Virginia (RMCO Book S39, pp. 243-69) and has remained in private ownership since then.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY: Upon completion of the title research in the Register Mesne Conveyance Office and the historical research, an archaeological survey was made of the actual site. Two mornings were spent measuring and collecting information from the site, in part with the aid of a metal detector. Because of the construction of the railroad and a road paralleling it, no evidence was located of the
Map showing the possible relationship of the Ashleytowne Landing development and the power line right-of-way to St. Andrew's Town and the location of artifacts.
remains of the southeasternmost lots of Ashley Ferry Town.

The area of St. Andrews Town proved to be more informative. Conversations with the owners, and the present tenant, and a visit to the site in the company of the latter produced a fair amount of evidence of the location of the town. Brick fragments and potsherds were scattered at various points along the power line right-of-way where the area is in open pasture. In addition there are the standing remains near one end of the site of a brick cistern or well and a rectangular slightly depressed area which might be another well or perhaps a privy.

The stable owner informed us that in the area immediately northwest of the power line were other areas of brick rubble. Some of the brick fragments taken from the site are well-shaped and perhaps somewhat later than the town, but most of the broken pottery recovered appears to be eighteenth century. In addition a few iron nails and the leg of an iron kettle were found with the metal detector.

A survey of aerial photos on file at the Marine Resources Laboratory produced little additional information on the earlier occupation of the site. However, a study of the enlarged aerial photo in the possession of Mr. Albert Fuchs indicated that the easternmost street in St. Andrews Town which extended the full length of the site is evident, and perhaps one of the streets perpendicular to it. This coupled with studies of the existing maps and plats indicate that the long axis of St. Andrews Town falls largely within the power line right-of-way. A composite map has been constructed showing the possible relationship of the maps of the town and the present map of the area. The areas where brick and other artifacts and features are located are shown in red.
We may conclude on the basis of combined photographic, cartographic, and archaeological information that there are indications at the site of the eighteen century occupation of St. Andrews Town. Part of the evidence seems to coincide most closely with the area of the three lots acquired by Mrs. Elizabeth Fuller in 1737; more of it lies in the areas which she added in 1742 and 1755.

The northeastern part of the site which is not part of the present development of Ashleytowne Landing has not been surveyed archaeologically but the history of the area has been included here, as it was part of the town.

RECOMMENDATIONS: As there is very little information available on the eighteen century communities of St. Andrews Town and Ashley Ferry Town and most if not all of the larger and more important Ashley Ferry Town is now gone with the development of the residential area Drayton-on-the-Ashley, it seems important to make some effort to recover the available information from this site. For this reason the following recommendations are made:

1 - Because the bulk of the archaeological evidence falls within the right-of-way of the power lines, and therefore will be protected from any modification of the land or development, it is recommended that this area be protected until some time when it can be adequately tested by a crew under the direction of a trained archaeologist.

2 - When the development of the Ashleytowne Landing is started and grading of roads, excavating for sewer lines, power lines, etc. is begun, we recommend that the archaeologist be notified to observe, recover and record information which may be encountered. It is not expected that it will be necessary to have an archaeologist present
throughout this construction, but one should be there when Jobee Drive and Assembly Road are being cut across the area of the power line right-of-way. It would also be interesting to look out for evidence of buildings in the areas of lots 16, 17, and 18 around Blacksmith Court.

3 - It is hoped that in the event that bulldozers and other earth-moving equipment encounter evidence of buildings, wells, privies etc, that the archaeologist would be called in to make notes and record the findings before they are totally destroyed. It is understood that such recovery would be carried out as a salvage project and would not delay construction more than absolutely necessary.

4 - It is further recommended that when and if the subdivision is extended in a northeasterly direction to include that tract between the railroad and the present planned dock area, or if there is to be any other development in that area which was once the site of the southeasternmost corner of Ashley Ferry Town, the Ashley Ferry itself and the northwest portion of St. Andrews Town that further archaeological reconnaissance be carried out and additional testing be provided for in the course of construction.
Bibliography


South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston.
pp. 134 - 146.

South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston.
pp. 75 - 122.

Statutes At Large of South Carolina, Vol. 3, Acts 1716 - 1752
Thomas Cooper, ed. A. S. Johnston, Columbia 1838.

Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. 9, Containing the Acts relating to Roads, Bridges and Ferries.

RMCO refers to volumes at the Register Mesne Conveyance Office, Charleston.

PC refers to volumes at the Probate Court Office, Charleston.
APPENDIX

Title Information on Ashleytowne Landing


RMCO Book J40, p. 667 - July 8, 1939 H. H. Lamar bought from Virginia May 82 acres for $3000, residue of Bee's Ferry Tract. NE side of Highway 61, between Church Cr. and ACL ROW.


