Well, thank you all for coming and I always look forward to these because it's a little bit more of a relaxed atmosphere and doing some real theoretical paper, which is fine too, that's what we do, but it's nice to be able to talk about this in a more, less formal setting. We've been doing work at Betty's Hope for five years in the field, but I started going down to Antigua in 2004 to get the project started, and I went back in 2005 with two students and did a survey and then came back, 2006, I didn't go, in 2007 we started the field schools. So, all total, I've been having a connections with Antigua since 2004, and that was, sort of, a preliminary trip to find out where we could establish a field school there and an archeological project, and it all worked out really well.
Okay, so, people, just because I work in Caribbean, people think that we’re doing pirates, and we’re not doing pirates, I just want to be really clear about that. We’re doing dirt and rock, not pirates, so I just wanted to be really clear about that. But, I haven’t seen any pirates, well, with one exception, that is their four legged, they have hooves, and they have, males have the horns coming out, more commonly known as goats, their the pirates, and they like to eat the pin flags at the site, and those goats who do, know who they are, but those are the only pirates that I know at the moment.
Just to situate the site, Antigua's part of a chain of volcanic islands known as the Lesser Antilles, located in Eastern Caribbean. Also known as the West Indies, the colonial designation, and then, in this chain, Antigua and its neighboring Barbuda, which is not labeled on there, as a smaller island east of Antigua, and it's very different than Antigua, even though they're under the same government, it's a very, completely different atmosphere, different island, but it's still part of, under theegis of Antigua. And, here's the island itself, it's a small island, it has about 80 thousand people on it, but I think it has more goats than people, actually, but it has about 60 thousand people, did I say 80, I mean more like 60 thousand, excuse me.
Betty's Hope is situated in the fertile agricultural area, sort of, sort of in this part, this, sort of eastern side of the island, where it's a really fertile agricultural plain. Because it's a volcanic island, it has good soil, and, which made it attractive to British colonists who wanted to plant sugar cane and indigo and other crops, and tobacco, on the island.
The general time periods for Antigua are the archaic period, there's a lot of good prehistoric archeology there, very good pre, interesting prehistory. The Archaic is pre-ceramic and then the Ceramic period, up to 1493, which is, no Columbus did not stop at Antigua, there's no archeological evidence for it, there's not documentary of his fort, so we don't have a record of Columbus story, but we use the 1493 of the contact date, but traditional, but in all reality, there wasn't actual settlement by European colonist until 1632, with Edward Warner, when he started a plantation there, the first plantation on the island. Their contact, there may have been earlier contact by Europeans, we just don't know about it. If they had come to that island, there's no real strong evidence. But, like most Amerindian populations, in the Caribbean, they were, the Amerindians were exposed to Small Pox [inaudible] diseases, and suffered, consequently, like many North American Indians did, so that story played out there as well.
When the British came to the Caribbean, their, initially they weren't very interested in the Caribbean, until, of course, what got them interested in the Caribbean was the presence of the Spanish, and being competitive with the Spanish and the French and the Dutch, the Spanish were coming into Peru and Mexico, and taking riches, basically in gold and silver, for short term profits to, basically, finance their wars with the other European nations. But, what happened with England was that when it went into the Caribbean and saw that, it took a, England took a very different approach, more of a long-term, settlement and colonization, which was primarily agricultural, so it had a very different focus, although, the same, ultimately the same goal as the Spanish to reap riches, but in a very different way. And, chief among those was sugar, which revolutionized the world. Every time you bite into a piece of chocolate or candy bar, you think about it, sugar changed the world, and so, part of my research is all about the whole sugar, aspect of sugar, because my previous work has been in tobacco, which I'm still working in actually, so, I'm working with the drug foods, and, which did change the world, tobacco has psychotropic properties, sugar can give you a high, anthropologists call it the stimulant foods, and there's a whole aspect to that, but I'm not going to be talking about that today.
Because the British came there early in the 1630's, they, they were big on fortification of the places they took, of course, they had to fortify, because they had enemies, and so, what they did was, they established a fort about every mile around the circumference of the island. When you stop and think about, it's really remarkable. Some of these forts were never used. This is Fort Barrington, we always make the students hike up to the top of this, and there's Fort James, we take them there on a field trip, and of course, the all powerful cannon. What people really like cannon's, they really, they really amaze me, when people find a cannon, they get really excited. But, we, there are all these forts in; there's a lot of good archeology done with military history, on the island too, for the historic period. The island is just oozing with archeological potential, and so there's a lot of forts, particularly Fort James needs to be excavated at some point.
