On 22 July, 2008, the author resumed test excavations in the lot of the Edward Moulton Barrett house at 1 Market Street in Falmouth, Jamaica. The project had a number of sponsors, most notably Falmouth Heritage Renewal, Inc. (FHR). The excavation was conducted as a field school arranged through the Center for Cooperative Study Abroad (CCSA), and proceeded under permit from the Jamaica National Heritage Trust.

Students from three universities participated in the field school: Kevin Colbert and Stephanie Lundert from Murray State University, Caitlin Rock from Northern Kentucky University, and Rylan Thomas from Eastern Kentucky University. Several FHR staffers participated at times, as well, for an introduction to archaeological field work.

The short-term goals of the project were as follows:
1. To extend the sample of artifacts from the early period of the Barrett lot occupation, towards assemblage patterning studies and spatial analysis of activities in the houselot;
2. To reveal details of the architectural history of the Barrett house and lot, towards aiding the historic preservation efforts of FHR.

In the long term, the project hopes to obtain a similar sample of lots representing households of varying social, economic, and ethnic character within Falmouth, to characterize archaeologically the range of the late 18th to early 19th century community.

Methods
We began the project by re-establishing the 2006 grid datum at the northwest corner of the lot, with grid North oriented along the west (back) wall. The grid therefore aligns with the street plan of this section of Falmouth. We offset an effective datum at 1S1E (all units metric) so that we could set up a transit over the point. We measured several points along the 6S lines in order to find the easterly positions of our previous test units. With these points as references, the slightly depressed backfilled areas of the 2006 units were easily found. As in 2006, we used the northwest corner of the back porch of the main house as our elevation datum, set at arbitrary 100.00 Assumed Elevation.

We removed the backfill from two units, 11-13S13-14E and 4-5S17-19E. The sandy bottom of the first unit was very wet with groundwater, so that we would not attempt to remove another excavation level. However, the bottom of 4-5S17-19E, halted at the base of Level 5 in 2006, was firm enough that we excavated Level 6.

We continued the excavation with expansion units as described below. The excavation proceeded by trowel and other small tools, and soils were removed in 10 cm levels except where
practicality or visible stratigraphy suggested otherwise. The crew mapped and photographed the floor of each level, and measured all elevations by transit with reference to the elevation datum. Artifacts recovered were bagged by provenience unit and the bags labeled accordingly. All washing and cataloguing is complete as of this writing.

We initially attempted to cover the excavations each night with tarpaulins, to protect the profiles, but thieves took the tarpaulins overnight and it seemed pointless to continue to donate to some unknown person’s tarpaulin collection. Over the weekend of 2-3 August, rain soaked the ground and raised the water table, which situation the tarpaulins would not have helped anyway, as we discovered in 2006.

Excavation

4-5S17-19E

This 2006 unit was sited to investigate a solid blockage about 10-15 cm below the surface, found in Test Posthole 4S19E. This turned out to be one of a line of square flagstones, well set in lime mortar, that led parallel to and just inside the north wall of the excavation unit. On removing the flagstones, the crew discovered that the pavers butted against a foundation of stone blocks that formed the effective north profile of the excavation. The sandy midden-like soil in the upper levels gave way to a zone of heavy brick and limestone rubble, which in turn rested on a reddish, brick-laden marl. The excavation floor, at about 50 cm below surface, was within the red marl zone when storm waters raised the water table and inundated the unit. We were unable to ascertain whether the red marl was the base cultural zone, overlying natural sand.

By removing Level 6 in this unit at the beginning of the current project, we did find sand underlying the red marl zone. There are still artifacts in the sand, but they are likely to have worked their way downward during the initial occupation of the yard (rather than signifying earlier occupation), and the water table makes it impractical to continue the excavation deeper.

We turned our attention to expansion unit 3-4S17-18E, in order to investigate the limestone foundation and the interior of the building it supported. The foundation was made of massive blocks more than 30 cm wide, with a perpendicular wall of equally large blocks leading to the north. Presumably this signifies at least a two-room plan for the building. On the east side, the interior of the foundation was filled with marl and lime, well packed, to form the base of a floor of 9” x 9” square brick-like pavers. Bricks covered the north-leading foundation, and may have continued westward to form a floor at one time. The west side was not filled with the same materials but rather a yellowish sand, and the builders constructed a gap in the foundation to drain the western room. Only a very small area of the latter was contained within the excavation unit. This unit yielded very few artifacts. Inside (north of) the limestone foundation, at the base of the excavation, there is yet another foundation of brick and mortar. It is not clear whether the brick foundation underlies the limestone, because the latter blocks were simply too massive to attempt to remove them.

