



ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

52ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON SOUTH CAROLINA ARCHAEOLOGY

***250 Years of Independence:
The Archaeology of The American Revolution in
South Carolina***



March 7, 2026
8:00 – 5:00

The Charleston Museum Auditorium
360 Meeting St, Charleston, SC 29403



ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Mission Statement

The Archaeological Society of South Carolina, Inc. is an association of professional and avocational archaeologists and concerned citizens uniting together in a cooperative effort to understand the prehistory and history of South Carolina.

It is a Society of dedicated members exerting their combined efforts toward the interpretation and preservation of South Carolina's rich cultural heritage.

The Archaeological Society of South Carolina operates under State and Federal Law as a 501c3 non-profit organization. Contributions are tax deductible. The Society is assisted and supported by the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, the University of South Carolina, and the Council of South Carolina Professional Archaeologists.

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

52nd Annual Conference on South Carolina Archaeology Program

March 7, 2026
8:00 – 5:00

The Charleston Museum Auditorium
360 Meeting St, Charleston, SC 29403



GENERAL SESSION I

8:30 – 8:50

Williams, Justin P. & Katie Dorn

“Quartz Quandaries in the Upstate and Northeast Georgia”

8:50– 9:10

Shough, Julia

“Everyone Dies: The Relationship Between the Enslaved, Master, and Death in an Antebellum Era Slave Cemetery”

9:10 – 9:30

Dillian, Carolyn

“Community-Engaged Archaeology, Coastal Knowledge, and Indigenous Collaboration at a Horry County Shell Midden Site”

MORNING BREAK & POSTER SESSION 9:30 – 9:50

MARITIME ARCHAEOLOGY

9:50 – 10:10

Spirek, James

“Lost on the Shoals: Exploring the Shipwreck Heritage of Port Royal Sound”

10:10 – 10:30

Scafuri, Michael, Nicholas DeLong, and Johanna Rivera

“Archaeology of H.L. Hunley: Recent Developments in the Investigation of a Civil War Submarine.”

GENERAL SESSION II

10:30 – 10:50

Anderson, David G., Chevis D. Clark, II, and David A. Clark

“Explorations at Venning Creek, Copahie Mount Site, and Other Locations in Northern Charleston County, South Carolina”



ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

AWARDS & BUSINESS MEETING 10:50 - 11:30



ASSC Archaeologist of the Year

Chevis D. Clark II



Lifetime Achievement Award

Eric Poplin, PhD

**LUNCH BREAK
11:30 - 1:00**



250 Years of Independence: The Archaeology of The American Revolution in South Carolina

Keynote Talks

1:00 – 2:00



John Allison

*“Redefining History: Discovering Lost
Battlefields in the Carolinas”*



Steven D. Smith

*“A Kind of Partisan War: An Overview of
the Southern Campaign of the American
Revolution, 1780 to 1782.”*



THEMATIC SESSION (CONT'D)

The Archaeology of The American Revolution in South Carolina

- 2:00 – 2:20** **Isenbarger, Nicole and Andrew Agha**
"Reading Patriotism: Revolutionary Sentiment at a Charleston Merchant Household"
- 2:20 – 2:40** **Humphreys, Stephen & Mackenze Burkhart**
"AVAR Conflict Archaeology School-Camden: Report on the First Season (and a Half)"
- 2:40 – 3:00** **Ghaffar, Tariq & Jason L. Smith**
"Archaeology of The Battle of Hobkirk's Hill"

AFTERNOON BREAK & POSTER SESSION 3:00 – 3:40

GENERAL SESSION III

- 3:40 – 4:00** **Lindler, Joseph A. Jr.**
"Breaking Ground at Topper (38AL23): Revisiting the 1985 & 1986 Excavations"
- 4:00 – 4:20** **Sherard, Jeff L., Eric Poplin, Dave Baluha, & Martha Zierden**
"'IF THE OLD DOG SNIFFS ENOUGH, HE WILL FIND THE SOURCE:" A Case for the discovery of John Bartlam's kiln on the Wando."