Nelson’s Dockyard was established in the 18th century to protect the British interest in the sugar plantocracy, and it’s a restored 18th century fort, it's called Nelson’s Dockyard because Horatio Nelson was, actually spent time, he hated every minute of it, I might add, he couldn't stand the mosquito's, he didn't like the heat, and, of course, British soldiers had to wear wool uniforms, in the middle of the summer there, so, which it's hard to imagine. They had to drink a certain amount of rum every day, watered down rum and they had to wear wool, wool uniforms, so I don't know, I don't think I'd want to be a soldier in the 18th century at colonial outpost, like the Caribbean. But, Nelson Dockyard was established to protect the sugar interest, the sugar plantations, and it was, basically, a naval dockyard, which has been restored, and it's a really wonderful place, some good archeology being done there, and there's a museum, the Nelson's Dockyard Museum, which is on the right, where it had some, two museum study students putting an exhibit together. But, it's sort of, like, its where, we stay near that area, for the field school, so that's the general vicinity in which we're living and working.
The research focus of the project is basically on different levels. There's what they call, in the anthropology or archeological research, different research questions at different levels, and the most basic sites, specific level, is to compare the archeological evidence to what we're finding in the documentary evidence, and when I say documentary evidence, we have 300 years of Codrington papers, the plantation we're working on was owned by the same family for almost 300 years, so you have 300 years worth of maps, accounts, letters. That's called the Codrington papers, the original papers were brought to Antigua, about 15 years ago, they used to be in a British Museum Library, and they were handed over to the Antiguan government, and they're located in the archives in downtown St. John. So we are looking at comparing the actual, there's some old maps in the documents, and so we're comparing the actual maps to the site, to see, really, if the structures that are, very schematic maps, by the way, not really helpful in terms of scale, but to see if they really, if the island, if the plantation is matching up with the documents. The second goal is to develop this deeper understanding of this relationship between the world systems model and the impact of agricultural and land use on the environment, so, my bigger research question is looking at the impact of the sugar plantocracy on the environment, and their agricultural practices, and how it affected the environment regional, region-wide in the Caribbean. I'm taking an environmental approach in historical archeology because there's not being much done in historical archeology with an environmental approach. I saw that there was very little literature on environmental work and historical archeology, and I thought, why aren't we doing this in historical archeology? Why aren't we looking at sustainability and the environment and all these sorts of things?
So I decided to take that approach. And then, third, looking at landscape archeology and Betty's Hope in relation to the whole plantation complex, this plantation as a system and connections to the greater Atlantic world, in other words, this isn't just the Caribbean region, it connects to a wider world of trade and colonization. And then, finally, looking at colonialism, on the island of Antigua and generally in the Caribbean, is looking at how the impact of this history upon the post colonial societies today in the Caribbean, particularly in Antigua, which can be used as a case study of how these Caribbean countries deal with this post colonial legacy of sugar. Does that make sense to you guys?
Okay. So, why study and excavate at Betty's Hope? Well, there's very good preservation, there still a considerable amount of standing structures or parts of structures on the plantation. It's very well preserved in that respect. It might be just a matter of dumb luck, because this is the area of hurricanes and it's hard to believe, but the British military fort, at a place called Shirley Heights, on the island, is a solid wall, and hurricanes have blown them down and the construction of the wall is considerable, so it's remarkable that some of these structures are still standing, knock on wood, and, of course, many aren't, but it has enough to be considered possibly as a world heritage site by UNESCO, but that's a very long and lengthy process to go through that. It has a very good documentary record, as I mentioned the Codrington Papers, for over 300 years worth of documents, and, again, this long continuous history of one family owning this plantation until 1944, so that continuity is something that helps when you're studying at the site.
