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# South Carolina Historical Magazine

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## DANIEL AXTELL'S ACCOUNT BOOK AND THE ECONOMY OF EARLY SOUTH CAROLINA

ALEXANDER MOORE\*

THE DANIEL AXTELL ACCOUNT BOOK, 1699-1707, IS AN important primary source of information for the study of early South Carolina economic history. It comprises the records of four business enterprises that Axtell, his partners, employees, and slaves operated in the South Carolina Lowcountry during the first decade of the eighteenth century. Their sawmill, tannery, and tar kiln were in the vicinity of present-day Summerville. As a fourth enterprise, Axtell managed Newington, a large plantation owned by a relative, Lady Rebecca Axtell. Daniel Axtell's records provide a clear picture of how these enterprises were conducted and the value of the goods they produced.<sup>1</sup> The Newington plantation records are equally significant. They document the daily business affairs of Newington: purchase of provisions, tools, and labor needed to raise rice and corn for export. During Axtell's management, Newington and, indeed, all of South Carolina were shifting to rice culture as the province's dominant economic activity. The sales of Newington rice recorded in the account book are among the earliest existing data on the genesis of Carolina's rice industry.<sup>2</sup>

The Daniel Axtell account book is part of the manuscripts collection of

\*Executive director, South Carolina Historical Society

<sup>1</sup>Henry A.M. Smith, "The Town of Dorchester, in South Carolina — A Sketch of Its History," in *The Historical Writings of Henry A.M. Smith*, Vol. 2, *Cities and Towns of Early South Carolina* (Spartanburg, S.C.: The Reprint Co., 1988), pp. 1-37; and Smith, "The Upper Ashley; And the Mutations of Families," *Historical Writings*, Vol. 3, *Rivers and Regions of Early South Carolina*, pp. 203-250; Anne Natalie Hansen, *The Dorchester Group: Puritanism and Revolution* (Columbus, Ohio.: The Sign of the Cock, 1987), Ch. 5, "Puritanism Moves South." Editing of the Axtell account book was sponsored by a 1989 Local History Grant from the American Association for State and Local History, Nashville, Tenn. Page number citations refer to the Axtell transcription, copies of which are at the South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston; the South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia; Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston; and South Carolina Department of Archives and History (hereafter SCDAH), Columbia.

<sup>2</sup>See Axtell Account Book (transcription) index entries for rice and rice barrels. Duncan Clinch Heyward, *Seed from Madagascar* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1937); Peter A. Coclanis, *The Shadow of a Dream: Economic Life and Death in the South Carolina Low Country, 1670-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); David Doar, *Rice and Rice Planting in the South Carolina Low Country*,

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the Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston. Mrs. Clara Crane, an Axtell descendant, gave the account book to the Massachusetts institution in 1958 after it had been on deposit there since 1930.<sup>3</sup> An 1899 genealogy of the Axtell family states that the account book then was in the possession of Joshua Eddy Crane.<sup>4</sup> Henry Augustus Middleton Smith viewed the account book or at least knew something of its contents in 1905 when he wrote an essay on colonial Dorchester, South Carolina.<sup>5</sup>

The Axtell account book is a single manuscript volume containing 132 pages numbered in ink at the upper left corner of each verso page. The first ninety-two pages record Axtell's South Carolina activities and the remainder of the book is devoted to Axtell's business ventures after his 1707 return to Massachusetts. The account book contains scattered accounts kept by later generations of the Axtell and Crane families as late as the 1770s. There is much doodling and penmanship practice by children. The upper corners of the first fifty-five pages are missing so that Axtell's numbering is present only for page fifty-six and those following.

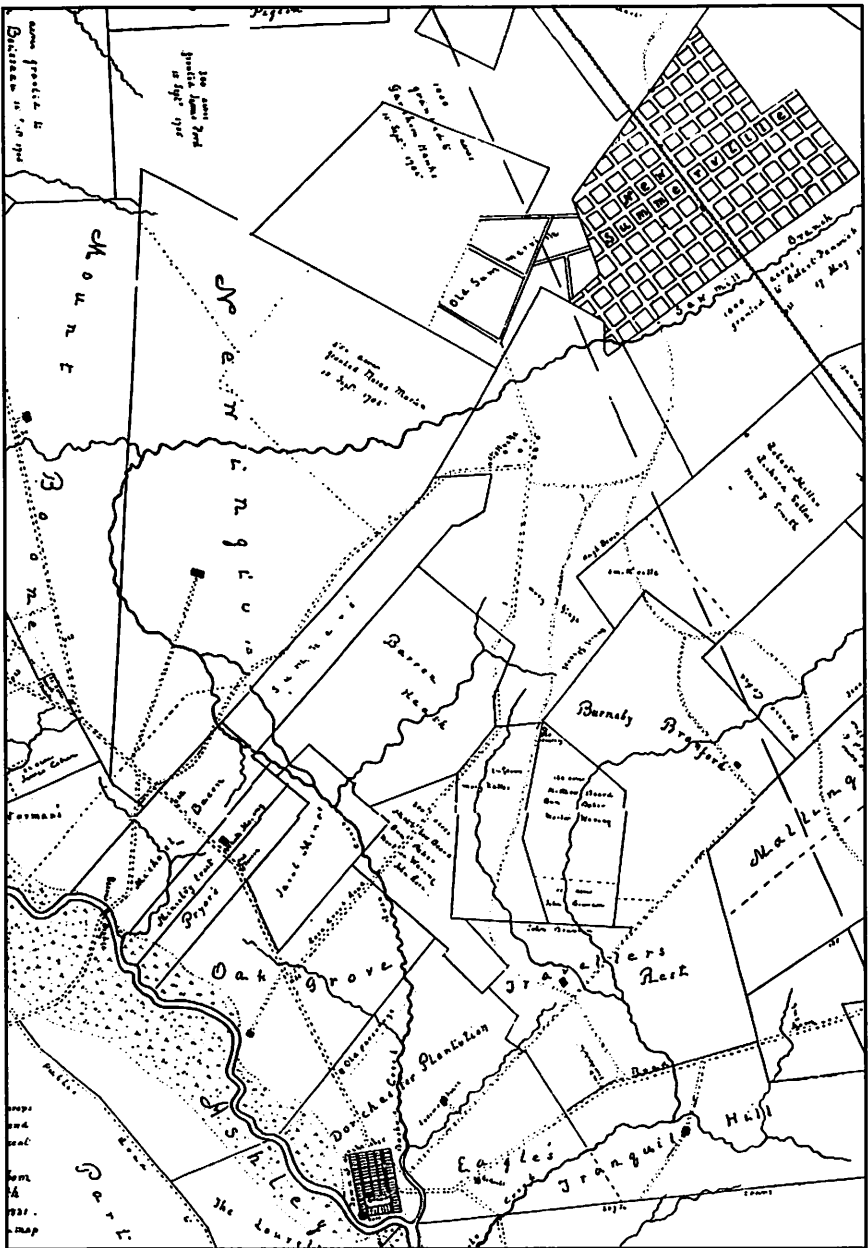
At the top of each verso page Axtell wrote the account name (an individual, one of his businesses, or Newington) and recorded debits to that account. The corresponding recto page lists an account's credits and is usually headed "Per Contra Credit." With this arrangement Axtell had before him at a glance both credits and debits of each account. This style of bookkeeping was a rudimentary form of double-entry bookkeeping

Contributions from the Charleston Museum, No. 8 (Charleston, S.C.: Charleston Museum, 1936); and James M. Clifton, "The Rice Industry in Colonial America," *Agricultural History* 55 (July 1981), pp. 266-283, are representative histories of rice in South Carolina. Converse W. Clowse, *Economic Beginnings in Colonial South Carolina, 1670-1730* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1971) and Verner W. Crane, *The Southern Frontier, 1670-1732* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1928) describe Carolina's economy prior to the rise of rice culture. Deposition of Joseph Meade, Oct. 24, 1711, Records of the Register and of the Secretary of the Province, Volume 1712-1713, pp. 17-21, SCDAH, recorded a 1709 sale of rice by administrators of the estate of Dominick Arthur. Accounts of rice sales in 1717 and 1719 are found in records of George Boyle's estate among the microfilm edition of Papers of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, Series A, Vol. 17, pp. 127-130, and Vol. 18, pp. 117-127.

