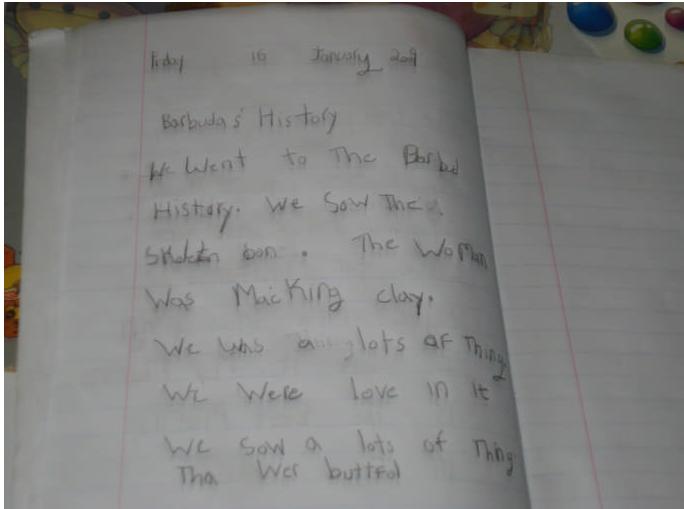


Field Report

Barbuda Historical Ecology Project 2009
Antigua & Barbuda National Parks Dept and
City University of New York
March 11, 2009



From the School Diary of a First Grader that Visited our Open Air Archaeology Exhibit

*"Friday 16 January 2009
Barbuda's History
We went to the Barbuda History.
We saw the bones from a skeleton.
The woman was making clay.
There were lots of things. We were loving it. We saw a lot of things that were beautiful."*

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Report Objectives

The work in Barbuda started in 2000 by CUNY archaeologists and an international team of environmental researchers in collaboration with the Antigua & Barbuda scholars and agencies and by the invitation of Dr. Reg Murphy, head of archaeology for National Parks Antigua and Barbuda. Previous seasons have established rich cultural heritage sites with deep chronological stratigraphy. The project emphasis is on interdisciplinary, international collaboration of scientists, education and outreach. This report provides an overview of the work completed in 2009. Reports from previous field seasons, AMS radiocarbon dates and additional specialist reports can be available upon request.

Acknowledgements: Our thanks are due to the excellent, hard working 2009 field crew, Mr. John Mussington, for facilitating our research, training students in marine biology and opening his lab to us Mr. Calvin Gore for his continued

support, expertise and excellent advice, the school teachers of both the primary and secondary schools that have taken active roles in connecting their students with the visiting scientists, the people of Barbuda whose kindness, support and enthusiasm make this project possible. Funding for this project was provided by PSC-CUNY Grants Program, the CUNY Northern Science and Education Center, The CUNY Honors College, the CUNY STOCS Program, Universitet Laval, SUNY Buffalo and Manhattanville College. The research would not have been possible without the dedication, hard work and commitment of the previous crews of 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009 field crews, who have our warmest thanks.



Dr. Thurston working with team members interpreting phosphate results

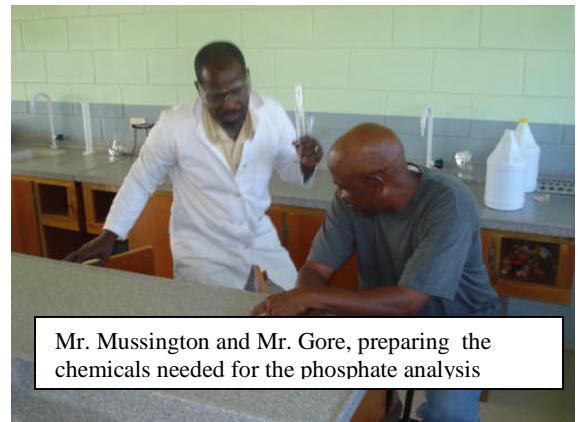
The 2009 project was intended to provide:

Field training, to beginning archaeology students that had received preparatory lectures and hands-on training in archaeology and Caribbean material culture, prior to their trip. In Barbuda the students received daily lectures, weekend excursions and hikes concentrating on Barbuda's ecology and cultural history

guided by Mr. Gore, lagoon ecology guided by Mr. Mussington and terrestrial ecology, by Dr. Nancy Todd. Students also received hands-on training in flotation and paleoentomology by Dr. Allison Bain and phosphate analysis by Dr. Tina Thurston.