It's also a good venue for public archeology. We're on the tourist route, for those of, how many people in this room have been to Betty's Hope, or have work at the field school? We've got quite a few. Many of you will know about the tourists that came out to the site. They come out daily, and they come in all forms. They come from different parts of the world. They come via cruise ship, these cruise ships are huge, when they pull into St. John, they tower over the downtown, it's remarkable. But, people spill out of these things; they've got a few hours on the island to, kind of, run around. They come out to the site, they get really bad rum punch, I think a basket of chicken, and they eat, they walk around with it and have their pictures taken next, in front of the windmills and then they leave. But, we get folks who are renting cars and they drive up, they're staying at the local hotels, and they want to get out and see the island history, so they drive up and they ask us questions, and they ask us interesting questions, and I, there's a really, a lot of good potential for public archeology there; school groups come out to the site, so, you know, it's a good way to interact with the public. Most people ask intelligent questions, when they come out to the site, and of course, somebody will always have to ask you, did you find gold? Oh, so you know, so, you know, at least not asking about the Lost City of Atlantis, which I appreciate.
So, what is Betty's Hope comprised of? The great house complex, there's a large area for water catchment, still on the island today; people get their water by collecting rain water. There are no lakes or streams to speak of, there's small streams, but there's no rivers or lakes on the island, so all people have to get their water through rain water catchment. Well, except for some of the major big hotels like Sandals, they recycle salt water and turn it into freshwater, but for the most part, you will see water collection systems in people's back yard in Antigua, almost everybody has a water tank in their yard. Windmills for crushing the sugar cane, the boiling house where the cane juice was boiled until it crystallized, and they skimmed all the stuff off the top, to make the molasses, the curing house where the crystals were, they took the crystals and put them in these big barrels called hog heads and shipped them out for export. And, then, the still house where they made the rum, yeah. And then, slave quarters, post emancipation housing and then animal pens and stable and burial grounds, and I want to say that not all of these buildings. Some of them are not there anymore, but the great house, the great house is gone. And, when I went there in 2004 and I talked to Dr. Murphy, the island archeologist, about working there, he felt that I should start with the great house, and considering he's an employee for the Antiguan government, it would probably be a good idea to listen to him, but he's also a very intelligent archeologist, he's very ethical, very professional and very logical about things, and it makes sense, because the great house was the vocal point of the plantation system, and it also was the seat of English government for two years, and so, and you can't really need this sort of focal point to emanate out from there, and so it makes sense. The plan, it's not because it's the home of the rich elite, that's not why we're excavating it.
Here's the still house, some years you can see it better than other. There's a lot of bush on the island, a lot of growth, it's not really a tropical island, it's a little drier than some Caribbean islands, but it still has a lot of growth, and in wet years, the growth can take over, very quickly, of building and archeology sites. In other years, when dry, here's, I've been there during drought where it's more like this and you can see the structures, the ruins. So, just depends what year you're there. A lot of that brush is [inaudible] that was brought in from Africa, probably by accident, on the hulls of ships. The only thing will eat are goats, but it's not their first choice. It's not very pleasant to work around and we have hacked through many of it, it will grow back immediately, so you have to work around it. But, that's the still house, I'd love to get down in there and excavate at some point; make a great doctoral dissertation for some excited grad student.
Okay, we've got the windmills, this windmill was restored in, in 1995, the sails were added and, actually saw some film of the windmills with the sails on them. These things go at a really fast clip, I mean, you could decapitate somebody in no time, with one of these things. They are very dangerous, but they, but you needed that power to be able to crush the cane, and eventually they moved to steam power in the 19th century, but these were wind powered, and the plantation house and the windmills were at the highest point of the land, so they could take advantage of the wind. This is the water collection system, the cistern, it's not used anymore, but it used to be by a village nearby. It collects a lot of rain water, I've took a picture of it during the rain to see how quickly that thing filled up. There's four tanks, and they're quite deep, and this is at McNeil Managers House, which is now where we store our tools, in this room here, and this is a small visitor center and museum. Another graduate student project, I have in mind for museum study students, because it's a little museum in there and it needs lots of work.
Now, what's surviving, fortunately, in terms of documentation, there are some old photographs of Betty's Hope. Most of these photographs were taken in early 19, about 19, between 1904 an 1906, that's all I've really got to go on, plus these really early schematic maps, like, from 1755, so I don't have a lot to go on, but they're helpful, and here's a, here's a photograph taken in 1904 of the grand entrance of the great house, but it's not so grand anymore, as you can see. One of the problems is, and this happens all the over the world, is that people steal the stones for their own house, and so, we've had a great deal of stone theft at the site over the years, for people haul the beautiful limestone, carved limestone rock, hand carved, imported from England in the hulls of ships, also brought in, also the local limestone too, as well, and so, a lot of this has been carted away. One place, in particular, is a village nearby, that, well, during World War II, we had, there's an American military base on Antigua, and the military base, basically, uprooted a whole village and so what the US Government did was, they started, it was called Winthrop, they built another village nearby call New Winthrop to replace the village that they had, basically, leveled. And, and the, and the story goes that the church directory in New Winthrop's has been built with the stone from Betty's Hope. I have yet to go out there and look at it, I never seem to get around to it, but everybody tells me that, so it must be true, right? I don't know.