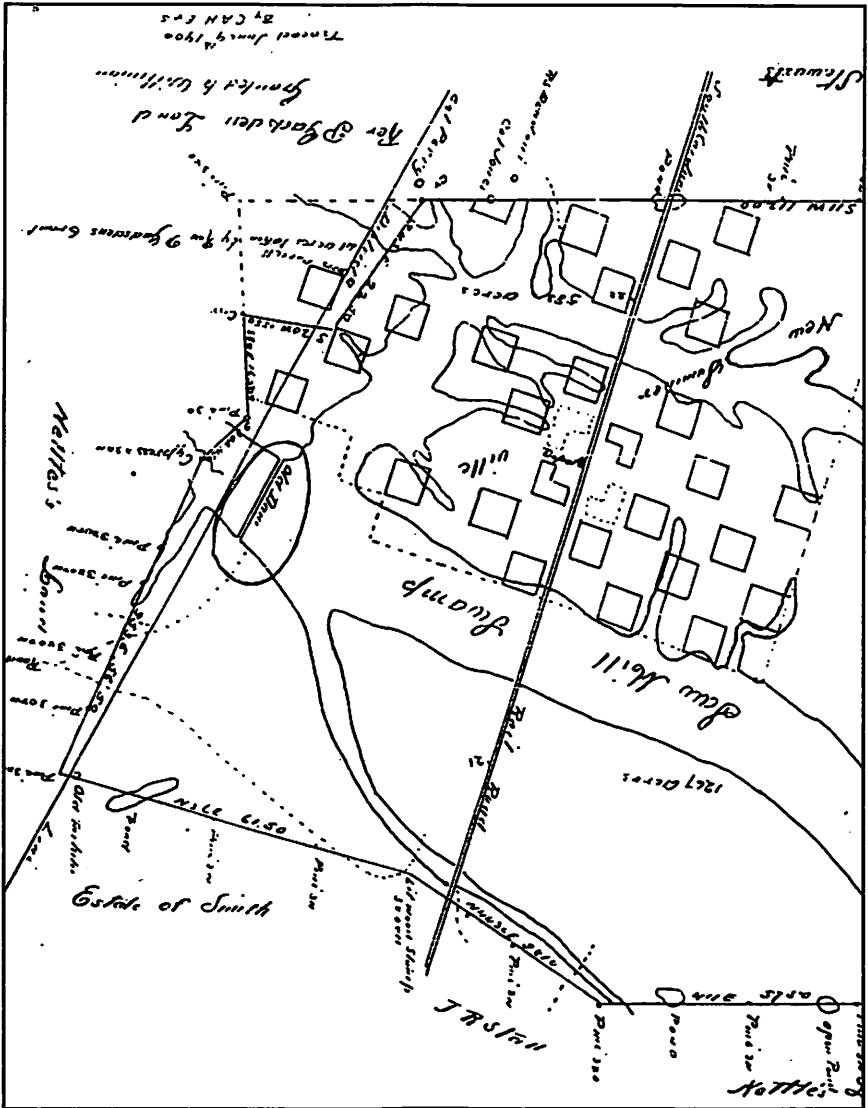
<sup>3</sup>*Catalog of Manuscripts of The Massachusetts Historical Society* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1969), Vol. 1, p. 215.

<sup>4</sup>S.J. Axtell, "The Axtell Family in America, First Five Generations," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 53 (April 1899), p. 229.

<sup>5</sup>At that time Smith stated that Crane owned the account book and another important Carolina record, the diary of Elder William Pratt, Axtell's father-in-law and founder of Dorchester. Smith, "Town of Dorchester," pp. 16-17. William Pratt's diary is published in *Narratives of Early Carolina, 1650-1708*, edited by Alexander S. Salley, Jr. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911; repr. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1946), pp. 189-200.



Plantations and settlements of the upper Ashley River, including Newington plantation and the town of Dorchester. Map from Henry A. M. Smith, "The Upper Ashley; And the Mutations of Families," which first appeared in the *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* and was reprinted in Volume III of *The Historical Writings of Henry A. M. Smith*.



A detail of "A Plan of Saw Mill Tract," 1850, shows Axtell's "Old Dam" (circled) near the town of "New Summerville." McCrady Plat Collection, microfilm number 1642, South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

commonly used during the period.<sup>6</sup> Axtell "reckoned" his accounts by adding up debits and credits and then subtracting the smaller from the larger sum. He then had a "balanc du" by him or by the account holder. The amounts recorded in the account book are in pounds, shillings, and pence and all refer to "Carolina money." In 1701 the rate of exchange between the currency in use in South Carolina and the English pound sterling was 161 Carolina pounds to 100 English pounds sterling. By 1710 the ratio was 150 to 100. Axtell also entered amounts in "royals" (a British coin worth 7 1/2 pence), Spanish pieces of eight, and other "gould pieces."<sup>7</sup>

The Axtell account book is remarkable for its length, continuity, and the variety of enterprises it records. It illustrates a complex, vigorous lowcountry commercial society. The names of 175 individuals — rich and poor, slave and free, male and female are found in the account book. Some persons appear only briefly, but many have several entries revealing their occupations and social status. Most of those named in the account book resided on nearby plantations and farms or in the town of Dorchester, on the Ashley River about six miles from Newington.

Account books of this era are numerous for New England and the Middle Colonies but the Axtell account book may be unique for South Carolina. A few small account books survive but these were kept briefly or for a single business activity. Some of the earliest English records of South Carolina contain the Lords Proprietors' business accounts of their partnership in founding Carolina. These records contain information on transportation, encouragement of commerce, and the business mentality that motivated the proprietors' endeavors.<sup>8</sup> Henry Woodward's accounts of his Indian trade and the journal of John Evans, another Indian trader, are good sources for the study of early Carolina trade.<sup>9</sup> Mrs. Elizabeth Sindry's account book recorded the disposition of her estate by her administrators, Colonel William Rhett and Sarah Rhett. The Ball Family Papers at the South Carolina

<sup>6</sup>W.T. Baxter, "Accounting in Colonial America," in *Studies in the History of Accounting*, edited by A.C. Littleton and B.S. Yamey (Homewood, Ill.: Richard D. Irwin, 1956), pp. 272-287. Baxter used the phrase "bookkeeping barter" to describe early colonial accounting procedures. See John Pynchon, *The Pynchon Papers. Volume II, Selections from the Account Books of John Pynchon, 1651-1697*, edited by Carl Bridenbaugh and Juliette Tomlinson (Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1985) for a representative account book of the New England region.

<sup>7</sup>Clowse, *Economic Beginnings in Colonial South Carolina*, p. 146; Axtell Account Book, pp. 2, 12, 21, 23, for currency.

<sup>8</sup>The proprietors' accounts are published in *Collections of the South Carolina Historical Society, Volume 5, The Shaftesbury Papers and Other Records Relating to Carolina and the First Settlement on Ashley River Prior to the Year 1676*, edited by Langdon Cheves (Richmond, Va.: William Ellis Jones, 1897), pp. 56-57, 137-152.

<sup>9</sup>Henry Woodward's Account Book, 1674-1678, SCDAH; John Evans Account Book, 1702-1715, Manuscripts Division, U.S. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.



