

Planning as an Historic Resource: An Example from the Western Piedmont of North Carolina

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As an archaeologist working with the historic resources of Carolina for more than twenty years I have found that the issues of planning have been an ever-present consideration in the study of our culture. It might be thought that this refers to the interface between the archaeologist or preservation planner and twentieth century change. It may also refer to the destruction of historically significant material resources, for example the excavation of a plantation ruin in the path of a bypass around Charleston or the clearance of a reservoir basin on one of our river systems.

There is, however, a broader aspect to the approach of archaeology: the ability of the discipline to examine process over time and determine the relationship of one point in time to another in terms of process. It is that aspect of the archaeological analysis of Carolina that this discussion will treat. In particular, it is intended here to examine the presence of planning in the origins of Carolina, in the origins of the Moravian towns of western North Carolina, and to draw some conclusions about the effect of that planning in the present day. Planning is a basic historic artifact of Carolina, an artifact which is visible in its material structure and in the ongoing flow of its culture.

As current planning takes place it is important to be aware that processes begun generations before continue into the present. As never before we have the capability to irrevocably transform the configuration of our landscape and in that process alter the streams of our culture. As our rate of change accelerates and our ability to affect physical change intensifies, it is important to recognize and enhance what is already present.

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Strategic Planning: English Colonization

The planned origins of Carolina lie in the Elizabethan period in England, when the ascension of Elizabeth to the throne provided a new stability which allowed that nation to consider participation in the colonial activities of America. Spain, the arch enemy of England, and other European nations were making great headway in the acquisition of lands and wealth in the New World. England was initially left out because of internal disruption, but her location on the western edge of the European continent was well-placed with regard to the Atlantic routes. England was now positioned in the mainstream of the Atlantic rather than on the periphery of the Mediterranean center as she had been in the past. With this advantageous positioning and the stability of a powerful monarch, England turned its consideration to the acquisition of New World land and wealth.

The method taken by the Elizabethans was not based on the throwing out of blind and blundering probes; it was founded on careful and considered planning. Two scholars, cousins who were both named Richard Hakluyt, were engaged on the highest levels of English decision-making to formulate plans for England's entry into the colonial enterprise. These two cousins first gathered all the accounts of explorations and conditions of the New World which could be obtained, translating those which were in foreign tongues into English. These were eventually published under the title *Diverse Voyages to America* in 1582. The accounts were analyzed and synthesized into a plan for English entry into the colonial contest.

Two basic Hakluyt documents, *Notes On Colonization* (1578) and the *Discourse Of Western Planting* (1584), present the substance of the English plan, which eventually led to the formation of Carolina. The first work, *Notes On Colonization*, deals with the elements of the individual colony, whereas the much longer and more comprehensive *Discourse* identifies strategic goals and

procedures to be employed in the acquisition of New World lands desired by the English. Taken together they constitute a generic model of the individual colony and the role of such colonies in the broad strategic context of New World colonization.

In summary, the English strategic model identified the area of interest as lying on the continent of North America from 30 degrees North latitude, at the upper end of peninsular Florida, to Cape Briton at 47 degrees North latitude. This is the temperate zone of the continent and is basically the land mass occupied by the United States today. This area was regarded by the Hakluys as being in the possession of no other European power (ignoring the capitol of Spanish Florida, Santa Elena, on Port Royal at present day Parris Island, SC), and was to be initially occupied on the seaboard by two to three fortified ports of the Hakluyt model.

These plans were acted on by the English throne and government, with the Roanoke voyages of the 1580's as the initial attempt to occupy the center of the proscribed area of activity. Although the attempts to the Outer Banks failed, a movement of a half-degree to the north into the Chesapeake successfully anchored the center of the English colony with the occupation of Jamestown in 1607. The location of this colony on the riverine system of the Chesapeake provided a much closer fit to the Hakluyt model for the individual colony than the initial attempts to the south on the barrier islands.