Okay, 1651, some background on Betty's Hope; 1651, Betty's Hope was owned by Christopher Keynall. We have really no information on Christopher Keynall, but he died in 1663, and he left his wife, Joan, the property, and so, for a while she enjoyed property ownership, but it didn't last long, because in three years later in 1666, the French invaded Antigua, for a whole whopping year, and she had to leave, she had to basically flee the island. And, when she came back, the British Parliament said, "That's not your land anymore, Ms. Keynall." In 1670's, they basically decided that, if you leave, if you left the island, tough beings, that property is not your anyone's, forget it, you don't have any land, so what they did was, they gave her land to Christopher Codrington.
So, Joan was out of luck, but Christopher Codrington wasn't, and, basically, he was granted Betty's Hope in 1674. Now, it had a huge amount of acreage, and then what Codrington did, he was an English colonist who immigrated to Barbados, made a killing in planting sugar in Barbados and was getting bored and looking around for other, other places he could plant sugar, and so, the British, basically, British Crown said, "Why don't you go over to Antigua." Which he did, and basically was handed this land on a silver platter, and then, then bought up as much land around the plantation that he could, with his funds from his sugar plantations in Barbados. So, Christopher Codrington, the first, was the first owner of Betty's Hope after Keynall, and then his son, Codrington two, Christopher Codrington II, took over after his father died, and I've looked at the, I've looked at the genealogical tree for the Codrington family, its available in the Codrington papers, and there, they are Christopher Codrington's long after that, it's a very large family tree, and there are more Christopher Codrington's. Christopher Codrington II also started a religious college in Barbados; it's still operating today, named after him. Betty's Hope, as I mentioned before, was a seat of English Government from 1688 to 1704, a little longer than two years, and then, of course, it's, the plantation stays in the families until 1994, and they sold it, and then it sort of fell into disrepair and then squatters started hanging around the plantation, and then, eventually, it became the Betty's Hope trust, overseen by the Antiguan government, but it's a non-profit trust, I am still looking for the non-profit tax id number, which I'm not sure where it is, I'm getting different stories, but that's essentially, it's a trust now, and its overseen by the Antiguan government, and particularly the Museum of Antigua and Barbuda in downtown St. John.
So, the Codrington Papers, there's lots of, lots and lots of material in the Codrington Papers, this is one of the schematic maps we've been working off of. It's very schematic, because there's no sense of scale on this thing whatsoever, but it is helpful, has been helpful, at least, its go the windmills on there and the great house and its complex, and so, it's helpful in that way, but there's lots of stuff that's not on that map, that we're finding, so, it's all very intriguing.
For the great house, all I have left, to go on, it's an old photograph, also from 1904. This is all gone, and there are also stories about what happened to that house, the house burned down, the house became derelict, then it burned down. The house got bulldozed, you know, all these different stories, I'm not sure what to believe. I've been in the archives; I've gone through the newspapers and looked for stories about a fire, we're not finding whole lot of evidence to support a major fire on, at this location, but, you know, it's been helpful to have this, and I'll show you why.
Because, there's two water pipes, they're called stand pipes, in this photograph, from 1904, and here they are, so it's been really helpful to use that as, sort of, a place to situate the location of the house or parts of the house. Now, the top stories gone, we'll never know what the top stories like, but we have the [inaudible] left over from the top floor, like broken window glass and stuff like that. What I do feel confident about, though, in this research, is that the stone walls, not so much this one, but you'll see in other pictures, I believe that we're working in the original 17th century foundation of walls, because they are really thick. Now, granted they've been stolen and robbed and the plaster faces are coming off, but it's very, very substantial walls, at this site, and so I feel very confident we are in the 17th century's foundational material.