Historical Society, Charleston, contain a plantation journal with some entries for 1720. The South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, and the records of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel contain brief plantation accounts.<sup>10</sup> However, the Axtell account book is longer, more nearly complete, and contains a greater variety of information than any other known account books.

Axtell's account book documents some of the earliest verifiable prices for Carolina commodities, labor costs, and prices of goods and services in the Dorchester region. Axtell raised, sold, and bought rice, cotton, potatoes, turnips, peas, corn, beef, tallow, and pork from his neighbors and also purchased them from Newington slaves who likely raised them on their own time, after plantation work was done.<sup>11</sup> Local artisans—John Branford, shoemaker, Thomas Osgood, master carpenter, Joseph Orris, blacksmith, and Joseph Griffin, weaver—purchased provisions. More accurately, they exchanged their goods and services for them. Some farmers bought few provisions from Axtell but often performed day labor at his sawmill. Axtell acted as a banker of sorts, lending small sums of money to individuals without recording any interest charges. The amount was simply entered on the debit side of the individual's account and became part of the "balenc du" when accounts were reconciled. From the sums loaned and the frequency with which he was called upon to lend, it is easy to imagine that Axtell's neighbors were chronically cash-poor.

**DANIEL AXTELL WAS BORN ON NOVEMBER 4, 1673, NEAR Marlboro, Massachusetts.** His parents were native New Englanders. Axtell's paternal grandfather, Thomas Axtell, had emigrated from Berkhamstead, Hertfordshire, in 1642, and had been one of the founders of Sudbury, Massachusetts. Thomas was the elder brother of Daniel Axtell, the Puritan regicide executed in 1660 when Charles II returned to the English throne.<sup>12</sup> Daniel Axtell of Marlboro immigrated to Carolina some time in the late 1690s, probably in conjunction with William Pratt's Dorchester congregation. However, his arrival may have been independent of that group for a "kinsman" of his, the London merchant and Carolina Landgrave Daniel Axtell had acquired a proprietary grant of 2,900 acres of land in Carolina in

<sup>10</sup>Mrs. Elizabeth Sindry Estate Account Book, 1705-1721, and Ball Plantation Journal, 1720-1778, Elias Ball XIV Family Papers, are in South Carolina Historical Society. Deposition of Joseph Meade, Oct. 24, 1711, Records of the Secretary of the Province, Volume 1712-1713, pp. 17-21, SCDAH, and inventories of George Boyle's estate, SPG Letters, Series A, Vol. 17, pp. 127-130, and Vol. 18, 117-127, are useful.

<sup>11</sup>Axtell Account Book, pp. 14, 115.

<sup>12</sup>Axtell, "Axtell Family in America," p. 227; Sumner Chilton Powell, *Puritan Village: The Formation of a New England Town* (New York: Doubleday, 1963), pp. 25, 28-30.

December 1680. That grant became the nucleus of Newington plantation. Landgrave Axtell died shortly after reaching the province. His widow, Lady Rebecca Axtell, and their children kept and worked their lands, expanding their holdings during the eighteenth century. Landgrave Axtell's elder son Daniel died at sea about May 1681 and his younger son Holland Axtell died some time between December 1691 and May 1692. The landgrave's daughter Elizabeth first married Francis Turgis, but he died in 1697. She then wed Joseph Blake, soon to become a Carolina proprietor and governor of the province. Governor Blake died in September 1700.<sup>13</sup>

With so many males dying prematurely in the Axtell and Blake families, Daniel Axtell, then about twenty-five years of age, may have come south to assist in the management of Newington. He soon became deeply involved in the economic life of the Dorchester-Newington region. He married Thankful Pratt, William Pratt's daughter, on May 12, 1702, and the couple had three children, Elizabeth, Daniel, Jr., and Rebeckah, prior to their return to Massachusetts in early 1707.<sup>14</sup>

Daniel Axtell's kinship to Landgrave Axtell is not known. The Atlantic Ocean had separated the branches of the family for two generations prior to the landgrave's immigration to Carolina. Also, the reason for Daniel Axtell's 1707 return to Massachusetts is not known. However, about the time he left, his father-in-law also returned to Massachusetts.<sup>15</sup> When he returned to New England, Axtell settled in Dighton, Massachusetts, where he established a sawmill, tannery, and tar kiln, the same businesses he had left behind in Carolina. He added a carting enterprise and may have operated a general store. These businesses are recorded in the latter portions of the account book. After leaving Carolina, Axtell had no business connections with Lady Axtell or his former friends, partners, and clients at Dorchester. However, Lady Rebecca did not forget her New England relative. In her will she left him some Carolina property.<sup>16</sup>

Daniel Axtell died at Dighton in January 1736. He willed only real estate to his wife and surviving children. There was no mention of sawmill, tannery, tar kiln, or slaves.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup>Alexander S. Salley, "Landgrave Daniel Axtell," in *South Carolina Genealogies* (Spartanburg, S.C.: The Reprint Co., 1983), Vol. 1, pp. 25-27.

<sup>14</sup>Axtell Account Book, p. 107.

<sup>15</sup>Salley, "Journal of Elder William Pratt, 1695-1701," in *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 193.

<sup>16</sup>Axtell, "Axtell Family in America," p. 228.

<sup>17</sup>Daniel Axtell Will, April 4, 1735, Miscellaneous Photostat Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society.

## AXTELL'S TANNERY

Cattle-raising was among the earliest business activities in Carolina. Many English settlers came from the cattle-raising regions of southern England and they brought with them familiar methods of agriculture and husbandry.<sup>18</sup> In addition, the Carolina proprietors encouraged settlers to raise provisions — including salt beef and pork and corn — for export to the West Indies and New England.<sup>19</sup> Newington was much involved in raising provision crops as well as the rice staple but there are few entries in the account book for the sale of animal hides. Axtell raised few cattle, but was an important partner in the cattle business. He set up a tannery on or near Newington that complemented both cattle-raising and Carolina's other important business, the deerskin trade. Although most of his tannery trade was in cowhides, Axtell bought deerskins singly or in small lots. He also purchased deerskins in quantity from Joseph Child, an Indian trader.<sup>20</sup>

There were many tanneries in the Boston area by the end of the seventeenth century and Axtell must have known through personal observation, if not practical experience, their local importance.<sup>21</sup> It requires little historical imagination to perceive through Axtell's eyes the Dorchester region's need for a tannery. Another circumstance testified to local interest in tanning. The South Carolina Commons House of Assembly passed in 1703 "An Act to Prevent the Sale of Leather not sufficiently Tann'd and the Regulateing the Processing of Shoo's."<sup>22</sup> Earlier tanyards in the region had apparently manufactured an inferior product and Axtell perhaps saw a chance to capture the local leather market.

On January 25, 1704, Axtell began to record expenditures for constructing tanyard buildings and the purchase of equipment for "taning in partnership" with Joseph Smith. Among the costs were boards and nails and one day's labor of Thomas Osgood, a master carpenter. Axtell purchased a fleshing knife for scraping rawhides, a bark shave, and other hooks and knives, some of which were for harvesting oak bark used in the tanning process. He also bought "oyel" to rub and finish leather.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup>John S. Otto, "Livestock-Raising in Early South Carolina, 1670-1700: Prelude to the Rice Plantation Culture," *Agricultural History* 61 (Fall 1987), pp. 13-24; Otto, "The Origins of Cattle Raising in Colonial South Carolina, 1670-1715," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* (hereafter SCHM) 87 (April 1986), pp. 117-124.

<sup>19</sup>"John Locke's Carolina Memoranda," *Shaftesbury Papers*, pp. 252, 262; "Instructions for Mr. Andrew Percivall. 23 May, 1674," *ibid.*, pp. 440-445.

<sup>20</sup>Axtell Account Book, p. 115; Philip M. Brown, "Early Indian Trade in the Development of South Carolina: Politics, Economics and Social Mobility during the Proprietary Period, 1670-1719," *SCHM* 76 (July 1975), pp. 118-128.

