

## Cypress Gardens Heritage Room

### Self-guided Tour

#### A little history...

Cypress Gardens is located on a small section of what was once Dean Hall, a very large rice plantation. The DuPont factory next door is also located on the former plantation. Before DuPont began construction of their new Kevlar plant, they needed to perform an archeological survey on the historic property. According to maps of the old plantation, the location where they chose to build was not an especially important or highly used area. The layout of the plantation, however; had changed several times over the years as the different owners had rearranged it. DuPont's survey showed that a more thorough investigation was warranted. They commissioned an archaeological dig and discovered much more than anyone expected.

It took about 30 people a month to complete the dig. The archaeologists found 125,000 artifacts including 59,000 pieces of slave-made clay pottery called Colonoware. This was the largest collection of Colonoware ever recovered in the United States. Another unusual discovery was that the slaves made and used Colonoware pottery at Dean Hall into the 1850s and possibly as free people. This is surprising because Colonoware is not usually found on archaeological sites that date after 1830.

From the dig and working with historians, they determined that 150 slaves lived at the site in a 19-cabin village and some of the cabins were two-story. Some of the same families lived on the land for 150 years.

The exhibit opened in 2010 and contains just a small percentage of the total number of artifacts found, the rest are in storage or are still being studied.

#### The exhibit layout

When you enter the building, the panels to the right discuss the resources used by archaeologists to interpret the past, including the various artifacts found as well as their location in the ground relative to other artifacts. The panels to the left discuss the resources used by historians such as wills, tax records, and diaries. The panels along the back wall combine the information discovered by the archaeologists and historians to tell the story of Dean Hall.

There are sections of the back wall that address the slave trade, rice production, the daily life of slaves, how to make Colonoware, plants that we grow today that have African origins and other contributions of slaves to our culture, and the creation of Cypress Gardens as a park.

## **Video**

There is a 15-minute video that runs continuously in the room that describes the work of the archaeologists and historians and tells the history of Dean Hall.

## **Activities**

There are questions on some of the panels that require students to look more closely at the maps (historian panels) and artifacts (archaeologist panels). The answers are written on the bottom of the panels in a lighter font.

Did you see...?

\*The heirloom garden just outside the door. It contains some of the plants that people would have planted around their homes in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

\*The demonstration rice field. It is on the right side of the swamp, about 1/8 mile up the trail. There are interpretive signs there that describe rice production. Rice is usually visible growing in the field during the summer.

\*The swamp. Remember, this is the water that was used to flood the rice fields using the inland method. It was through the hard work and ingenuity of slaves that this area was transformed into a rice plantation. Our walking trails are on top of the dikes they built. The swamp is labeled Reservoir on the maps in the exhibit and will help to orient you and compare the layout of the old rice plantation to the park today.