Okay, here's an aerial photograph that Kaye Davis found, I thank you Kaye, of the site, taken somewhere between 2004 and 2005. It's a wonderful picture because this area is where we've excavated. All that bush is gone now, and I look at that, and I stand back and look at that, I go, wow, but this is the water cistern I'm talking about, the cistern complex, this does date to the 17th century, it was built sometime after the plantation began, but it's not on the first schematic map, but I know it's an old, this windmill was definitely from the 17th century, and here's the still house, you can see all this from the air, it's very helpful, but I'd like to get more aerial photographs of the site, particularly because, the more we excavate, we can't get it all in one, one, one photograph, and we can't get the site, you know, in one picture.
When I first went there in 2007, we needed a site map. There was an existing site map by a cultural resources firm that went down there, it was okay, it was helpful, but we decided to start our own map, and Jim Sclero from the Engineering Department, who's a surveyor, we went, he and I went down, I had no TA that summer, we did everything ourselves, we tromped around the bush, and took points with the total station, and made a map, so that's our first map from 2007, it was a very productive time down there.
And then, 2008, we plotted in more areas around the site, so we have the site map from 2008.
And then, I'd like to start now with the anticipation of going to Antigua. Thinking about planning for the trip, going on the trip, I worked through the office of the continuing education, the study abroad office, and, it's a field school, but at the same time, it's also research too, so it's both, and the students, as a field school, all go through a little bit about what they do, but also, too, it isn't just a field school, it's a research site, so, the students get to be, it's the outdoor classroom, I guess, if you want to call it that.
For the first day in the field, normally what we do, after their jet lag, we actually take them for a brunch on the beach, on Sunday, and then after they've had a chance to rest up, we put them to work right away, we don't waste any time, but, the first day out, we take, we move, we ease them in, a little bit, okay, we get them to do compass headings, learning how to lay out 2 meter, 2 by 2 meter grid, and all that kind of stuff; sort of, get initiated. They also have to clean the site, because, as I mentioned before, things go quickly there, and even, even if you, even if they mow the lawn there, we still have to pull out weeds, we have to pull weeds the first day, which isn't very exciting, and it's not peoples idea of archeology, but you have to pull weeds, and, so, that's something we do. I have a lot of pruning shears, I bring more every year; somehow they get buried and lost, but. So, we have to do that, we have to pull rock and clean up the place, and get it ready before we can lay out the grids.
And then, we map it, we, sort of, map and plot things in and get the site ready to lay out the grids.
And then we work with the students, show them to lay out grids, 2 meter by 2 meter, which is great for historical archeology, because you need, for two reasons, one is, this is a site that's largely architectural and secondly, I start two students in an excavation unit, so they can help each other, particularly if they've never done this before, and then, when they get more proficient at it, I move them into their own units, so that's, that's my logic behind 2 meter grids. I was also trained in 2 by 2 too, I worked in Israel, and I feel really comfortable around stone walls, because that’s what I was, sort of, nurtured on, was working around stone walls.
Excavation unit for preparation, we get the place looking tiptop and ready to go.
And, then we are 2 meter by 2 meter squares.
June 30, 2011, the work begins. So, but I'd first like to introduce the cast of character for the 2011, or more well-known as the field crew.
This is Maija Glasier-Lawson, TA extraordinaire, she was my head TA and did a fabulous job, and so she was, she came down, she knew how to drive on the left side of the road, it was wonderful, all fell into place beautifully.
Katrina Eger, whose a PhD student at UC Berkeley, just started this fall at UC Berkley, and, and then Corey Luck, who’s a PhD student at Brooklyn College, and so that was, those are my, I have three TA's now. I'm not sure, every year will be different, but it was really wonderful having three of them. First year I didn't have any, which was absolutely ridiculous, but I didn't. The second year I had two, it was wonderful; third year I had two, well, up through this past summer, which it was the first time I had three, it was just great.
So, we did something different this year. Being the good anthropologist that we are, we decided it was time to do a ritual at the site, and so, most rituals, in the Caribbean, involve some aspect of rum, and so, what we decided to was baptize the site with rum, on opening day. So, we decided to start a tradition this year, and so, here you see me opening up the, Reg loaned me his silver flask, and, took the silver flask, full of rum, good rum too, I want to remind you, not the cheap stuff, not the stuff for washing windows, but the good rum, took it out there, sprinkled the site with it, and off we went.