RMCO Book W39, p. 532 - Jan. 22, 1938 Virginia May bought from David K. E. Bruce for $10 and other considerations Bee's Ferry Tract. B and B to N on ACL ROW, E on Ashley R and marshes, S on Church Creek, W on Highway 61, except for Church land.

Schieveling Tract - 1056 acres B and B NE on Ashley R, SE on public road leading from Rantowles to Ashley Ferry, NW on lands late of Thomas Middleton, SW by Hickory Hill Plantation, conveyed to Charleston Mining and Mfg. by Samuel Lord, Jr., referee, June 14, 1873, RMC O Book L16, p. 23.

RMC O Book M14, p. 330 - Feb. 25, 1868 Charleston Mining and Mfg. acquired Bee's Ferry Tract or Ashley Ferry Tract from Francis S. Holm for $10,000, B and B N on Ashley R., S on Church Cr., E by Ashley R., NW by Ashley Ferry Rd., and W on Public Road or Ashley River Rd., delineated on plat made March, 1856 annexed to deed of plantation made by James W. Grey, Esq. Master in Equity to Ed. North, Feb. 5, 1856 RMC O Book V12, p. 441.

RMC O Book V12, p. 441 - April 24, 1856 Master in Equity James W. Grey sold to Dr. Edward North for $6000 Ashley Ferry Plantation, 425 acres shown on map by Mr. Henry Meillard. Sold as a result of bill John J. Bee, William J. Bee and Richard G Bee brought Feb. 19, 1855 against Mary S. Bee and her children Benjamin A., Hannah M. G. and Mary Julia Bee regard the estate of Joseph Ferguson Bee, dec.; court ordered estate sold.

PC Book of Wills Vol. 33, p. 1369 - Jan. 31, 1814 Will of Sara Freazer of St. Andrews Parish, wife of John Freazer, dec., and mother of John L. left bulk of estate, real and personal, in hands of executors until grandson Joseph Ferguson Bee is 21; executors to keep causeway and boats in repair at Ashley Ferry; also to purchase 50 or 60 acres of land near ferry belonging to Mrs. Scrivens and Mrs. Cave and any other lands adjoining her lands, also to be given to Jos. F. Bee
Simon Magwood, Thos Lee and Charles B. Ladson Exec.,
proved Feb. 13, 1818.

RMCO Book F9, p. 330 - Aug. 2, 1820 Rebecca Scriven, spinster, sold to
Simon Magwood, exec. of estate of Sarah Frazer for $600 28
acres on S. Side of Ashley, B and B to NE and NW on lands of
Francis Fidling and on other sides on lan of Charles Jones;
also 32 acres B and B to NE on William Cattle and marshes,
SE on marsh and creek, SW on Glebe land and land of Charles
Jones, NW on Joseph Williams land.

PC Record of Wills Vol. 26, p. 478 - Will of Elizabeth Williams,
Aug. 21, 1792 left estate to daughters Rebecca Screven and
Sarah Scott, proved Aug. 2, 1796.

PC Record of Wills Vol. 12, p. 533 - Will of Joseph Williams, planter
July 25, 1765 left estate to wife Elizabeth, proved April 7,
1769.

RMCO Book K6, pp. 369-74 - March 5, 1794 John Freazer put in trust for
wife: 1- 19 acres on S side of Ashley R joining road leading
to Church Cr., Glebe land, Mrs. Williams and land of late
Edmund Bellinger, which he obtained from J. Bellinger
and wife Rebecca May 23, 24, 1790; 2- 49 acres on S Side of
Ashley R at the Ferry, B and B to NW on Ferry Rd., to NE
on Ashley R, to SE on a street between it and St. Andrews
Town, and part of land belonging to estate of _____Scott, de
SW on land of John Lloyd, esq. which was conveyed to Freazer
by Wm. Bellinger and wife, Sept. 16, 1788; 3- 86½ acres in
St. Andrews Parish B and B to NW on land of Dr. Dering,
NE partly on Shemtown and marsh of Ashley R, SE partly on
Shemtown and partly on Broad road leading from Stono to
to Ashley Ferry and SW on Broad road leading to Dorchester; 4 - 66 acres of marsh in front of above tract of 86 acres and other land of Edward Legge, dec. B and B to NW on vacant marsh, to S on above mentioned land, to NE on Ashley R., originally granted to Edward Legge; S- Also lots 25, 26, 88, 96, 78, 77 and tanyard lots 36 and 37 in Shem Town.

PC Record of Wills Vol. 22, pp. 159-63 - Will of Edmund Bellinger, July 20, 1783 leaves to son William 49 acres of land at Ashley Ferry (parcel 2 mentioned above) that the brick house stood upon, proved July 3, 1787.