Team members getting a guided tour of the historic monuments in Codrington Village



Mr. Mussington and Mr. Gore, preparing the chemicals needed for the phosphate analysis

Community outreach



The 2009 field season establish a much closer bond with the Barbuda school system. Dr. Perdikaris was invited to a number of guest lectures at both the primary and secondary schools and developed hands on projects for the young students to work with the archaeology team and their students. The team has been offered the use of the primary

school lab for the processing of artifacts in future seasons. Dr. Mussington will be in charge of the marine biology component of the project and has kindly extended access to email and support with the processing of chemicals for the phosphate analysis. Both primary and secondary schools will house a permanent display case displaying archaeological materials during the course of the school year. This year's Open Air Archaeological Exhibit was visited by all students of Barbuda and many local residents with an impressive number of visitors close to 600. Museum exhibits and screens were built by the local Youth Vocational Training Center. The Barbuda Council kindly provide all raw materials and the labor of the Barbuda Council construction team to organize the space for the open air exhibit.



Dr. Murphy overseeing the building of screens



The Barbuda Council team building tables for the open air exhibit

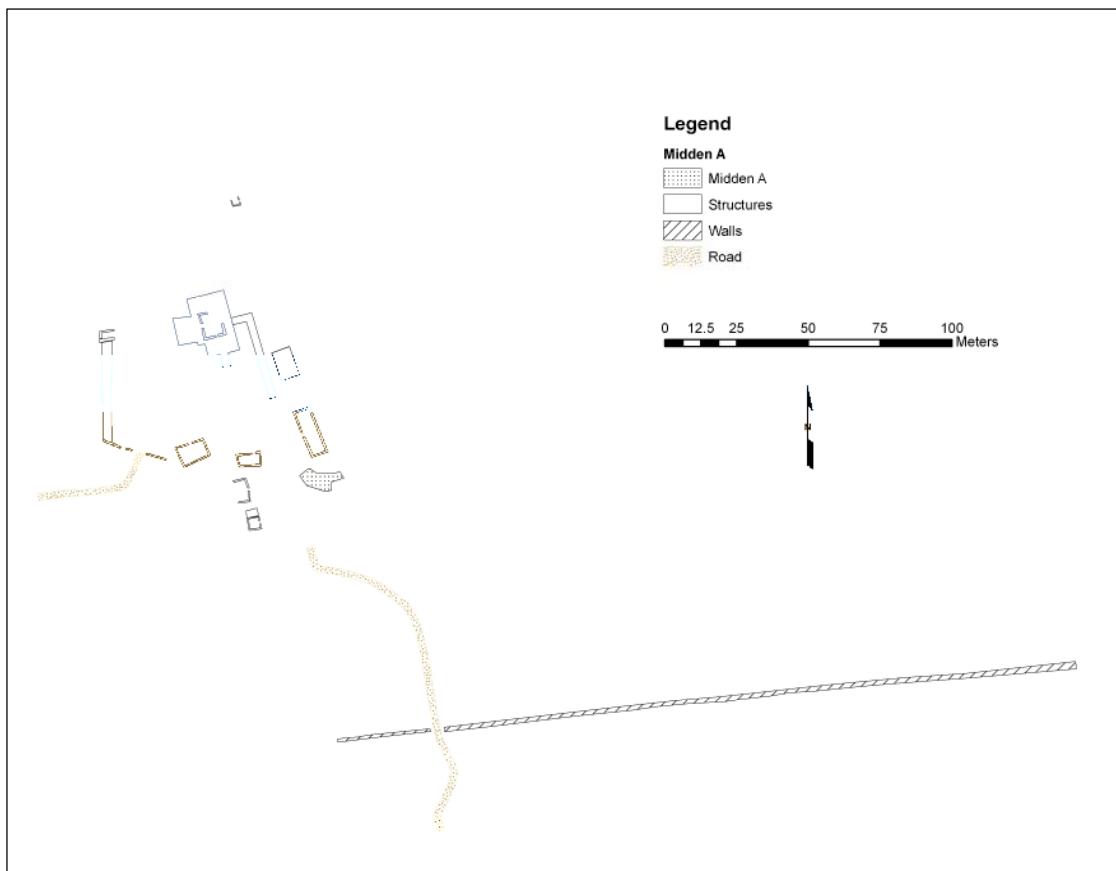
Discussions for the creation of a research station and a museum continued. There have been several buildings that have been identified as potential candidates but final decisions are still pending. The team was impressed with the developments since last