The August 2 storm prompted a shift to a new expansion unit. Due to trees and heavy concentrations of rubble in three directions, we chose to expand south, and established 5-6S17-18E with the goal of further exploring the yard. We excavated five levels, ending in the red
marl. As with 4-5S17-19E, the lowest levels produced mainly pearlwares and creamwares, indicating an occupation in the first few decades after the Barrett house’s construction. Following a recurrent theme in these excavations, the crew discovered an apparent wall at the south profile. Curiously, this wall is built of rough stone, looking more like a field wall than a foundation. Its purpose is unclear.

11-13S13-14E

In 2006 we placed this unit to investigate whether there might be an architectural feature that aligned with the end of a stone wall segment that probably marked the west end of the original lot (Ivor Connelly, personal communication). The excavators removed a set of flagstones at the surface in the south end, and immediately found a brick pavement that barely intruded into the unit. By the time the excavation reached a depth of approximately 55 cm below surface, the crew had excavated through intercalated layers of sand and marl, evidence for two additional distinct brick pavements, a pit feature filled with yellow marl, a relatively modern pipe trench intruding from the upper stratum, and a stone foundation across the base of the south profile. The unit floor was in rapidly moistening but artifact-bearing sands when rain raised the water table.

For the current project, we expanded south, in order to investigate the foundation at the south wall of the original unit. We established a 1 x 2 m unit at 13-14S12-14E. A large tree root, attached to an even larger fallen tree, penetrated the eastern half of the unit, but we thought that we could excavate around it. Not unexpectedly, the tree fall disturbed the stratigraphy in the eastern half. Less expectedly, it also impacted a brick structure. The western half of the unit contained a great deal of brick, some displaced, some probably dumped. We removed the bricks in each level, revealing more brick underneath. It was not until we reached Level 5 that we realized that we had been dismantling the north wall of a rectangular brick structure, of which the east wall was right up against (and partly disrupted by) the tree stump and the west wall lay against our west profile. The crew left the base of the north wall intact in Level 6.

At this point the August 2 rain inundated the excavation floor, and we expanded southward into 14-15S12-13W in order to find the south wall of the brick structure. We did not find it, but followed the west wall into the south profile. In the southeast corner of the unit, large limestone blocks may have formed the corner of yet another foundation.

Based on field observation, the deposits in the expansion units post-date the deposits found elsewhere on the site (surficial soils excepted, of course). In the deepest levels of 13-14S12-14E we recovered insulated copper wire, which probably was associated with the disturbance created by the tree fall. Inside the brick structure in 13-15S12-13W, bottle glass and whiteware suggest that the deposit was created after the mid-19th century. It is likely that one or a succession of structures stood here until after that date, when they were torn down, and the foundation voids became a trash repository.

We completed recording of all open units on August 7, and backfilled on August 8.
Comments

The 2006 excavations revealed a number of architectural features, including stone walls and foundations, pavements, and numerous fill episodes. The 2008 excavations compounded the complexity. Only a large-scale block excavation covering most if not all of the yard will reveal the outlines of all of the outbuildings that occupied the space over the history of the Barrett house. Despite crab and tree disturbance at some places, it is evident that substantial intact deposits of the first decades of the nineteenth century remain intact. Should this property be developed in the future, I urge the JNHT to require further archaeological impact mitigation before any destruction of the grounds.

In my previous reports and papers on this project, I noted only a single sherd of yabba ware. I have reexamined the collection and found that there are, in fact, a number of such sherds. I will examine their distribution more closely. It is possible that the presence of African-Jamaicans is more detectable here than I first thought, and an extensive examination of the yard as suggested above should incorporate this question in the research design.

The artifacts have been catalogued and are boxed in order of catalogue number in the facilities of Falmouth Heritage Renewal. The collection will remain in Falmouth. In the future, the author may request permission to remove the faunal materials temporarily for analysis by an expert in animal remains.