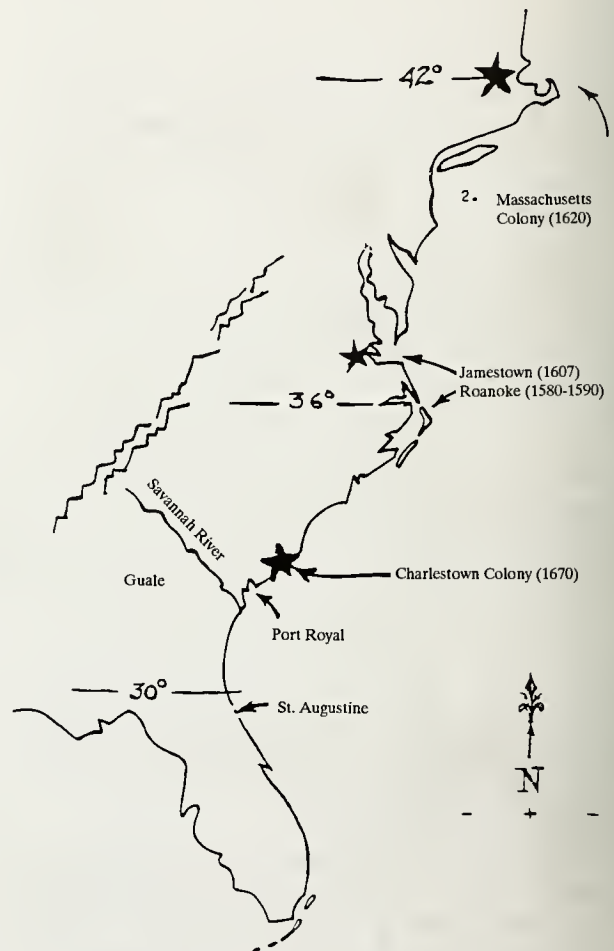
The occupation of Massachusetts in the 1620s met the requirements of the strategic plan, anchoring the northern wing of the seaboard and acting as a buffer against the newly established French on the St. Lawrence. The presence of this English colony to the north allowed expansion against the French to the north and infilling between Massachusetts and the Chesapeake, absorbing the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam that lay between the two.

The founding of Charles Town in 1670 provided the fortified port on the southern wing of the seaboard and led to the establishment of Carolina, the southern buffer against the Spanish in Florida. The form, structure and behavior of the Charles Town colony fits closely the Hakluyt model of the fortified port described in their *Notes On Colonization*.

The English established an area of no-man's land below Charles Town, lying along the Savannah River and manned by Indian warriors allied to the English colony, eventually to become the south and west boundary of Carolina. During this period the coastal zone of Carolina above Charles Town, between that colony and the Chesapeake/Albemarle settlements, saw an ever increasing infilling of colonization behind the Charles Town buffer. The North Carolina settlements of Bath, NC (1690), New Bern, NC (1710), Brunswick, NC (1725) and George Town, SC (1729) are examples of that

infilling, while Edenton, NC (1710) appears more properly to be a part of an expansion of the Chesapeake settlement into the North Carolina Albemarle.

The English had earlier attempted the settlement of Stuart Town on Port Royal to the south of Charles Town, which had immediately been attacked and destroyed by the Spanish in 1686. The successful establishment of Beaufort, SC on Port Royal (1711) increased pressure on the Spanish below Charles Town as well as on the Indian populations of the area. The Yamasee War of 1715 resulted from this movement of English settlers into the area of Port Royal and the Savannah and marked the beginning of a period of unrest on the border



Stages of the English Model.

which lasted for fifteen years. An outgrowth of this war was the English occupation of Guale on the coast well south of the Savannah in 1721, resulting in the creation of the colony of Georgia in 1733. Georgia assumed the functions of an expanding buffer colony, continuing the pressure on the Spanish.

Within the broad scope of the Elizabethan plan for colonization of the New World can be seen a process which adhered to form and behavior over a period of some century and a half. Charles Town is predicted in the planning of the Elizabethans in the 1570s and 1580s, and the activities of Carolina and later Georgia against the Spanish in Florida can be found explicitly called for in the scheme proposed by the two Richard Hakluyts.