season. There has been effective signposting of all visible historical monuments. National Parks are also marked as such. The basement at the Government House remains the storage area for the archaeological artifacts. Community interest in the archaeological heritage of Barbuda remains high and there are plans for further integration of local youth participation in the archaeological team.



School teachers from the secondary school wanted to thank the archaeological team for the outreach work on the island and prepared an absolute feast of local delicacies. We are looking forward to be back in 2010 and continue the amazing collaboration to further develop awareness of cultural heritage and assist in further expanding the national parks and establishing the beginnings of a botanic garden.

Barbuda Historical Ecology Project 2009
Survey and Mapping for the Highland House, Barbuda
George Hambrecht
Cory look
Anthropology Department
Brooklyn College and CUNY Graduate Center



Highland House is an 18th century complex built in part by the Codringtons, the leaseholders of Barbuda from 1685 until 1870. At least some of the compound was also built by sub-leasees, William Byam and Samuel Martin 1746-1761 (Watters and Nicholson 1982). William Byam was said to have died and been buried on Barbuda in 1755 (Debrett 1824) but it is unlikely that any of the Codrington's ever lived on the island for any great length of time. They held a number of sugar plantations on Antigua as well as other islands. The family was prominent in the British colonial administration of the Leeward and Windward Islands. Barbuda was their own personal holding leased directly from the crown. Though there were attempts to raise cash-crops on the island they were unsuccessful and eventually Barbuda became a provisioning island for the other sugar islands. Along with this the island was apparently a retreat for the Codringtons, their friends and business associates. Highland House was built as a country house, possibly a hunting lodge, for the Codringtons. William Codrington, son of John Codrington, one of the original signers of the

Barbuda/Codrington lease, wrote a letter to (presumably) one of his managers on Barbuda asking him to plant a wide variety of trees and fruit on the island, as well as to preserve the game. In this letter he says that he intended to build a house on the highlands and to retire there (Watters and Nicholson 1982). He died in England in 1738, but the letter does give some idea of what the Highland House estate might have originally been intended for.

"I beg yt youll have a good orange Orchard planted at Barbuda Sappordillers, grapes of all Sorts, plantings, Bonanahs Lime hedges, Lemons, Tammarins, Coccoe nuts for I design to end my days there, next to the highlands where [?whene] I designe a house one time or other – so pray pserve all y deere feasants & Partridges & and suffer none to be killed on any ptence wtever, nor no gentlem' to there shooting....." (Watters and Nicholson 1982)

The site would surely have been a lovely retreat. The site is on one of the highest points on the island and is exposed to an almost constant east wind that keeps the area cool and the air fresh. All the buildings seemed to be built with this breeze in mind as they all have a number of doors and windows open to the east in order to catch this breeze. The main house commands a view of the whole of the north section of the island, and possibly with its original height much of the southwest area of the island as well. It could certainly have seen the village of Codrington and the Castle. The site had a cistern and spillway for fresh water and had a wall around at least part of the complex. It is made up of a main house in a clearing on the edge of the Barbudan highlands. A number of stone out-buildings lie to the south of the main house in an area sheltered by trees.