Screens are ready, these are to screen, we find a lot of small artifacts at the site, beads and buttons and things like that, we do need screens at the site.
In 2009 we did shovel tests to look for where the kitchen was. The kitchen was a separate building, so we found things in the shovel test, we found very promising areas of walls and floors, so, we, those, indeed, were very helpful, thanks to Melinda Button, at that time, we did these shovel tests, and we got going on those. We did find something very promising, so in 2010, we found the kitchen, we excavated it, and the, I wanted to go back in 2011, continue excavations there. How do we know it's the kitchen? Because, if you look at that old photograph, there's a building next to it, that was probably the kitchen. We found a hearth, a fireplace and lots, this pass summer, lots of [inaudible]. We've got a student from the University of Victoria's, planning to do her Master's thesis on the [inaudible] material. We have bags and bags and bags of it after 5 years in the field. So, we've got, so what I want to do is open up the area between the house and the kitchen, because there's a brick, I knew, I know there's a brick floor in there, and there was, because there's a brick floor here, and I had a feeling there was a brick floor there until we found it, and don't ever let anybody tell you, you should, it's not scientific, it's not the scientific method to tell you that partly archeology is intuition, but it is. There's science too, we're scientific but we're intuitive; we combine those. Okay, so we've got, I knew in here there would be, there would be brick floor between the house and the kitchen, and then the kitchen's over here, so my goal, this past summer, had a small crew, was to, at least, get this, some of this area uncovered, expose the floor, and expose more of the kitchen. We're not done yet, but we'll get more into that in a minute.
So, but, as you can see, we have quite a bit of material, we have quite a bit of, you know, soil to get through, so its, it's very time consuming to excavate a site like this. And, what's really remarkable about all of this is that you don't think anything's there on the surface, I guess that's what's remarkable about archeology, anyway. And then, when you excavate, you go down fairly deeply, there it is, it's just wonderful. So, but, it does take time.
Meanwhile, in the bush, I had two graduate students, Kate Davis, our own Kate Davis and then Jean Veiv Gabo, who's a PhD student at University of Chicago, she's doing here doctoral dissertation from the site, and Fred's in the site, in Barbados. And so, they went back into the bush to do a shovel test to look for potential foundations, walls and things like that, because this is the great house complex area. We're trying to see what's back there. Now, it's really hard to do remote sensing back there, because there's too much bush, you can't really do resistivity or conductivity back there, is just too jammed packed full of bush; you'd have to mow it all down. So, our next, our, really, next best thing is to do shovel tests and phosphate tests.
So, here we are, back in the bush. There's Kate sitting on a wall. This is one of these things that intrigues me. I'm not sure what it is, but we may excavate that doing a shovel test, so that areas very promising, and I don't think it's an area full of fill either, I think it's pretty much natural stratigraphy.
Okay, well some days it does rain on the site. I don't want to give the idea that it's all beautiful and sunny every day. It does rain, but we find other things to do when it rains. Here are three graduates having a good time, filling in their notes, hopefully having a good time.
Here's the kitchen. This past summer we found more. We found this hearth in summer of 2010. For those of you that were there might remember that, and then, in 2011, we found the top of the hearth. We found an area where a chimney went, and that's very exciting. It was collapsed, but there was plenty of burnt material there and that shape was there to indicate as such. Now, you might wonder why the kitchen was separate from the rest of the house. In the British Caribbean, that's usually the case, because it's hot there. It's better to do your cooking, either out in the backyard or in a separate kitchen, also house fires were common, so it just made more sense to have the kitchen separate from the main house.
Now, why is it always toward the end of a project you start finding the most amazing materials? It seems like it's the classic archeological Murphy's Law, and, of course, for those of you that have excavated, many of you probably already realize that. Getting toward the end, we found something I was hoping we would find.
What happened was there was a foundational wall in this area, this big stone just fell in there. We were cleaning and scrapping up around that area, and we opened up an area to the entrance of the plantation house off to the south. In 2007, at the end of the field season, we had laid down plastic tarp. So, I wanted to open that back up, which we did. But, low and behold, we found something we weren’t expecting.
So, when we started excavating this unit called unit 1000, we started excavating next to this water tank, which is not old. The water tank dates somewhere to the 1940's, not 17th century or 18th century. So Maya and Kat were excavating there and they went down, and down.