While Carolina played its part in the broad scheme of English plans, it also demonstrated its individual characteristics. Established as a Proprietary colony, the region of Carolina had specific pressures relating to its vastness and the contiguity of its northern boundary to the Chesapeake. The Albemarle section of Carolina, just south of the boundary with Virginia established by the grant to the eight Lords Proprietors, resulted from expansion from the center from the center of the colony, that is, from the Chesapeake. This occurred independently from the infilling allowed by the buffer of Charles Town. Early on the presence of this settlement in Carolina required a separate government because of its great distance from Charles Town and resulted in the division of the colony into North and South Carolina.

With the coastal zone made relatively secure through military pressure against the Spanish and the ongoing subjugation of coastal native populations, this zone between the Chesapeake/Albemarle and Charles Town grew in population and solidified the English hold on the southern wing. By the 1750s the English had a firm hold on the entire seaboard of the area chosen by the Elizabethans. They had occupied the center, then the northern and southern flanks respectively, and from these positions of strength had populated the coastline of the temperate zone of North America.

18th Century Comprehensive Planning

It is at this point that the Moravians enter the region of Carolina. A Protestant Episcopacy with its origins in Bohemia and Moravia of central Europe, the *Unitas Fratrum* or United Brethren had already attempted to participate in Carolina. In 1734 a group of Moravians had joined Oglethorpe's settlement of Savannah in newly-established Georgia. Drawn there by missionary goals, the Moravians soon learned that Georgia was a battlefield between the English of Georgia and Carolina and the Spanish of collapsing Florida. Stability among the Indian groups was nonexistent and the fierce ongoing guerilla war involving all parties made any meaningful establishment of peaceful outposts impossible. The Moravians therefore moved to the north and established their first continental settlements at Bethlehem and elsewhere in Pennsylvania in 1740.

The leadership of the *Unitas Fratrum* was made up of people accustomed to the function of planning as a formal component of their activities. Both North and

South Carolina had ceased to be Proprietary colonies by the 1740s, but one of the Lords Proprietors had held out a one-eighth share of Carolina with rights to sell the land. Lord Granville, the last of the Lords Proprietors of Carolina, came to hold the Granville Grant, basically the northern half of North Carolina.

Granville came to learn of the *Unitas Fratrum* because of business the group was conducting before parliament in 1749. Learning of their demonstrated performance in Pennsylvania, Granville offered the sale of 100,000 acres of land in the Granville tract. Granville's offer meshed with the needs and goals of the Moravians. Their movement to the New World had been prompted by religious persecution in Europe, and they felt the need for a large contiguous tract of land to fully establish their desired way of life. For Granville the development of such a tract, by this time only available in the western section of Carolina, offered the possibility of opening a major settlement on the frontier of the colony.

By 1752, the terms of the sale were agreed to and the leadership of the *Unitas Fratrum* had set the plans for the tract. Bishop August Gottlieb Spangenberg, known as Brother Joseph to the Moravians, was selected to make the search. He was experienced in the colonies, having led the shortlived colony in Georgia in 1734, and having established Bethlehem in 1740.

Spangenberg came to North Carolina with specific instructions about the form of the Moravian tract to be followed as much as possible. He was to lay out the 100,000 acres in a square, twelve miles to the side, with a navigable river through the center. The center of the tract was to be suitable for an *Orts Gemein*, or central town, to be surrounded by outlying satellite towns within the tract. Politically, the tract was to constitute a single Moravian parish within the structure of North Carolina.

Spangenberg, with five of his Brethren, first went to Granville's land office in Edenton, on Albemarle Sound, where he conferred with Granville's agent, Sir Francis Corbin. They spent a week in Edenton, outfitting for a trek through the forest, where Spangenberg recorded in his journal that the English agent was "a walking encyclopedia concerning North Carolina affairs" after spending several hours each day with him. Granville's agent advised Spangenberg to go to the "Back of the Colony," or west to the Blue Mountains, where he might find land suitable for the tract. Joined by William Churton, the land office surveyor, and several hunters who were to also pull surveying chains for Churton and to serve as guides, Spangenberg began his search.