<sup>21</sup>Peter C. Welsh, "A Craft that Resisted Change: American Tanning Practices to 1850," *Technology and Culture* 4 (Summer 1963), pp. 299-317.

<sup>22</sup>Nicholas Trott, "New Collection of the Laws of the Province of South-Carolina" (manuscript volume in SCDAH), Part II, pp. 15-17.

<sup>23</sup>Axtell Account Book, pp. 60-61.

Partnership offered mutual benefits. Axtell had the capital or credit to set up the business and Smith managed the tanyard. Smith worked at the tannery and supervised the labor of slaves hired to assist him. The agreement between the two men called for them to divide the profits of the business equally. But out of his share Smith paid room and board to Axtell and had a personal account with him. On the same day that the men began the business, Axtell began recording Smith's debts for clothing, shoes, cash advances, and the labor of the slaves James, Hemp, and Titus, employed to harvest oak bark.<sup>24</sup>

Tanning leather was long, tedious, distasteful, and hard manual labor. At this time and for many years to come it was practiced with virtually no machinery and with methods a thousand years old.<sup>25</sup> Rawhides and deerskins were soaked in water to remove blood, flesh, and dirt. They then soaked for long periods in water mixed with lime to loosen the animal hair from the skin. When this soaking was completed, the hides were scraped with curved knives to remove the hair and again soaked, this time in fresh water. Repeated washing and scrapings made the tanning process even longer. Finally, the prepared skins were soaked in water saturated with oak bark, containing tannin, to transform the skin into leather. After tanning, the leather was dried and rubbed with oil — fish oil was commonly used — to seal the pores of the leather and make it supple. The process often took a year, but the production time for Axtell's tannery was about six months. Jean Pierre Purry remarked on the leather trade in South Carolina in 1731:

Most of their Shoes are brought from *England*, and generally sell for 40s. per pair. Not but that they have Hides enough, and very cheap, an Ox's Hide being sold for 30s. neither are they very destitute of the Means to Tan them: for they make very good Lime with Oyster-shells, and the Bark of Oak-trees is so plentiful, that it costs nothing but the trouble of gathering: They want therefore only a sufficient Number of good Tanners and Shoemakers.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>25</sup>Charles C. Gillispie, ed., *Diderot Pictorial Encyclopedia of Trades and Industry. Manufacturing and the Technical Plates selected from "L'Encyclopedie, ou Dictionnaire Raisonne, des Artes et des Metiers" of Denis Diderot* (New York: Dover Publishers, 1959), Vol. 2, plates 389-394, and descriptions; Welsh, "A Craft that Resisted Change," pp. 299-317.

<sup>26</sup>Jean Pierre Purry, "Proposals by Mr. Peter Purry of Neufchatel, for encouragement of such Swiss Protestants as should agree to Accompany him to Carolina, to settle a New Colony. And, also, A Description of the Province of South Carolina, Drawn up at Charles-Town, in September, 1731," in Bartholomew R. Carroll, ed., *Historical Collections of South Carolina* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1836), Vol. 2, p. 131.

Smith and Axtell purchased hides from their neighbors and by June 30, 1704, Axtell began to record entries "Per Contra Credit" for the tannery. On March 3, 1705, Smith and Axtell reckoned their accounts. The two each had earned profits to that date of 18 pounds, 14 shillings, 1 1/2 pence, but Smith's net profit for the year and a half of operation was a deficit of 8 1/2 pence, "his bord excepted."<sup>27</sup>

The tannery operated through April 1706 when the last reckoning of accounts was made. During that period the tannery had made a net profit of 55 pounds, 8 shillings, 33/4 pence. Of this, Smith's share was 23 pounds, 14 shillings, 1 3/4 pence, but his debts had consumed all of his profits. When Axtell prepared to leave the province in February 1707 Smith owed him 21 pounds, 13 shillings. Axtell assigned Smith's debt to Gershom Hawkes.<sup>28</sup>

Large orders in February 1705 of 386 pounds of sole leather and April 1706 of forty-one sides of sole leather, weighing 435 pounds, demonstrated Axtell's participation in the export trade. On January 31, 1707, Axtell made up a large shipment of skins and leather he had on hand. The shipment included 300 deerskins bought from Joseph Child at 2 shillings, 6 pence per pound and fifteen deerskins "bought of the Indans" for 4 pounds, 11 shillings. Axtell paid 4 pounds, 9 shillings, 9 pence export duty on these skins figured at a rate of 3 pence per skin. He also readied for shipment 325 pounds of sole leather belonging to James Ford, 411 pounds of his own, and 425 owned by Joseph Smith. Eleven sides of upper leather, a finer grade used to make the uppers of shoes, were included in the shipment, but their owner was not named.<sup>29</sup>

Despite these large shipments, much of the tannery's business was local trade and for small amounts of leather. Shoemakers bought his leather for their craft and individuals purchased leather to use on their farms. In this trade Axtell's tannery amply demonstrates the interconnection of the Dorchester economy. John Branford, a shoemaker and cattle-raiser, was a frequent seller of hides to the tannery. He was also one of the biggest purchasers of sole and upper leather. The account book reveals that Axtell and Newington plantation purchased most of their shoes from Branford, both for family members and for the plantation's slaves. Axtell occasionally paid cash for these shoes but more often he recorded the shoe purchases in the plantation ledger's debit column and "per contra credit" to Branford's account.

### THE TAR KILN

On November 4, 1704, Daniel Axtell, Lady Rebecca Axtell, and Gershom Hawkes entered a partnership to operate a tar kiln. Hawkes owned one-

<sup>27</sup>Axtell Account Book, p. 59.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., pp. 104, 105.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., pp. 88, 98, 115.

third of the business while Lady Rebecca had two-thirds of the remainder. Daniel Axtell was to take the rest.<sup>30</sup> Expressed in other terms, Hawkes had three-ninths, Lady Rebecca four-ninths, and Axtell two-ninths. The group purchased oxen and carts for hauling timber and tar barrels, axes, and provisions. But their biggest expense was the hire of their own slaves to operate the kiln.<sup>31</sup> In addition to the paper debits and credits that arose from shifting slaves from one enterprise, rice-growing, to another, kiln-minding, Axtell also recorded cash payments to the slaves for their labors. Randall and Nero, belonging to Lady Rebecca, Abram, and a fourth, unnamed slave, worked occasionally at the kiln, tending the fire that baked resin out of the pine wood that filled it. Abram carted barrels to the kiln for seven days for Thomas Baker.<sup>32</sup> Nero received five shillings for minding the kiln. At another place in the account book Axtell recorded payments totaling 1 pound, 13 shillings, 4 pence to Nero and Randall for unspecified work at the kiln. He also debited the kiln the cost of beef, pork, rum, and corn for slaves who resided at the kiln site.<sup>33</sup>

Tar was produced in Carolina using a method that required no machinery and little labor, once the kiln was dug, filled with wood, covered, and ignited. The craft was in the watching. In 1710 Thomas Nairne published a description of a tar kiln that likely depicted the Axtell kiln:

Tar is made thus: First they prepare a circular Floor of Clay, declining a little towards the Center, from which is laid a Pipe of Wood, whose upper Part is even with the Floor, and reaches 2 Foot without the Circumference; under this End the Earth is dug away, and Barrels placed to receive the Tar as it runs. Upon the Floor is built up a large Pile of Dry Pine-wood, split in Pieces, and surrounded with a Wall of Earth, which covers it all over, only a little at the Top, where the fire is first kindled. After the Fire begins to burn, they cover that likewise with Earth, to the End there may be no Flame, but only Heat sufficient to force the Tar downward into the Floor. They temper the Heat as they please, by thrusting a Stick through the Earth, and letting the Air in at as many Places as they see convenient.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 104

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 104-106.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., pp. 93-94, 104-105.