POSTERS

Watson, Jenna

“Community-Engaged Archaeology, Coastal Knowledge, and Indigenous Collaboration at a Horry County Shell Midden Site”

Georeferenced maps, data, and sketches created a geographic representation of a site, highlighting missing data. Every year, Dr. David Palmer hosts an archaeological field school at the Laurel Hill Rice Plantation site along the Waccamaw River. During this field school, students excavated and mapped the fallen structures previously published on Lesley Drucker’s 1980 map. Last year, I referenced this map and field school data and compared it with sketches drawn by Emily Weston, plantation owner Plowden C.J. Weston’s wife. I discovered several structures unmarked on the Drucker 1980 map and plotted them in ArcGIS Pro by georeferencing the different data sources. This year, I have visualized this map in a three-dimensional format. Using SketchUp, I reanalyzed last year’s map using the perspective of Weston’s drawing to allow accurate plotting of 1849 Laurel Hill Plantation and corrected building placement. The result is a visualization with allowance for spatial analysis of buildings.

Morales, Ansleigh & David G. Anderson

“The Hillside That Keeps On Giving: Continued Analyses of the Late Precontact Topper Hillside Assemblage”

This poster visualizes the excavation at the Topper Hillside in Allendale County, South Carolina, conducted between 2015–2017 by the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK). The Topper Site has earned a reputation for being rich in artifacts from Clovis to late precontact occupation. Since August of 2024, we have been working to analyze and catalog the collection as we prepare them for permanent curation. To date, tens of thousands of ceramic sherds and pieces of lithic debitage, and over 200 arrow points have been examined, as well as a number of other artifact categories. Our goals of this process include improving catalog accuracy, identifying patterns within the assemblage, and strengthening the associations between artifacts and provenience data. As we go along, we aim to translate this numerical data in a way that provides a new, visual perspective, and makes assemblage patterns more accessible at a glance. This project contributes to responsible stewardship and supports future research on the site’s occupational history.



POSTERS

Aller, Kathleen & Jeff L. Sherard

“‘Usually Imported from England’”: Characterizing a Bartlam Artifact Assemblage and its Relationship to Activities along the Wando River in Charleston, South Carolina”

Recent research on artifacts from an archaeological survey of portions of the Wando River and the Cainhoy area suggests the potential location of an early pottery operation by the English potter John Bartlam, reportedly active in the 1760s. While historical advertisements seem to confirm Bartlam’s activities near the area, are there clues or trends within the broader artifact assemblage that help to describe events at the site? Using archaeological and archival data, this poster will explore activities related to possible ceramic production and explore the potential for residential occupation during Bartlam’s enterprise.

Robinson, Maddox

“Sweep, Beep, Repeat: Metal Detecting at Laurel Hill Plantation”

In May and June 2025, as part of an archaeological survey that was conducted on Laurel Hill Plantation, a metal detector was utilized as a tool to help guide the placement of excavation units within the survey area. This was the first time an archaeological survey of this plantation utilized a metal detector. The goal was to find the remains of a 19th century captive African village that was associated with the Laurel Hill Plantation, situated along the bank of the Waccamaw River. This poster will share how the metal detector was utilized in this survey, the results of its use, and how the device is planned to support future work at the site.

Lindler, Joseph A. Jr.

“Lithics, Lasers, & Legacies: Geochemical Techniques at Nipper Creek (38RD18)”

The Nipper Creek site (38RD18) is an Archaic Fall-Line site in South Carolina that was excavated in 1985 to determine the Indigenous occupational history of the site following its discovery. Using Laser Ablation-Inductively Coupled Plasma-Mass Spectrometry (LA-ICP-MS) technology on select debitage from 1985, and on samples from known tool-stone quarries in the Southeastern United States, this study explores the differences of these samples and the attempt to determine a source location of the lithic materials excavated from the Early Archaic contexts to better understand the settlement of Nipper Creek (38RD18) as it relates to known lithic quarries.



POSTERS

Dorn, Katie

"Examining the Degree of Sedentism at a Disturbed Woodland Period Site in Pickens County, South Carolina"

This paper examines lithic artifacts from the Fort Rutledge archaeology site in Pickens County, South Carolina, a region of the state that is lacking in archaeological research, to investigate Woodland Period site usage and duration. Fort Rutledge, a multicomponent site now on Clemson University's main campus, has undergone multiple cultural site transitions, including Cherokee settlement, the Revolutionary War, construction, and disturbances from the local community that have disrupted the stratigraphy and complicated artifact dating. Previous excavations (2020 - 20223) recovered Revolutionary War era artifacts alongside Native American ceramics and lithics, primarily made of quartz. This study applies multiple lithic analytic techniques, including minimum analytical nodule analysis, and morphological and functional analyses. Preliminary evidence suggests long-term sedentary patterns at the site. This study is the first attempt to apply these methods to lithics made of quartz and aims to clarify the Woodland period sedentary patterns at Fort Rutledge.