Spangenberg demonstrated pragmatic flexibility as he pursued the accomplishment of the Moravian plans. He immediately realized that the prospects of locating the tract on a navigable river in North Carolina were non-existent. The land on the few navigable coastal plain rivers of North Carolina had long been taken up



Survey map of Wachovia from 1766.

and was not available for a project on the scale of the Moravian tract. Discarding this criterion he began to evaluate alternatives for the trade necessary to sustain a major Moravian settlement. His journal indicates an early recognition that the settlement would be in the western part of Granville's Grant. With this knowledge, Spangenberg established that the tract would be about 300 miles from Charles Town and about 300 miles to the Chesapeake. Early in his search he also evaluated the Roanoke and Cape Fear drainages as avenues of trade from the potential location of the tract.

Spangenberg demonstrated a planner's mind working in orderly procedure. He was constantly informing himself about the region of Carolina with which he was to integrate his tract, attempting to find the best solution from the means at hand. He wrote in another context

that the basic principle of colonization was to "have the data first, and know the nature of a thing: then one can say it should be done thus or thus." Spangenberg brought to his considerations an awareness that his goals required a meshing with a process which was already in operation, the English process of Carolina. He was also aware that this process was incomplete on the frontier, and that the flexibility of that context would provide some freedom, allowing the *Unitas Fratrum* to establish a certain autonomy. This was the purpose of the new Moravian tract, the establishment of an equilibrium between established English process and the particular religious requirements of the Moravians. That balance required a planner's mind, capable of addressing both the expediencies of short-range planning and the solidity of foundation required for long-range planning.

Early in 1753, Spangenberg selected a tract of land some ten miles east of the Yadkin, which encompassed almost the entire drainage of Carguels Creek, now known as Muddy Creek. In terms of internal characteristics he selected it for a rich diversity, mentioning the countless springs and numerous fine creeks, securing his water for consumption and for power, saying as many mills as may be desired can be built. The tract contained rich bottoms and uplands, with good pasturage for cattle, plenty of stone and woodland for construction material, all contained in terrain of relatively gentle relief. While the tract was not an exact square, it was laid out on a basic rectilinear form, sixteen miles on the north-south axis by twelve miles on the east-west axis. Spangenberg named the tract *Der Wachau* after an estate in Germany belonging to Count Nicholas Von Zinzendorf, an important leader of the *Unitas Fratrum* in Europe.

In terms of the broader regional context, Spangenberg noted that the tract lay on the upper road to Pennsylvania, at that time no more than a trail into the area. It was about 150 miles from a landing on the Cape Fear to which a road was to be built and about 350 miles to Edenton. When the location of *Der Wachau* is examined relative to Carolina, it is found to be on the heads of the drainages of the Yadkin, the Cape Fear and the Roanoke, close to the heads of the Santee/Catawba and the Neuse/Haw systems and on the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road at the base of the Appalachian chain. From the perspective of an interior location in colonial Carolina, the tract sits at a well-positioned hub of radiating lines connecting it to a vast region and important centers of trade.

Implementation of the plan for the Moravian tract was begun the same year it was laid out, with the establishment of the first settlement, Bethabara, by a group of Single Brothers sent down the Great Wagon Road from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania for that purpose. Finding the Wagon Road too narrow for their Pennsylvania wagon they were required to cut down its width. As they pro-

gressed they found impassable sections and frequently had to cut a new roadway. Arriving at *Der Wachau* they established themselves at an abandoned cabin which had been built by a trapper named Wagner.

Although not located in the center of the tract as required by the plan, Bethabara became the *de facto* central town of the tract, and was immediately a center on the frontier wilderness of western Carolina. The presence of a doctor, a minister and a number of craftsmen in the party of Single Brothers brought people in from as far as a hundred miles away to find aid and services.