<sup>34</sup>Thomas Nairne, "A Letter from South Carolina," in *Selling a New World: Two Colonial South Carolina Promotional Pamphlets*, edited by Jack P. Greene (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), pp. 40-41.

The naturalist Mark Catesby elaborated Nairne's description in 1731 after a visit to South Carolina. According to Catesby, a well-managed kiln thirty feet in diameter and provided with good wood could produce 160 or 180 barrels, each barrel containing thirty-two gallons. The firing time was four or five days. Catesby emphasized the term "well-managed," for tar kilns required constant attention. If they burned too hot the tar would be consumed in the fire but if they were too dampered they might explode with deadly force.<sup>35</sup>

The account book contains three entries that record the kiln's production and distribution of profits to the partners. Thomas Baker was indebted to the partners for 415 barrels of tar worth 81 pounds, 10 1/2 pence and for another 132 barrels, "40 of them gre[alt]," valued at 38 pounds.<sup>36</sup> Another entry records that 570 barrels had been run off during the year 1705. Axtell's share of the profits had been 34 pounds, 18 shillings, 2 1/2 pence, from which was subtracted 25 pounds, 18 shillings, 8 3/4 pence, his share of the expenses. His net profit to April 8, 1706, was 8 pounds, 18 shillings, 5 3/4 pence. The 570 barrels "per contra credit" to the kiln probably included the 542 debited to Thomas Baker.<sup>37</sup> Using Axtell's two-ninths' share of the business as a factor, the gross and net earnings of the kiln can be computed. The gross profit for 1705 was 157 pounds, 1 shilling, 12 1/2 pence and the expenses amounted to 116 pounds, 12 shillings, 14 1/2 pence. The net profit was 40 pounds, 4 shillings, 13 3/4 pence.

Axtell's tar kiln may have been exceptionally busy during the spring of 1706. On May 15 Axtell entered his share of the gross profits from 809 barrels of tar. These figures suggest that from April to May 1706, a little more than a month, the kiln had produced 239 barrels — two firings according to Catesby's description. Axtell's share of the profit was 67 pounds, 6 shillings, 10 3/4 pence. After expenses were subtracted he realized a net profit of 34 pounds, 4 shillings, 7 pence.<sup>38</sup> This reckoning of 809 barrels may have been the kiln's total output from November 6, 1704, to May 15, 1706. It is possible, but unlikely, that, having produced 570 barrels in 1705, it could have produced 809 barrels from January to April 1706.

<sup>35</sup>"Mark Catesby's Natural History, 1731-1747," in *The Colonial South Carolina Scene: Contemporary Views, 1697-1774*, edited by H. Roy Merrens (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1977), pp. 106-108. Considerable archaeological research has been conducted upon Carolina tar-kiln sites. See C.A. Smith's "Site Inventory Reports for Tar Kilns at 38BK1074, 38BK1079, and 38BK1081, in Berkeley County, S.C.," on file at South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, Columbia. See also Linda P. Hart, "Excavations at the Limerick Tar Kiln Site — 38BK472," U. S. Forest Service, Wambaw District, McClellanville, S.C.

<sup>36</sup>Axtell Account Book, p. 89.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 106.

Whether the total output for 1704-1706 was 809 or 1,379 barrels, Axtell's kiln contributed a sizeable proportion of the tar exported from South Carolina during that year and a half. According to one source of information on colonial trade statistics, the total Carolina tar export to England in 1705 was 2,346 barrels. In 1706 the amount was 6,755.<sup>39</sup> Much of South Carolina's tar was exported to the West Indies and to other mainland colonies so that it is impossible to correlate directly the output of Axtell's kiln to British tar imports.

The capacity of Axtell's tar barrels is also of interest. He used two sizes, one "great" and another smaller barrel. The South Carolina General Assembly passed laws in 1691 and 1703 to regulate the construction and size of barrels used to export provisions and naval stores. Barrels containing pitch and tar had to hold at least twenty-eight gallons or be rejected by weighers and gagers, provincial officials who oversaw packing of products for export.<sup>40</sup> In 1705 the English Parliament placed a bounty of 4 pounds sterling per ton on American tar but required barrels to contain thirty-one and one half gallons.<sup>41</sup> To comply with these regulations the Carolina Assembly raised the standard barrel size to thirty-two gallons.<sup>42</sup> In 1704-1705 Axtell and his partners must have exported their tar in barrels of at least twenty-eight gallons. Other account-book entries related to the weights and gages of barrels. Axtell made two payments to Daniel Goble, a Charles Town cooper and provincial gager. One payment was one pound "for huping tar barrils" debited to Newington plantation.<sup>43</sup>

The kiln's fate is not known. During January 1707, as he prepared to leave Carolina, Axtell made no mention of dissolving the partnership. Nor did he dispose of the debts and credits of the kiln as he did for his tannery. Perhaps the kiln had been abandoned in May 1706 after the last recorded reckoning of profits.

### AXTELL'S SAWMILL

A sawmill was the quintessential local industry in colonial America. It harnessed water power and applied it, through technology, to clearing

<sup>39</sup>Eleanor L. Lord, *Industrial Experiments in the British Colonies of North America* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1969), App. B.

<sup>40</sup>South Carolina acts of April 20, 1691, and September 17, 1703, in Thomas Cooper and David J. McCord, eds., *Statutes at Large of South Carolina* (Columbia, S.C.: A.S. Johnston, 1836-1841), Vol. 2, nos. 64 and 212, respectively.

<sup>41</sup>"An Act for Encouraging the Importation of Naval Stores from Her Majesty's Plantations in America" (3 & 4 Anne, c. 9), in *The Statutes of the Realm. Printed by Command of His Majesty George the Third* (London: G. Eyre and A. Strahan, 1810-1822), Vol. 8, pp. 354-355.

<sup>42</sup>Act of December 18, 1714, *Statutes at Large of South Carolina* 2: temporary act no. 15, pp. 615-617.

<sup>43</sup>Axtell Account Book, pp. 99, 109.



forests and producing lumber, the *sine qua non* of the New World's buildings, ships, barrels, and fuel. The construction of sawmills was a large undertaking but within the capabilities of frontier entrepreneurs. When Daniel Axtell and his partners, Lady Rebecca Axtell and Robert Fenwick, built their mill they powerfully altered the geographical and economic landscape of the Dorchester region.

Axtell constructed the dam and sawmill on the upper reaches of Dorchester Creek, north of Newington, probably on a parcel of land owned by his partner Robert Fenwick.<sup>44</sup> Dorchester Creek had its headwaters in a large swamp and flowed south through Newington plantation and the town of Dorchester where it joined the Ashley River. The upper portion of Dorchester Creek has for 250 years been called Saw Mill Branch. It forms part of the southeastern boundaries of Summerville and Dorchester County.<sup>45</sup>

Axtell's sawmill was a New England importation. Water-powered mills were common there by the end of the seventeenth century and doubtless Axtell was familiar with their operation.<sup>46</sup> Axtell's sawmill may be compared to those built and operated during the 1660s and 1670s by John Pynchon at Springfield, Massachusetts, and Suffield, Connecticut. Pynchon's account books illuminate the microeconomy of the Connecticut Valley as Axtell's account book illuminates the Dorchester region.<sup>47</sup>

There are no contemporaneous descriptions of Axtell's mill and, except for the milldam, no traces of it exist today. In 1905 Henry A.M. Smith described the site:

In 1882 before the present canal down the swamp was excavated, the old milldam was practically intact. Some of the old mill timbers of solid cypress remained on the old mill site. The oldest inhabitant could remember no one who had seen the mill run, and the growth of pines showed that no water could have been kept in the pond for near a century.<sup>48</sup>

Some surmises can be made about the appearance of Axtell's sawmill.