ABSTRACTS (IN ORDER OF PRESENTATION)

Williams, Justin P. & Katie Dorn

"Quartz Quandaries in the Upstate and Northeast Georgia"

The vast majority of lithic tools and debitage in the Upstate and northeastern Georgia are made of quartz. Quartz is known to be a difficult material to work with and is even harder, perhaps, to analyze. Using a site in Rabun County Georgia as a case study, this paper suggests methodologies that can be employed to squeeze more data out of quartz dominated lithic scatters and other sites.

Shough, Julia

"Everyone Dies: The Relationship Between the Enslaved, Master, and Death in an Antebellum Era Slave Cemetery"

The relationship between people and death is complicated. Burial customs and commemoration are ways people rationalize their loved one's passing. In the Antebellum era, cemeteries and graveyards were heavily segregated. When an unmarked cemetery was found on old Kinsler land, it was deemed the burial place for the enslaved of Captain Kinsler's plantation. This project aims to better understand the relationship between the enslaved, master, and death, and how slave namelessness affects both decedent and descendant, using Kinsler Cemetery as an example. Post-processual archaeology, African cosmology, existing literature, issues of namelessness, social death, and identity, and newly collected map data of the cemetery were all used as points of reference in this paper. The theoretical approaches stated will be used to understand the Kinsler Cemetery as a place of historical value and living memory. This project fits into a larger issue of studying and documenting African American cemeteries in the American South. Their preservation and commemoration, and how there must be an effort to include them in the narrative of the nation's history.



ABSTRACTS (IN ORDER OF PRESENTATION)

Dillian, Carolyn

"Community-Engaged Archaeology, Coastal Knowledge, and Indigenous Collaboration at a Horry County Shell Midden Site"

This presentation examines a collaborative archaeological project integrating Coastal Carolina University students with tribal members of the Waccamaw Indian People in excavating a shell midden site in Horry County, South Carolina. Shell midden research has undergone significant transformation in recent decades, emphasizing heightened collaboration with Indigenous communities. The project demonstrates how community-engaged approaches to coastal archaeology can honor Indigenous perspectives while generating new insights into early settlement patterns and subsistence practices along the Georgia Bight. Students developed culturally responsive archaeological methods, strengthening relationships between academic institutions and Indigenous communities. This work contributes to broader efforts reframing archaeology as a collaborative endeavor that amplifies Indigenous voices in interpreting heritage and landscapes.

Spirek, James

"Lost on the Shoals: Exploring the Shipwreck Heritage of Port Royal Sound"

For centuries, the shifting shoals at the entrance to Port Royal Sound have been notorious for claiming ships. More than forty vessels—from early European adventurers to modern-era craft—met their end in this natural "ship-trap," leaving behind a remarkable underwater archive of America's maritime past. This presentation dives into the ongoing archaeological search for these wrecks, using cutting-edge marine technology and hands-on visual investigations to map and identify what lies beneath the waves. Historical research helps bring each vessel's story into focus—how it sailed, how it sank, and what its loss reveals about life along the South Carolina coast. The discoveries made here not only guide future research but also play an important role in understanding environmental impacts tied to coastal management, including beach-renourishment efforts. Supported in part by the Archaeological Research Trust and NOAA's Office of Ocean Exploration and Research, this long-term project by the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology aims to document these maritime losses and illuminate the rich underwater heritage of both South Carolina and the nation.



ABSTRACTS (IN ORDER OF PRESENTATION)

Scafuri, Michael, Nicholas DeLong, and Johanna Rivera

“Archaeology of H.L. Hunley: Recent Developments in the Investigation of a Civil War Submarine.”

On February 17, 1864, the submarine H.L. Hunley attacked the blockading ship USS Housatonic off the coast of Charleston, SC, becoming the first submarine to sink an enemy vessel in combat, only to disappear in the aftermath. The recovery of the submarine in 2000 led to a long-term effort by Clemson University’s Warren Lasch Conservation Center to conserve the vessel and to understand the circumstances surrounding this historic attack. This paper will review current developments in the conservation treatment and archaeological investigation of H.L. Hunley. In addition, the authors will present recent research that has revealed new insights into the potential causes and circumstances around both the submarine’s final attack and its subsequent loss.