Bethabara, meaning "House of Passage", was known by the Moravians to be a temporary location, yet the town grew in numbers of structures, population and importance. Additional Moravians came south from Pennsylvania after the establishment of the town and soon the population was made up of families sharing the communal economy of the frontier settlement.

The unrest of the French and Indian war and the subsequent Cherokee war made of Bethabara a peaceful stronghold on the frontier, fortified by a palisade and a well-filled larder. On many occasions neighbors from the surrounding countryside either fled entirely from the frontier or sought refuge in the fort at Bethabara. In the midst of these alarms, when the surrounding frontier settlements sought refuge, the *Unitas Fratrum* put in place its first planned town.

In 1759, in a period when many refugees had fled into Bethabara, Bishop Spangenberg arrived from Bethlehem to select the site for the town designed to further the process of *Der Wachau*. Selecting a site three miles northwest of Bethabara and directly across the Great Wagon Road, Spangenberg ordered the establishment of Bethania, meaning "House of the Lord."

Laid out by the newly arrived Prussian trained surveyor Phillip Reuter for survival in a hostile environment, his plan for Bethania drew on a medieval German form of clustered houses and residential lots surrounded by agricultural outlots. This was in response to an early Spangenberg dictum that the initial Moravian settlements on the frontier were to be clustered for mutual support and safety due to the Indian unrest which he accurately predicted. The occupants of the new village, established and erected within months of the site selection, were made up of eight families from the Bethabara Congregation and eight families expressing a desire to join with the Moravians selected from those who had fled into Bethabara from the Indians. Both Bethabara and Bethania continued successfully into the 1760s, when in 1766 Bethabara was directed to get on with the siting and construction of the *Orts Gemein*, the planned central town of *Der Wachau*.

Although there was some initial resistance on the part of Bethabara's residents to moving the religious,

administrative and craft facilities to a new location, the requirements of the plan for the tract were acceded to. Reuter, the surveyor and forester of the tract, selected a site near the center of the basically rectangular body of land and the central town was built by Bethabara and Bethania. Construction was begun in 1766 and Salem was formally occupied in 1772.

Bethabara's population was cut in half and the town was radically changed in function. For 20 years it had been the administrative center of the Moravian tract. It suddenly became a small agricultural village near its neighbor, Bethania. Bethabara might be thought of as somewhat analogous to a trailer set up on a modern construction site to contain the map tables, files, communications, equipment and supplies of the project at hand while the site is under construction. For a period of time that trailer is the center of activity. Then, suddenly, it is no longer needed, it is packed up and it disappears. Although Bethabara continued to have an active congregation, the village fortuitously located at the site of Wagner's cabin is now an archaeological site.

At about the same time that the central town of Salem was occupied three Country Congregations came into being at the southern end of the tract: Friedberg, Friedland and Hope.

Made up of people migrating to *Der Wachau* because of a desire to participate in the Moravian experience in North Carolina, none of the three had a formal town organization, although each had a defined town lot. By the time of the formal occupation of Salem in 1772, the frontier had moved well beyond the Moravian tract. The threat of Indian attack was remote and the surrounding population, now substantial, had been flowing down the Great Wagon Road in thousands, sustained by the presence of the Moravian towns of Bethabara and Bethania.

Spangenberg had said in 1752 that at first his Moravians must live close to one another in clustered settlement, but when the area became more settled, as it must, then it would be possible for the inhabitants of the tract to live on individual farms. Residence on individual farmlots was the form of settlement in Friedberg, Friedland and Hope, occupied at the end of the colonial period. This was much closer in pattern to the surrounding North Carolina pattern of settlement than the earlier Moravian settlements of Bethabara, Bethania and Salem.

From the laying out of the tract in 1753 until the near end of the colonial period, *Der Wachau* is an illustration of successful adherence to planning goals. Coming into the wilderness of Carolina with a concept in mind, in less than 25 years the Moravians brought the concept into reality, a body of land with a preplanned internal structure and a preplanned relationship with the containing community.