The first task set for the survey of Highland House in January of 2009 was to walk the site in detail with the map created by Watters that was published in 1982. Watter's map proved very accurate considering the conditions he was working under. In his report he mentions a number of times that the site was overgrown with dense scrub. Barbudan scrub is a particularly hostile landscape filled with sharp thorns, cactus, and the skin irritating hog bush, so it is admirable that he was able to map it as well as he did. That being said the conditions for survey during the January 2009 season were much better. The site was largely cleared of scrub during 2008 at the behest of the Barbuda council. This was done to facilitate tourism to the site but it also had the effect of making our survey much easier. This clearing of the site also revealed a number of structures that were not mapped (though many were noted in his survey) by Watters. The site was mapped by total station (figure 1). Due to issues around ease of coding Watters numeral structure codes were not used but instead the structures were given letter codes. Table 1 gives codes used for this survey as well as Watters' codes for structures he mapped.

Two transects (north-south and east-west) were staked out through the complex. A surface survey of one two square meters every two meters on each transect was carried out. No significant artifact concentrations were found. After this it was decided to walk the whole site within the confines of the surrounding bush. Two possible midden concentrations were found- midden A to the south of structure F and midden B, downhill from structure K. There is a sparse but consistent spread of 18th century artifacts on the surface across the whole site.

There was also an informal survey of the path called Bun Jacket Road that was lead by Calvin Gore, a Barbudan whose knowledge of the history and folklore of the island is unparalleled. Mr. Gore remembered that the area around Bun Jacket Road was known for having peculiar plants not considered native to the Island. Mr. Gores memory of this area coupled with the passage from the letter written by Sir William Codrington in 1720-1721 made a look at the area of great interest. Artifacts were found all the way out to the end of the path. We were accompanied by the tropical ecologist Dr Nancy Todd on this walk but due to time constraints and the extremely dense bush on either side of the path we could not penetrate into the interior. No obvious plant introductions were seen from the path. This area needs further investigation.

Description	Watters 1982 Map Code	Hambrecht 2009 Map Code
Cistern and Spillway	2	A
Main House	1	B
Walkway to Main House	-	C
"Garden" House	-	D
Structure at edge of escarpment	-	E
Structure	9	F
Structure	7	G
Structure	6	H
Structure	8	I
Structure	5	J
Stone Drain	4	K
Wall	-	L
Homefield	-	M

Table 1



Main House

The main house, structure B, is surrounded by an outer platform/patio area on the west and part of the south side. A more substantial reinforced platform surrounds most of the house structure itself. Stairs, of a large even formal character enter the house from the west, and southern side. The north side of the building might have stairs as well but the rubble from the collapsed walls obscures them if they exist. This rubble seems to have been rearranged sometime after collapse in a fashion suggestive of stairs making this side of the building difficult to interpret. The eastern side of the house has no stairs but does have a walkway (structure C) leading to it from the south.



Figure 2. Main House (Structure B) – West Stairs

The whole house structure itself is very strongly built with walls in excess of a foot and half thick. The quality of the masonry in some cases is high as can be evidenced from the pictures of the western stairs (figure 2). The walls of the Main House itself seem to be of a rougher quality (figure 3).

Historic documents suggest the structure had two stories (Watters and Nicholson 1982). Whether this was the case could not be determined. It is likely that at least some of the stone from the structure might have been removed for use elsewhere as building materials. This also might be the case for the surrounding wall and other structures (Calvin Gore, personal communication).



Figure 3. Main House (Structure B) – North Stairs to main house platform

The House lies on an axis roughly following the cardinal points. The ease of airflow from east to west of all the buildings at Highland House would have been even more effective in the Main House as it is on a raised platform that catches the breeze the constantly flows from the Atlantic.