We went down 63 centimeters. Here Kat's very excited because we thought we found a privy, which I had been hoping for and crossing my fingers we'd find a privy. But it isn't a privy, per say, like a structural privy where it's lined with brick, it was more like, probably, a night soil bumping area, but, nonetheless, it was night soil. How do you know that? It's compacted, its dark, kind of greasy looking. It was, it was definitely privy material, there's no question about it, and it had artifacts in it. But Kat's really excited here because she was walking in a privy. Privy's are one of the great things in historical archeology. As Maya and Kat went down and down, they realized it just wouldn't end, and so, what happened was, we had to stop. We had to close it back up, and back fill it. Sad, but true.
Next to it was very, very deep. This thing went down and down too, we never got to the bottom of it. I still don't know what it is, but I have a friend who's an architect, who specializes in historic buildings and he suspects that it's a root cellar. Who knows? You may ask, what is night soil doing next to the house, particularly a plantation house?
Well, do we really understand 17, 18 and 19th century sanitation habits? What we deem as having normal such as having a bathroom in our house, and the thought of disposing of your nightly stuff there, would have probably been a little different back then. All right, so looking back at the 17th century hygiene practices are different because it's a different time period. Same goes for the 18th century, so we can't really take our 21st century ideas about how to be sanitary and apply them to this time period.
Meanwhile, what we would do is we’d also process artifacts, we’d go through artifacts, the students are responsible for their own artifacts, if they have too many, other students should offer to help them, hopefully. And so, we have students processing artifacts, making sure the tags are an accurate matchup to the catalog, they’re responsible for, certain types of artifacts need some cleaning in the field like high fired ceramics and things like that, and then making sure that things matchup, that’s there’s no discrepancies. This is at Nelson’s Dockyard in back of the museum, and here Jean Veiv is doing a flotation with samples she collected in the field.
Now, another exciting development last summer. This is very, very, very preliminary, but we may have found the area where the slave housing was. We don't know yet, but we're looking at the old maps and the archives. In the past excavations, one was done by Brooklyn College maybe about 10 years ago or so, but it wasn't really the slave area, it was the post-emancipation housing, and so we've been, it's really hard to find slave housing, because it's really a femoral, mostly it's built from waddle and dob, plant and mud, plants and mud, it's hard to find slave housing. It's a very femoral and doesn't leave you as much of a trace, but we, but on the schematic maps it shows the slave housing in one direction and Reg and I have had many conversations about where the slave housing might be, and I think the maps are right, so, when we went, we went, last, the year before, we went into the bush and found all kinds of strange structures and walls and foundations, in another area of the site. The site is huge. But last summer Corey Luck, from Brooklyn College, was out there. He took his GPS device and went tromping around and found a pile of Afro-Antiguan wear, which is probably made by slaves; it's a very coarse earthen wear.
It's dark in the middle and it's very thick and it's very distinctive, it's not like the sugar pots that were used to store sugar crystals. And so, he found a pile of it, and I went over there and looked with him, and it looks very promising, but we don't know yet, it's too preliminary, but we have to do more work around there, and we'd like to do that next summer to see, really, if that is the area of the slave housing, and it would make sense, because plantation owners liked to keep an eye on their slaves. It's within eye distance, but it's far enough from the house. It's also close to the fields, where the slaves would work. Also, to the entrance of Betty's Hope, there are different roads around the area, and so, the roads of earlier time periods are probably different than the roads today, and the entrance to Betty's Hope today is not the entrance it was much earlier. In that time, Betty's Hope was entered through a different direction.
So, in review, I'd like to go over from 2007 to 2011 to give you an overview of what we accomplished in 5 years.
Here are some pictures of students working and also TA's. Here's Kate Kolpan, who just graduated from our program not long ago, and Bob Patterson, and Melinda Button, my TA one year, and then Bob, Carson Shellinberger, and other students working on the project throughout various years.
Now, in 2007 we started working from the outside in to the house, following that, we found a lot of rock, a lot of dirt, not really sure what we’re dealing with, kind of in a jumble, but then, of course, the very last week, we find this. And it was very exciting. We found our first walls and floors, so we ended on this very positive rock, paved flooring and stone walls. This got us all excited for 2008.
2008. We really made some headway. I had a much bigger team that year, so we really made tracks, we excavated more inside the house, foundational walls and floors, looked very promising; we made a lot of headway.