<sup>44</sup>See Smith's map of the upper Ashley region, p. 282 of this article.

<sup>45</sup>Plan of Saw Mill Tract, 1850, McCrady Plat Collection, No. 1642 (microfilm in SCDAH), reprinted on p. 295 of this article.

<sup>46</sup>*The Timber Industry of Puritan New England* (Providence, R.I.: Brown University Press, 1973), pp. 70-71; Benno M. Forman, "Mill Sawing in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts," *Old-Time New England* LX (Spring 1970), pp. 110-130; Richard M. Candee, "Merchant and Millwright, the Water Powered Sawmills of Piscataqua," *Old-Time New England* LX (Spring 1970), pp. 131-149.

<sup>47</sup>John Pynchon, *The Pynchon Papers*, Vol. 2, pp. 226-227, 236-238, 393-399, record the construction and operation of Pynchon's mills.

<sup>48</sup>Smith, "The Town of Dorchester," Vol. 2, p. 17.

A single water wheel probably powered a single vertical blade. This was the most common sawmill design in New England and epitomized the state of the art in sawmill technology. Some sawmills operated multiple vertical blades from a single power source but the relatively small amount of lumber produced at Axtell's mill suggests that its wheel drove a single blade.<sup>49</sup>

Axtell began recording expenses for the sawmill in the fall of 1701. He or his partners must have supervised construction of the milldam prior to that time. Enough of the dam survives today to suggest its appearance when it was in operation. The dam was built of earth, about 470 feet long, and nearly ten feet high at its highest present elevation. The two ends of the dam slope to zero elevation but the high ground at these two end points provided natural dikes to impound the swamp. Saw Mill Branch has been channelized several times since the 1880s and little remains of that section of the dam bordering the creek.<sup>50</sup>

The partnership between Lady Rebecca Axtell, Robert Fenwick, and Axtell was simple. Fenwick owned one-half of the business. Lady Rebecca and Daniel Axtell each owned a quarter. Fenwick's share may have been larger because the mill and dam were constructed on his property. Gershom Hawkes, a nearby landowner, likely supervised sawmill operations.<sup>51</sup> The partners operated the sawmill from late 1701 until May 1705. Robert Fenwick sold out his half of the business to his two partners on February 24, 1703, by paying his portion of the mill's expenses to that date. Axtell recorded that the "charges concerning the Saw Mill" amounted to 198 pounds, 12 shillings, 6 pence. Fenwick's share of the debt came to 99 pounds, 6 shillings, 3 pence, of which Axtell received 93 pounds, 17 shillings, 9 1/2 pence "pr his [Fenwick's] Acctt."<sup>52</sup>

There is only one brief credit statement for the sawmill. On March 1, 1703, Axtell recorded the sawmill's sales. The net profit from sales of cordwood, plank, boards, and slitwork (flooring and panelling), was 18 pounds, 19 shillings, 8 pence.<sup>53</sup> This reckoning occurred the week after Fenwick sold his share and was probably connected with it. After Fenwick's sale the sawmill's accounts were merged with those of Newington.<sup>54</sup>

The sawmill produced 9,566 board feet of pine and cypress lumber, divided into planks, boards, and slitwork. Lumber prices varied from 5 shillings to 7 shillings, 6 pence per hundred board feet, suggesting that Hawkes and Axtell cut several different widths and thicknesses of lumber.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>49</sup>Forman, "Mill Sawing," pp. 110-130.

<sup>50</sup>Alexander Moore, "Site Inventory Report, Daniel Axtell's Mill Dam (38DR137 and 38CH837)," 1986, S.C. Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, Columbia.

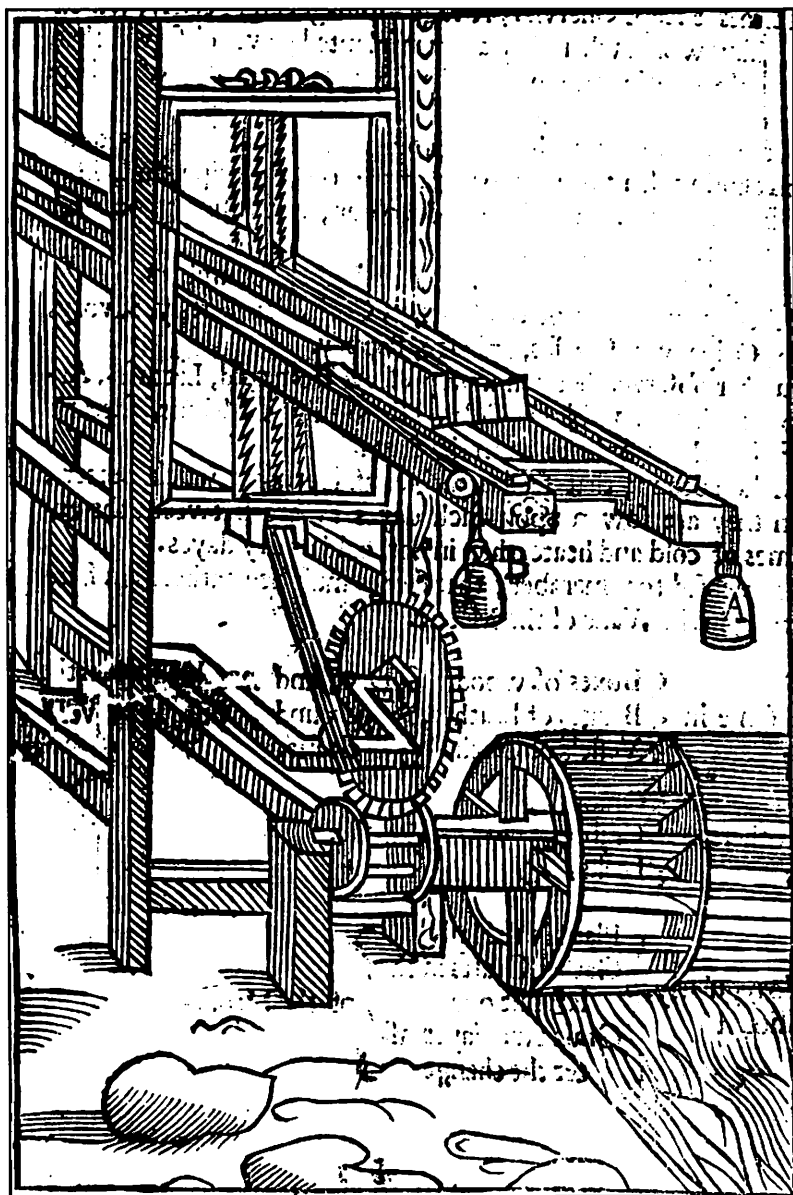
<sup>51</sup>Axtell Account Book, pp. 27-28, 49-50.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 29-30, 50-52.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 48-50, 54, 89.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.



Daniel Axtell's water-powered sawmill on the upper reaches of Dorchester Creek utilized a design that was common in New England, but was rare in the Carolinas. It was probably similar in design to this one depicted in Edward Williams, *Virginia: More Especially the South Part Thereof, Richly and Truly Valued: viz. the Fertile Carolana, and No Lesse Excellent Isle of Roanoak, ...* (London: Printed by T. H. for John Stephenson, 1650, 2nd ed.). Courtesy of the Virginia Historical Society.