Figure 4. Main House (Structure B) – Eastern Stairs, Entrance, and main house platform. The line of stones on the left of the picture leading up to the platform is part of the walkway (Structure C).

There is a pathway lined with stone (structure C) that starts in the southern part of the field around the Main House that proceeds north and then turns 90 degrees to the west meeting the platform around the Main House at a point where a doorway allows access into the building. Structure C seems on first observation to be a formal landscaping element directing people from the area of the outbuildings as well as the general area of the main entrance to the south into the Main House.



Figure 5. Main House (Structure B) – the “passage” down to the “turret” on the north side of the house.



Figure 6. Main House (Structure B) – the octagonal “turret” on the north side of the main house.

A curious element of the Main House is on the northwest corner of the building. A passage leads from the northern “foyer” to the north ending in an octagonal stone structure (figures 5+6). There is a tree growing out of this structure whose roots have furthered the erosion of the structure and warped its original shape. This structure has been informally dubbed the “turret” as that was what it suggested when first observed. Calvin Gore, of the Barbuda Council and an invaluable source of information on all things Barbudan pointed out on the inside of this structure there is a reddish deposit that he usually associated with standing water. He suggested that this structure was a small cistern or even fish tank. Another possibility is that it was in fact a turret and what we see is the base of what was a tower for observing the northern end of the island. A further possibility is that it is a decorative feature.

The Main House has a number of places where plaster is still clinging to the walls. In most cases this plaster has been scratched in a cross-hatched pattern, most likely to facilitate the addition of another layer of plaster on top of the one on the masonry wall itself.

Structure B – The cistern and spillway



Figure 7. The Spillway going north, at a slight downgrade, toward the cistern. Structure A is the spillway leading at a slight downhill angle, to the north, into a cistern. Historic documents mention the presence of a cistern at Highland House, and the lack of freshwater anywhere near the house would have made storage a necessity (Watters and Nicholson 1982). The spillway has eroded significantly but it still clearly leads into the cistern which was built of good quality masonry.



Figure 8. Cistern (Structure A) – north side with view of the spillway

There are stairs leading into the cistern from the eastern side of the structure and on the opposite side there is an overflow drain (figure 9). The cistern is currently filled with rubble, dirt, and vegetation. The spillway also functioned as the western boundary wall of the complex itself. The wall (structure L) ends at the southern end of the spillway and directly abuts it.



Figure 9. Cistern (Structure A) – overflow drain on the western wall of the cistern.

Structure C

Structure C is the walkway mentioned before that connects the southern area of the complex containing the many outbuildings with the main house (figure 10).

Whether this walkway was a decorative landscape element or had some more specific use is uncertain. Considering that the main entrance seems to have been in the south this walkway might have been a formal approach to the main house. More research on Georgian approaches to landscape in such a peculiar context as this must be undertaken before the whole complex can be understood as a landscape/architectural statement.



Figure 10. The Walkway leading from the south to the eastern entrance of the main house.



Figure 11. Structure D – north end

Structure D

Structure D is more enigmatic than the rest (figure 11). It consists of a low rectangular foundation with very little masonry left intact. The quality of the stonework also seems much more haphazard. This might be one of the more temporary structures associated with the sub-leasees Byam and Martin, though there are other possibly more relevant similarities in some of the other out-buildings. Regardless this large structure (in terms of area) seems to have been of less permanence than the rest, unless it was dismantled and its masonry used for the other buildings at some time. Another possibility is that it was a garden element, possibly recreational and decorative in use.