The relationship of the tract to the broader context of Carolina was one of great importance. The Moravian tract of *Der Wachau*, called Wachovia by the English, was a most important anchor for the pre-Revolutionary maturation of Carolina. It was this tract of Wachovia which sustained the frontier of northwestern Carolina during the Indian wars of the 1750s and 1760s and which provided a major center on the Great Wagon Road to sustain the early immigrant populations pouring down that thoroughfare. It is interesting to recall that its presence was initiated by the last of English Lords Proprietors of Carolina, even though Granville may not have been fully functional as a Lord Proprietor at the time.

The English partially acceded to the Moravian desire for their own Parrish by establishing Dobb's Parrish co-terminus with Wachovia. The Moravians, however, were never given full political control of their affairs and received some direction from the courthouse established at Salisbury. The tract was never divided in the formation of new counties on the frontier, although this was once proposed but put off through complaint of the Moravians.

In 1849 the new county of Forsyth was created, a county which is in effect an expanded Wachovia. The desire to have Salem function as the county seat was objected to by the Moravians, but with their acquiescence the secular county seat of Winston was grafted onto the Salem Town Lot and in 1913 the hyphenated name of Winston-Salem was adopted.

Conclusions

The examination of Carolina and its elements reveals that plans put in place by colonial settlers are not dry and distant events of antiquity. Rather they are the basis for ongoing processes which extend strongly into the present. The intentions of past planners have a durability which transcends generations and successive governments. This durability is particularly evident when the plans carry the cultural weight of carefully formulated Elizabethan concepts for the settlement of a continent, or the establishment of a Moravian settlement or a North Carolina county. This is exemplified by the region of Carolina. Winston-Salem is rapidly growing into the physiography of Wachovia both supported and constrained by the Muddy Creek drainage basin chosen by Bishop Spangenburg in 1753. Faced with this expansion, outlying historic communities find the rapid change of 20th century growth a threat to their long-term stability.

Recognizing that Forsyth County is the Wachovia Tract expanded, study of the tract and its elements has provided input for the planning process which has produced substantive results. Initial plans for a northwest

Beltway around Winston-Salem through Forsyth County proposed a corridor directly through the village of Bethania. The route as originally conceived intruded directly into the core of the 1759 Town lot at the foot of God's Acre Hill. God's Acre is the Moravian name for a graveyard, an important focal point for each Moravian congregation.

In 1991, the Bethania National Register District was increased from 50 acres (established in 1975 based on standing structures along Main Street) to 500 acres to encompass the significant agricultural lands, forests and colonial road system which surrounded the settlement. An immediate benefit of this expansion in the planning process was the elimination of proposals for any Beltway corridor which would intrude on the Bethania Town Lot. Awareness of Bethania's significance continues to increase and the National Park Service is currently preparing a nomination to elevate Bethania to Landmark status based on the the 1991 National Register amendment and boundary expansion.

Similarly, but on a different scale, a proposal to widen and pave a historic lane within the village of Bethania was deemed a threat to the roadway as well as adjacent historic and archaeological sites. Negotiation with district and state Department of Transportation engineers and environmental officials resulted in the lane being paved in its existing dimensions with a surfacing of tan pea gravel. As a result, the lane was stabilized with a sensitive appearance that did not negatively impact the character of the historic village.

Both proposals would have been detrimental had they been carried through as originally planned without awareness of Bethania's past and the relationship of the existing community to that past. As professionals working at the turn of the 21st century, it is important to recognize and understand that deliberate and explicit past planning has been an integral part of the reality of Carolina in company with deep seated implicit traditions. Current planning cannot take place on a clean slate and the presence of powerful plans and goals originating in past generations must be acknowledged. Awareness of history and culture is not merely a nicety in planning, it is basic to understanding the community. If the future is to be planned for, then that planning must incorporate the past and the planning which deliberately shaped our past and our present.

Carolina, with its relatively short period of existence rooted in colonial and post-colonial settlement, offers much information about extended effects of plans, successful and otherwise. Those interested in the long-range view have much to gain through the awareness and study of these processes. CP