

Bonfield Plantation Buildings: Some Remnants

The salt shortage in 1776 led Samuel Chamberlaine Jr to experiment with salt recovery from the Boone Creek waters:

"He set up an experimental salt works at Bonfield, boiling down the brackish waters of Boone Creek in large kettles over open fires, and that winter pickled some of his pork and beef with the salt residue to demonstrate that it would preserve meat. During the next summer he established a salt works at the Ratcliffe Manor home of his father-in-law, Henry Hollyday, who used it successfully for six years, until imported salt came back on the market again."

D.J. Preston, Oxford: the First Three Centuries, p 122

The records show that the site was along the inlet at the western part of the property. The inlet is now silted and wet land, however a walkway remains.

Close to the Manor House, slaves lived (i) in the Cottage on the east side, now a three bedroom house, and (ii) along the inlet on the western part of the Manor House. Foundations of one of the inlet huts can still be seen today.



Henry Yates Thompson, an Englishman, visited Bonfield in September 1863, left the following drawing of a slave hut published in D. J. Preston's book on Oxford (p.157)

The following aerial view of Boone Creek indicates the location of the plantation remnants and the probable location of the now defunct burial ground of the chamberlains "of Bonfield" within the Homestead grounds.