Structure E

Structure E lies right on the edge of the escarpment (figure 12). Much of the northern end of the building has toppled off the escarpment leaving barely two walls intact. Initially it was thought that this building might have served as a watch tower considering its excellent view shed from the edge of the plateau. Yet there are many places from which to achieve this view, not least from the Main House itself. Another possibility that came to mind was that this might have been a privy. The drop off of the escarpment is fairly severe and at least during the rainy season any waste would have been washed further down the hill. It would have been a convenient place to get rid of human waste, close to the houses yet

with a good drop off from the escarpment that would have kept the waste at least somewhat distant. While no specific privy-like architectural elements (such as stone toilet holes) are present, much of the north side of the building has collapsed. The size and quality of the whole complex, as well as some of the more specific kitchen related elements suggest that the Codringtons might have invested in such a well built and solid privy. Finally Calvin Gore told the author that some of the best midden material associated with the site actually lies on the slope below the edge of the escarpment, suggesting that household trash was thrown over the side of the escarpment. This might also suggest that Structure E was a privy.



Figure 12. Structure E – southern end.
Structure F



Figure 13. Structure F – north wall.

Structure F is a large building built of high-quality stonework (figure 13). It has a number of patches of plaster still on its internal walls. It is not possible to do anything other than speculate on its use. It had a number of widows on each side as well as an entrance on its southwestern corner.

Structure G

Structure G is a smaller building also made of good quality stonework (figure 14). It had been cleared of most of the rubble and vegetation within it exposing a high quality flagstone floor (figure 15). This structure also shows evidence of a number of alterations throughout its life. A doorway on its eastern side as well as one on its northwestern corner were filled in half-way, creating windows. It also shows evidence of possible partitioning. Its relatively small size and the alterations made to it might suggest that this building contained administrative offices.



Figure 14.

Structure G – north wall and entrance.



Figure 15. Structure G – flagstone floor

Structure H

Structure H is another structure constructed of high quality fitted masonry(figure 16). The walls of this structure survive to the greatest height of any of the buildings. Again the purpose of this building is unknown.



Figure 16. Structure H – south wall.

Structure I

Structure I is a building divided down the middle into two parts (figure 17). The northern part might have had high, complete, stone walls. The southern portion has foundation walls that rise to about 30-40 cm and then taper in. The inside of these walls have insets where presumably wooden structural beams were laid (figure 18). This structure might have been a small stone room with a projecting tented room to the south. Historical documents and letters mention two timber structures that might have been built by the sub-lessee Byam. This structure is a good candidate for one of these.



Figure 17. Structure I – north end.



Figure 18. Structure I – south end - note the spaces for structural inserts.

Structure J + K

Structure J is a two room building with access to the outside from both rooms as well as a doorway between the two (structure 19). The stonework of this building seems a bit rougher than the other buildings and there are some interesting indications that this might have been a kitchen or washing building. Inside of the western room there is a large stone basin as well as a length of stone gutter. Directly outside of the building on the south side from the basin lies structure K (figure 21). This is a long stone drain that leads from Structure J downhill away from the building running roughly southwest, outside the complex wall (figure 22, Structure L). Below where this drain ends there is a light but consistent spread of historic midden material, bone and ceramics, that has been labeled Midden B. A preliminary interpretation of this building and the drain is that this was either a wash-house or kitchen, or possibly both. The waste from the activities centered around the basin was thrown out into the drain so that the waste ran down the drain downhill away from the complex itself. It was not clear whether there was a direct connection through the wall from the basin to the drain.



Figure 19. Structure J – north wall and entrance.



Figure 20. Structure J – looking east – note the partition, the large stone basin on the right and the length of stone trough below the basin.



Figure 21. Structure K – the stone drain

Structure L – the Wall

The wall around the complex is an interesting element. It does not completely encompass the complex. The wall ends at its western terminus abruptly, and in ruins. Calvin Gore has suggested that this was due to the stonework being removed for other buildings. This would be odd in that the western end is farthest away from the village of Codrington. It could be that the wall was deconstructed for buildings on the western side of the island, though these are few and far between. Another possibility is that the wall just stopped being built at this point.

At the point where the wall ends near Structure J there might be indication of some sort of structural work between the Wall and Structure J. This could have

possibly been a gate or door. Strangely though, the wall does not continue to the south (figure 1).