In addition to the mill's role as a lumber producer, it was also an important employer of day labor. Local residents labored at the mill for daily wages, cutting lumber or repairing the mill and dam. Some planters hired out their slaves and others worked alongside them for cash or credit. The daily wages Axtell paid are conclusive evidence for determining the price of labor in early Carolina. Aaron Way, a local planter, was a frequent worker at the mill and received 2 shillings, 6 pence per day. Way's son, Aaron, Jr., and Moses Martin commanded two shillings per day. Carpenter Thomas Osgood received three shillings and his son earned 2 shillings, 6 pence.<sup>56</sup> Thomas Graves labored twenty-two days at 2 shillings, 6 pence per day. At the same time one of Graves's slaves also worked at the mill. The slave earned 1 shilling, 3 pence per day, or one-half the salary of his owner. Gershom Hawkes managed the mill for many days at a time. His daily wages were 3 shillings, 6 pence.<sup>57</sup> Thomas Nairne reported in 1710 that carpenters and joiners in Carolina earned from three to five shillings and laborers from 1 shilling, 3 pence per day "with Lodging and Diet."<sup>58</sup> The wages Axtell paid his workers in 1701-1705 corroborate Nairne's figure.

One measure of Axtell's place in the economy of the Dorchester region was the effect of his return to Massachusetts. The end of his tannery business must have been a blow, but closing the sawmill must have been devastating. For it seems to have been the only water-powered mill in the province. On June 7, 1712, the South Carolina General Assembly passed "An Act for the Better Strengthening of this Province by increasing the Number of the Inhabitants thereof, and for encouraging the making of Potash, building Saw-mills and other mechanick Engines." That act offered to the first person to construct "a mill to saw with wind or water, so as to bring the same to complete perfection, as in Holland or in other countrys" an eight-year monopoly to build all wind and water powered sawmills in the province.<sup>59</sup> By then Axtell had been gone five years and the mill was abandoned.

## NEWINGTON PLANTATION

Newington plantation was named for Stoke Newington, Middlesex, the home of Landgrave Daniel Axtell. The Blake, Axtell, and Morton families had branches there and those who immigrated to Carolina clung to the rock of nonconformity as strongly as their cousins back in England.<sup>60</sup> The germ of Landgrave Axtell's Newington was a proprietary grant of 2,900 acres to him in 1680. After his death, his widow, Lady Rebecca Axtell,

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., pp. 27-28.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., pp. 27-28, 49-50.

<sup>58</sup>Nairne, "A Letter from South Carolina," in *Selling a New World*, pp. 65-66.

<sup>59</sup>*Statutes at Large of South-Carolina*, Vol. 2, no. 318.

<sup>60</sup>Smith, "Upper Ashley," p. 214.

increased the size of Newington by another 4,400 acres.<sup>61</sup> The plantation successfully grew upland rice and provided Lady Rebecca's descendants a secure base of wealth, power, and prestige in South Carolina. In 1711 Lady Rebecca devised Newington to her daughter, Elizabeth Axtell Blake, widow of Governor Joseph Blake and mother of Blake's posthumous son, Joseph, Jr. At the same time she gave a nearby plantation, later named Mount Boone, to her second daughter, Anne Axtell Boone, wife of Joseph Boone, a Charles Town merchant, Dissenter politician, and sometime colonial agent in London.<sup>62</sup>

The Axtell surname disappeared from Carolina after Lady Axtell's death, but Newington and Mount Boone prospered. They were the chief plantations of the Blake and Boone families through the eighteenth century. Mark Catesby visited Newington in 1723 when it was the residence of Joseph Blake, Jr.<sup>63</sup> During the 1730s Blake built a large brick house there which was the family seat until 1830. The house burned about 1845, but the walls stood until the 1870s.<sup>64</sup>

Daniel Axtell managed Newington from 1699 until he left Carolina in February 1707. He received as wages one-fifth of the plantation's net profit and did not share the plantation's debts.<sup>65</sup> His account books are a full, precise record of the purchases of provisions, goods, and services needed to sustain Newington and to participate in the emergent rice economy of the Lowcountry. Newington produced rice, corn, salt beef, and tar for export. It also produced beef, pork, honey, eggs, cotton, and tallow for consumption and sale in the local market.

While Axtell's tannery, tar kiln, and sawmill were important enterprises, Newington was his primary business interest. Two of his industries were unique—not only one of a kind but also unusual—and the survival of their accounts is a remarkable boon to historians. But because Newington was not unique, the records of its management are more useful. There were apparently no other tanneries or sawmills in Carolina from 1699 to 1707, but there were many plantations similar to Newington in size, crops, labor system, and breadth of their owners' aspirations. Axtell's Newington accounts recorded that moment in history when Carolina was poised to become the kingdom of rice.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid, pp. 211-217.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.; Ella Lonn, *The Colonial Agents of the Southern Colonies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1945), pp. 43-46, 223.

<sup>63</sup>Smith, "Upper Ashley," p. 214.

<sup>64</sup>Robert Stephenson, "Site Inventory Report, Newington Plantation (38DR15)," 1972, SCIAA, Columbia; Richard Polhemus, "Excavation at Newington Plantation (38DR15)," S.C.I.A.A., *Notebook 4* (July-August 1972), pp. 85-86.

<sup>65</sup>Axtell Account Book, pp. 70, 111.

Newington had extensive commerce with local carpenters, blacksmiths, coopers, shoemakers, and retailers of salt, rum, molasses, cloth, and nails. Axtell paid physicians to care for the plantation slaves, Reverend Joseph Lord a portion of his minister's stipend, a schoolmaster or tutor, fees for legal instruments, and the Newington slaves for vegetables they had grown.<sup>66</sup> These account book entries, too varied and voluminous to remark upon singly, provide a precise record over time of the costs of basic foodstuffs, goods, and services. In this respect they are authoritative, first-hand data — hard to come by so early in South Carolina history.

Newington's accounts reveal little-examined facets of Carolina's local economy. Among these were the large number of payments to local shoemakers and weavers. Shoemaker John Branford's business with Axtell's tannery has been described. Branford was the major supplier of shoes for Newington. In 1701 he made seventeen pairs of shoes that sold for 1 shilling, 6 pence a pair, or a total price of 1 pound, 5 shillings, 6 pence. A later entry records another "17 pare of Shous negro" valued at 3 pounds, 8 shillings, 6 pence. He also made more expensive shoes for Daniel and Thankful Pratt Axtell and their children.<sup>67</sup> As a result of his good cobbler's business Branford was one of the few individuals in the Dorchester region whose sales to Newington exceeded his debts to it. Axtell reckoned Branford's account on August 23, 1704, and found that the plantation owed him 3 pounds, 5 shillings, 5 pence.<sup>68</sup>

Joseph Griffin, a weaver, also did a large business with Newington. He provided fabric from which the Axtells, Blakes, and their slaves made their clothing. Griffin's slaves were also weavers. From the amount and variety of cloth he sold to Newington, Griffin must have operated a substantial cottage industry. During 1704 Axtell credited Griffin's account with 354 yards of cloth valued at 6 pence per yard. In another entry he placed 4 pounds, 6 shillings, 3 pence "per contra credit" of Griffin for 186 yards of cloth at varying prices per yard.<sup>69</sup>

The Axtell account book demonstrates that the Dorchester and Newington region had a diversified economy with a good mixture of agricultural products, local industry, and a modest export trade. The variety and frequency of human interaction reflected in the account book call to mind traditionally held notions of a New England town transplanted from Massachusetts to the banks of the Ashley River. But, as the account book fosters images of a "peaceable kingdom," it also chronicles the emergence of rice produced for export — the forging of economic chains

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., pp. 39-40, 42, 63 for physicians; 39, 64, 77 for Joseph Lord; and 57 and 64 for George Crichton's salary as a tutor.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., pp. 33-34, 39.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

**TABLE I**  
**SALES OF RICE AT NEWINGTON PLANTATION**

| Rice sold    | Price per<br>hundredweight | Total selling price |    |        |
|--------------|----------------------------|---------------------|----|--------|
|              | <b>1702</b>                |                     |    |        |
| 6,000 pounds | 20s per cwt.               | £60                 | 0s | 3d     |
|              | <b>1703</b>                |                     |    |        |
| 10,593       | 15s per cwt.               | £79                 | 9  | 0      |
| 1,650        | 14s 6d                     | £11                 | 19 | 3      |
|              | <b>1704</b>                |                     |    |        |
| 11,729       | 15s per cwt.               | £87                 | 19 | 4      |
|              | <b>1705</b>                |                     |    |        |
| 13,203       | 15s per cwt.               | £99                 | 0  | 5      |
|              | <b>1707</b>                |                     |    |        |
| 8,791        | 15s per cwt.               | (£65                | 18 | 7 3/4) |

Source: The table is compiled from entries in Axtell Account Book, pp. 69-70, 74, 106, 113-114. Entries in parentheses were not recorded in the account book but were computed from data found therein.

that bound all Carolinians, white and black, rich and poor, to raising for export a succession of staple crops.