And, in 2008, we found this mystery feature, which, at first we saw the top of what we thought, maybe had a privy, but it was too close to the kitchen, but there’s that health sanitation thing again. But, then, it wasn’t deep, so and, first we thought it might have been a well too, but then, we hit bottom pretty quickly, so it wasn’t deep, so it wasn’t a well and it wasn’t a privy, so what the heck was it? Well, it, all points lead to, it was probably a meat hanger, and, meaning that you hung the meat over some water, so, basically, ant and other insects couldn’t get it, or you could hang the meat out to dry, so to speak. Now, what supports this is that its right in the back side of the kitchen, it just fits perfectly, so that’s probably what, and there’s another one on the island too.
2009, more walls and floors exposed, so, we've been moving along quite nicely.
And more walls and floors. The floors are all different, they’re paved, some are paved in red tile, some are paved in brick, some of the brick is 17th century, some of the brick is 18 century. Doorways, we found doorways and door jams and all kinds of things.
2010, more walls and floors.
2010 is when we found the kitchen, which was very exciting.
The same architect friend of mine in Washington DC made this map with AutoCAD, it was wonderful, I really, really appreciate that he did that.
And then, 2011, we got more walls and floors, we were able to, I'd like to finish the kitchen next summer, this big hump of dirt back in here, and I'd like to open all this up to finish the kitchen and finish this floor and, basically, complete that part of it. It's getting too big now, where we can't photograph the whole area, we really need to get up high, we tried using a boom, putting a camera on the end of a boom, and it didn't work very well, but this is, this is about as good as I can get it, I got it in two photographs, but that's just, there to the great house. There's plenty more, there's, the other area we were talking about we were doing surveying, back in the bush.
These are very preliminary, these are new site maps, I've got, I'm not going to show you the one with all the elevation numbers on them, but I've got site maps with elevation numbers on them, but these are, this is the area where, close to where the slave cabins might have been. This is the first time that we've created a site map for this area that is south of the great house complex, so this is a whole new area that we survey, it very, very deep in bush, it's hard to take GPS points in there, but we managed.
And, here's another site plan we're working on. There's the kitchen that's been plotted in finally, so we're making headway on the site maps.
Our goals for next year; investigate potential slave housing area, possible excavation further north of the great house kitchen area, finish the great house, hopefully, we'll see. Just when I think we're finishing it, we find more. Finish the kitchen, hopefully.
But, it’s not all work, okay, we do have fun.
We, you know, students week, here we go to Shirley Heights to listen to music and dance. I didn't go this year, I usually go every year and dance with the students, but I didn't this year. This year we did something different, we took students out on a 50 foot sailboat, you can see our lovely bathing beauties here, getting a nice suntan. We took them out on a 50 foot sailboat on perfectly flat, calm water, crystal clear, beautiful, one student got seasick though. He got sunburned and seasick, but boy was he a trooper.
And the, students get their shot, I love this picture or Murula Baker, in this place call Rasta Pasta, which has lots of beads and stuff, and students go shopping, we have field trips on the weekends, there's Dr. Murphy lecturing. And, they can go downtown to St. John, oh, sometimes we go to a neighboring Barbuda so they can see the island there.
More field trips, there's the, what they call the rainforest area of the island; this is a church we pass every day, or frequently. This is the beach we go to, you know more music, more steel drum music and stuff, so, students have time to enjoy the island too, and enjoy contemporary Caribbean culture.
So, I want to thank the crew from 2001, for wonderful, wonderful job they did. We were a small crew, but a lot was done, and I'm very appreciative.
I want to thank all the students who have been there from 2007 up through last summer. We had, I've had wonderful students on this project. Some have decided they love archeology, other's decide they never want to see another trowel, ever again, for the rest of their lives, but that's fine too. I had one student, I dropped her at the airport once, she said, "I don't think archeology's for me." And, I said to her, "I don't think so either, but that's okay." You know, but you got to love this, you know.
And, a very special thanks to Dr. Murphy and his wife Nikki, this is Nikki here. I want to say, I love this picture of Reg, he was here last year, by the way, those of you who remember him, he's really in his element. He standing next to a canon, for one, and then secondly, he loves to give tours and talk about the island history, he's just really in his element, because he's so passionate about his island, and its history, and he really is one of the few, real stewards and caretakers of that history, and so, the island's very lucky to have Dr. Murphy.