Anderson, David G., Chevis D. Clark, II, and David A. Clark

“Explorations at Venning Creek, Copahee Mount Site, and Other Locations in Northern Charleston County, South Carolina”

This paper summarizes investigations conducted in the 1970s and after at a series of archaeological sites in the tidal marshes in northern Charleston County, led by Chevis and David Clark of Mount Pleasant, South Carolina. The Clark brothers took notes about their visits, donated the materials they recovered to the Charleston Museum, and invited and guided a number of archaeologists to the locations. Extensive collections were made at one of these sites, designated Venning Creek, and limited investigations at a second site on a small island at the northeastern end of Copahee Sound, is noteworthy for the recovery of a large Awendaw finger pinched vessel fragment. The activities highlight the importance of finding, preserving, sharing, and curating information from threatened sites. In addition, the roles the Clark’s played on a number of other major archaeological projects are also briefly recounted.



ABSTRACTS (IN ORDER OF PRESENTATION)

Isenbarger, Nicole and Andrew Agha

“Reading Patriotism: Revolutionary Sentiment at a Charleston Merchant Household”

Archaeological excavations of the kitchen and laundry rooms at the Nathaniel Russell House in downtown Charleston reveal political narratives absent from surviving documents. Little is known about the Russell family’s Revolutionary-era involvement or political leanings, yet their household material culture fills biographical gaps and illuminates forms of allegiance otherwise unrecorded. Households functioned as political spaces where patriotism could be expressed through consumer choice, and ceramics were highly visible objects “read” by visitors, kin, and associates. This study examines how patriotism was materially expressed in a prominent merchant household through the identification of patriotic ceramic patterns. Whether these were expressions of genuine patriotic allegiance or part of a performative identity, the archaeological record captures the outward projection of the household’s sentiments they chose to present to visitors and the broader community. Ultimately, the ceramic assemblage demonstrates how household archaeology produces political knowledge, revealing otherwise undocumented allegiances and enriching our understanding of Revolutionary sentiment in Charleston. Elite households emerge as economic-political landscapes, where consumer choices reflect the social negotiations and personal choices shaped by the conflict.

Humphreys, Stephen & Mackenze Burkhart

“AVAR Conflict Archaeology School-Camden: Report on the First Season (and a Half)”

From 27 January – 21 February, 2025, American Veterans Archaeological Recovery (AVAR) directed fieldwork on the site of the Battle of Camden (16 August, 1780) and on the urban site of Camden as part of a larger educational program meant to help American military veterans transition into careers in archaeology. A systematic metal detection survey building off the research of Dr. Steve Smith and Mr. Jim Legg covered 46,800 sq. meters on the site of the Battle of Camden, focusing on the actions of the American militia and the American retreat that followed the battle. Furthermore, 40 hours of geophysical survey was conducted on portions of the colonial settlement at Camden along with 40 hours of Phase II excavation on three units. Fourteen veteran volunteers carried out the labor while receiving technical and managerial training as well as formal instruction on transitioning into paid work and/or careers in professional archaeology. Thanks to the ongoing support of the American Battlefield Trust, Historic Camden Foundation, South Carolina Institute for Archaeology and Anthropology (SCIAA), and the South Carolina American Revolution Trust a second season will take place from 14 February – 14 March, 2026. This presentation will focus on the findings from the first field season as well as providing preliminary analysis of the second season’s systematic metal detection survey.



ABSTRACTS (IN ORDER OF PRESENTATION)

Ghaffar, Tariq & Jason L. Smith

“Archaeology of The Battle of Hobkirk’s Hill”

This presentation will summarize the events of the Battle of Hobkirk’s Hill in Camden, SC. It will subsequently address and explain the archaeological work done on the site of the battlefield between 2005 and 2012 and what the results may suggest about the battle. This presentation will also discuss the challenges of metal detector survey in a developed suburban landscape.

Lindler, Joseph A. Jr.

“Breaking Ground at Topper (38AL23): Revisiting the 1985 & 1986 Excavations”

The Topper site (38AL23) is an Indigenous quarry site that has been internationally recognized as one of the oldest sites in the Western Hemisphere (and possibly the oldest) based on the findings of Dr. Albert C. Goodyear of SCIAA. This paper returns to the first excavations at 38AL23 to discuss the findings of the site and how some perspectives have changed on the lithic artifacts recovered since their discovery 40 years ago, and how the legacy collections of 38AL23 can continue to be valuable sources of data for archaeologists as well as an instructional aide for students.

Sherard, Jeff L., Eric Poplin, Dave Baluha, & Martha Zierden

““IF THE OLD DOG SNIFFS ENOUGH, HE WILL FIND THE SOURCE:” A Case for the discovery of John Bartlam’s kiln on the Wando.”