By 1701 Lady Rebecca Axtell and her family were growing rice for export. Her daughter Elizabeth Blake resided at Newington and perhaps leased land from her mother to cultivate the 1701 rice crop. This arrangement is suggested because the first rice entries in Axtell's account book are debited to Elizabeth Blake's account instead of "per contra credit" to the plantation. These entries for 3,261 pounds of rice, at 12 shillings, 6 pence per hundredweight, in November 1701 and 4,923 pounds, worth 17 shillings, 6 pence per hundredweight, in February 1702, recorded that the net worth of the two lots were 20 pounds, 7 shillings, 6 pence and 43 pounds, 13 shillings, 6 pence respectively.<sup>70</sup> Subsequent entries are simpler for rice grown from 1702 to 1707. Axtell recorded the amounts of rice sold, price per hundredweight, and the total selling prices (see Table I).

Joseph Boone and Alexander Parris factored shipments of Newington rice.<sup>71</sup> As in the case of Axtell's tar kiln, the barrels for shipping rice were a

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., pp. 38-39.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., pp. 39, 46, 69.

significant element of expense and profit. The price of rice barrels used at Newington was generally from 5 to 5 1/2 royals each. By 1707 the price had risen to 3 shillings 9 pence per barrel. Barrel costs constituted a plantation debit during the year, but those amounts were transferred to the credit side of the account book when a shipment was made.<sup>72</sup> Newington's rice barrels contained from 340 to 350 pounds. Some held as little as 335 and others as much as 354 pounds.<sup>73</sup> The plantation also sold small lots of rice for local consumption. These sales were for one or two hundredweights or even for bushels and were debited to account holders.

### MISCELLANY

Axtell occasionally used his account book to record activities not directly related to his business. Some of these entries serendipitously reveal aspects of colonial life. Fifteen shillings paid "to whit washing ye hous" and Thomas Cater's debt of 1 shilling, 10 1/2 pence for a "Constable staf" of office strikingly illustrate elements of Carolina's architectural and cultural landscape. On May 29, 1702, Axtell, Robert Fenwick, and Benjamin Lamboll entered a 2,000-pound bond to administer the estate of Benjamin Blanchard.<sup>74</sup> The account book records debits and credits for Blanchard's estate, including physician's bills during his last illness and even his funeral costs. Thomas Cater, Gershom Hawkes, James Boswood, and Thomas Osgood, Sr., inventoried Blanchard's estate and valued it at 26 pounds, 13 shillings, 9 pence. "Deptes & sondry other chargs" amounted to 12 pounds, 16 shillings, 6 3/4 pence, leaving a small balance in Axtell's hands.<sup>75</sup>

The "Alarmm" Axtell mentioned on July 2, 1706, was one of a series of military musters that preceded an unsuccessful French and Spanish attack upon Charles Town in August 1706. On October 20, 1706, "a sabath day," Axtell observed a strange meteorological event, "a ball of fire flying from the south in to the North. Just as it came to the horizon it gave a report as Loud as a great Gunn."<sup>76</sup> After his return to Massachusetts, Axtell used one page of his account book to record the birth dates of his children Elizabeth, Daniel, Jr., and Rebeckah, in Carolina, and seven more born in Massachusetts.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., pp. 68-69, 113-114.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., p. 114.

<sup>74</sup>Caroline T. Moore, ed., *Records of the Secretary of the Province of South Carolina, 1692-1721* (Columbia, S.C.: R.L. Bryan Co., 1978), p. 8.

<sup>75</sup>Moore, ed., *Records of the Secretary of the Province*, p. 9; Axtell Account Book, p. 8.

<sup>76</sup>Axtell Account Book, pp. 39, 48, 114.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., pp. 107-108.



**THE DANIEL AXTELL ACCOUNT BOOK ILLUMINATES THE** sophistication of early Carolina's economy. Axtell, his partners, and his relatives engaged in a variety of business ventures and employed contemporary technologies as they labored to grow wealthy. On the Carolina frontier, twenty miles from Charles Town, Dorchester and Newington were both part of a local economic network and a satellite of the metropolis. In its columns of numbers and lists of products Daniel Axtell's account book delineates the economic lives of carpenters, weavers, shoemakers, sawyers, clerics, physicians, and slaves, as that large cast of characters acted roles both on the local and international economic stages.

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## PRYCE HUGHES, COLONY PLANNER, OF CHARLES TOWN AND WALES

EIRLYS M. BARKER\*

**THE WELSHMAN PRYCE HUGHES IS USUALLY EXCLUDED FROM** accounts of individuals who played important roles in the initial years of European settlement in North America and in the history of contact with the Indians. Only Verner Crane, the leading historian of the southern frontier in its formative years, has devoted much attention to Hughes and his vision of British expansion, concluding that he was an "outstanding frontier figure of the [American] South."<sup>1</sup> One major reason for Hughes's neglect was his name, one that the Indians found difficult to pronounce.<sup>2</sup>

Hughes was better known to influential eighteenth-century Americans than to twentieth-century historians. In 1755 Edmond Atkin, a member of South Carolina's council who was involved in the administration of the Indian trade, first for South Carolina, and then for the southern colonies, referred to Hughes as a "Man of some Fortune, Learning and Piety" who had hoped to convert the Indians to "Christian Principles."<sup>3</sup> In 1715 Francis Le Jau, a commissioner with the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG) commented on the "fate of Mr Rice Hugh, The Gentleman mighty Zealous to Promote Peace among all the Indian nations Bordering upon our Province."<sup>4</sup> In 1730 Governor Alexander Spotswood of Virginia referred to him as "an English Gent., who had a particular fancy of rambling among the Indians."<sup>5</sup> Who was this Welshman who had come

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<sup>1</sup>*Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), s.v. "Price Hughes," by Verner W. Crane, p. 355; Crane, *The Southern Frontier: 1670-1732* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1928), pp. 99-107.

<sup>2</sup>Richebourg G. McWilliams, ed. & trans., *Fleur de Lys and Calumet: Being the Pénicaut Narrative of French Adventure in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1953), pp. 160-164. As so frequently happened, Pénicaut called Hughes an "Englishman" and his name was transposed by this Frenchman as "Mestriou," based on Indian attempts to pronounce his name as "Mr. Yous."

<sup>3</sup>Wilbur R. Jacobs, ed., *The Appalachian Indian Frontier: The Edmond Atkin Report and Plan of 1755* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1954), pp. 59-60.

<sup>4</sup>Le Jau to the Secretary, August 23, 1715, Frank J. Klingberg, ed., *The Carolina Chronicle of Dr. Francis Le Jau, 1706-1717* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956), p. 165. The Indians were not the only ones who found Hughes's name difficult.

<sup>5</sup>Robert A. Brock, ed., *The Official Letters of Alexander Spotswood, Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Virginia, 1710-1722*, Collections of the Virginia Historical Society, n.s. 1 and 2 (Richmond: Virginia Historical Society, 1882-1885), Vol. 2, p. 331.