PC Record of Wills Vol 7, pp. 63-6 - Will of Elizabeth (Bellinger) Ellis April 10, 1745 leaves to son Landgrave Edmund Bellinger tract of 222 acres situated on the Ferry Path in St. Andrews Parish, the uppermost 222 of 344 acres received from father Shem Butler, dec.; left to son Wm. Bellinger house and land at Ashley Ferry in which Mrs. Sureaw keeps tavern, unless so Edmund stipulates in writing that he wants property; leaves to son George tanyard lots in Ashley Ferry Town and rest of 344 acres; proved March 30, 1753.

RMCO Book CC, pp. 517-22 Oct. 8, 1742 Elizabeth Bellinger bought from Esther Elliott, widow of Shem Butler, for 330 pounds 33 acres SW side of Ferry path, B and B NW on Ferry path, SE on lands of Charles Jones, NE on lands of Elizabeth Bellinger; by will of Shem Butler, executors gave Esther Elliott 280 acres land on NW side of Ferry path.
PC Book of Wills Vol. 1 - Oct. 9, 1718 Will of Shem Butler leaves property to be divided among wife and children; division made after Ashley Ferry Town laid out; proved July 30, 1723.

Smith 1913, p. 203 - Original land grant to Shem Butler of 3 tracts of land totaling 2450 acres in 1703 and 1704 which included the Shem Town or Butler Town or Ashley Ferry Town area.

RMCO Book U10, p. 577 - Oct. 15, 1838 Col. Wm. Cattell, planter, conveyed all unsold lots in St. Andrews Parish - lots 1-34 - on plat by H. Yonge to vestry and church wardens of St. Andrews parish; also pasture land formerly belonging to William Cattell, mentioned in will Aug. 8, 1751, on E. side of St. Andrews Church, B and B to E on Hooper's Cr., W on Church lands or public road leading to Bacon's Bridge.

PC Record of Wills Vol. 7, pp. 13-18 - Aug. 28, 1751 Will of William Cattell, left to son William Walter and wife Mary Walter, Mr. John Cattell and Benjamin Cattell and their heirs the home at Ashley Ferry now rented to Mrs. Stokes; one plantation where son Charles now resides containing 730 acres which fell from father's estate joining Mr. John Cattle; also one lot at the Ferry now occupied by Mr. Thomas Godfrey with the use of the pasture; son Peter shall have use of pasture at Ashley Ferry now occupied by Thomas Godfrey; to vestry of St. Andrews Parish my lands on the said town plat for the use of a school with the use of my pasture in common with son Peter and son Charles; proved Oct. 20, 1752.

RMCO Book O, pp. 126-8 - March 8, 1735 William Cattell of Berkeley Co. leases for 5 shillings and then releases for 250 pounds to John Haydon, Cordwainer, ¼ acre lot No. 30 and messages or tenements on lot in St. Andrews Town; which was part of 38 acres Cattell purchased from Dynes who owned 38 acres and Ashley Ferry Store; Dynes acquired property from Thomas Rose and Rose obtained property from Francis Fidling; plantation was granted to Fidling by Lords Proprietors Oct. 12, 1701, on south side of Ashley R., B and B to N on river, to E on marsh or creek, to S on other lands of Francis Fidling and to W on lands of Shem Butler.

PC Record of Wills Book 13, pp. 898-9 - Will of Elizabeth Fuller, July 12, 1756 left entire estate to granddaughter Elizabeth Simpson and grandson Thomas Fuller, proved Jan. 20, 1758.

RMCO Book PP, p. 148 - March 6, 1755 Charles Jones releases to Elizabeth Fuller, widow, for 250 pounds 25 acres of land, B and B on NE on tract of Joseph Williams, SE on Glebe lands; SW on road that leads to Wadmalaw, NW on street (St. Andrews Town); Jones land was part of 140 acres granted to Francis Fidling Aug. 14, 1701, Fidling conveyed it to Abraham Waight July 22, 1703.

RMCO Book DD, pp. 148-51 - June 10, 1747 Charles Jones conveyed to Elizabeth Fuller for 100 pounds 3 acre B and B to W on High St., to N on land of Elizabeth Fuller, to S on Kings highway, in St. Andrews Town.
RMCO Book X, pp. 136-7 - Aug. 3, 1742 William Fuller conveyed unnumbered ¼ acre lot to Elizabeth Fuller, widow for 50 pounds.
RMCO Book X, pp. 127-36 - June 10, 1737 Charles Jones conveyed to Elizabeth Fuller 3/4 acres lots 1, 14, 15 St. Andrews Town for 150 pounds.
PC Record of Wills, Vol. 2, pp. 23-4 - Aug. 25, 1727 Will of Charles Jones of St. Andrews Parish leaves to eldest son Charles Jones house, plantation and land on which I live and which I bought from Thomas Rose; proved Dec. 16, 1726.