Figure 22. The Wall – (Structure L)

This brings up the question of what purpose the wall served. Protection, from other colonial powers and their own slaves, would not have been served through a non-contiguous wall. Keeping animals out of their planted areas might have been one purpose. The wall could also have been a delineator between the Codrington's area of leisure and sport and the rest of the island and its farming and animal husbandry.



Figure 23. The South Gate

The southern gate of Highland House seems clearly to have been the main entrance to the complex. The approach would seem to have been from the south. The current approach from the west is modern and the opening in the wall one that was broken through, not an original gate.

Midden A

Just to the south of Structure F there was a fairly dense spread of historic midden material. A surface collection was taken. This area, like the rest of the site, has variable top soil, going from exposed limestone substrate to hollows in the limestone filled with an ochre colored soil. The surface collection has not been analyzed yet, but a casual survey revealed ceramics (mainly delft, some German stoneware, some Staffordshire Slipwares) bottle glass, shell, lead spall, small amounts of charcoal, and no mammal bones at all. The pH was 6.9-7.

Discussion

Nothing that we observed countered Watters and Nicholson's timeline for Highland House starting in the early 18th century with abandonment by the early 19th century at the latest (Watters and Nicholson 1982).

A question that arose was what exactly was Highland House used for. We know from the historical documents that the complex was at least intended as a 'vacationing' spot for the Codrington family and their friends and colleagues. We can also reasonably assume that no one in the Codrington family ever

permanently resided in Barbuda, let alone Highland House, with the possible exception of the first generation of Codrington lessees, Christopher and his son William. What exactly Byam and Martin were doing on Barbuda is not exactly clear. There is one reference in Debrett's 'The baronetage of England' that states that what wealth the Codringtons enjoyed from Barbuda came from the "capital and exertions" of the sub-leasees Byam and Martin (Debrett 1824). The scale and investment behind this complex suggests that this was used for more than just a country retreat, regardless of first intentions. The viewshed from the site is magnificent. We were also informed by Calvin Gore that there is a platform on a piece of higher ground in the bush to the southeast from which you can see the whole of the east side of the island down to its southern tip. Such a placement would be an ideal place from which to observe shipping either in transit or in the process of foundering on the reefs of the east coast. Salvage was a source of income for the Codringtons. It has even been suggested that the Codringtons 'encouraged' shipwrecks on their reefs through false lighthouses. Highland House would have been an excellent place from which to manage such efforts.

Highland House has great potential for both the interdependent possibilities of making the site a better heritage tourism site and as a scholarly historical archaeological project. The site is a novel one for the 18th century Caribbean. It is not a plantation, and how it was utilized is not well understood. Highland House could be an important place to study a number of issues regarding the early modern British colonial system in the Caribbean in a context not directly within the sugar plantation system. It might also be a productive place to study the idea of leisure in the early modern period in an imperial context. As a pure landscape study it would be an important addition to the already substantial body of studies of early modern landscapes throughout the Atlantic and wider world.

Future Work

- Much more work needs to be done with the large amount of historical documents available. Both the Berleant-Schiller papers and Margaret Tweedy's dissertation need to be examined. The Codrington papers in their various forms need to be examined as well.
- A number of the buildings could be cleaned out in a systematic way in order to make the complex more conducive to tourism as well as recover any artifacts that might have been deposited in the buildings before and after abandonment.
- Over the 2009 January season there was discussion of some island residents who might know the recipe for the mortar traditionally used on the island. If this was found it might be beneficial to try to recreate this and use it to shore up some of the buildings at the Highland House complex.
- The area below the escarpment needs to be surveyed in order to look for the midden material Calvin Gore mentioned.
- More time needs to be taken on Bun Jacket Road and the surrounding bush to look for more structures as well as introduced flora.
- A comprehensive surface collection could generate a good assemblage to be used for better dating and interpretation of the site. Test pits around

Structure J and K (the possible kitchen/wash house and the stone drain) might also be a promising approach to excavation.

- An overall plan needs to be created with the Barbuda Council that addresses how to make Highland House a better asset for the island as a whole.