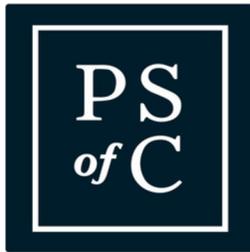
Staffordshire potter John Bartlam traveled to Charleston in 1763. He found good clay at Cain Hoy on the Wando River above Charleston in 1765 and operated a “pott works” there for five years. After decades of searching, in 1991 Stanley South and others excavated a site associated with Bartlam that produced a large collection of Queens Ware, Tortoise Ware, and Blue China ware. But they did not find a kiln. During the 2014 survey of the 10,000-acre Cainhoy Plantation, archaeologists with Brockington identified two sites, including a brick kiln, that produced Bartlam pottery. In this paper, we describe the Bartlam wares recovered there and make a case for the identification of John Bartlam’s kiln.



ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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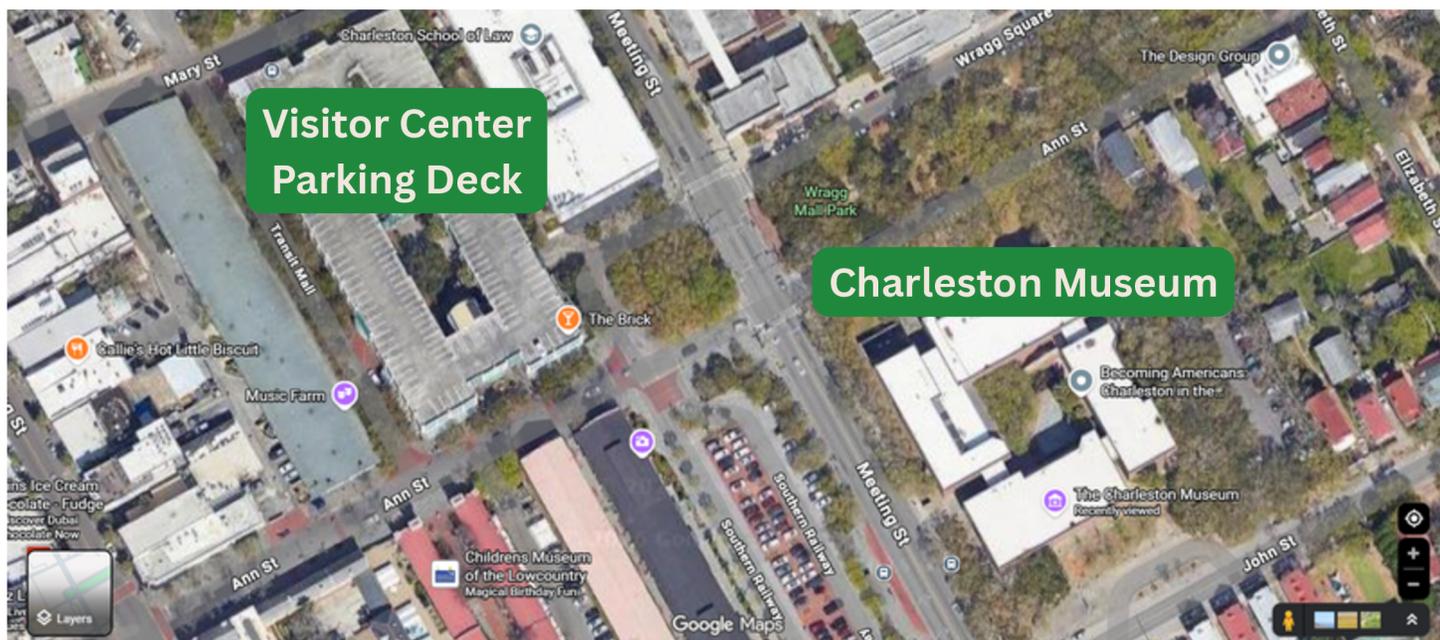


ASHLEY RIVER SPONSORS





PARKING MAP



Conference Sessions & Posters:

Charleston Museum (Auditorium)

360 Meeting St.
Charleston, SC 29403

Suggested Parking:

Visitor Center Parking Deck

63 Mary Street
Charleston, SC 29403



ADDITIONAL VENUES & TOUR INFORMATION

The Charleston Museum

360 Meeting Street, Charleston, SC 29403

All presentations and poster sessions will take place at the Charleston Museum on Saturday, March 7. Parking is typically plentiful and easiest at the Visitor's Center parking deck located across the street from the Museum. The parking deck's address is 63 Mary Street, and it charges \$1.00 per 20 minutes with a \$24 daily max.

Happy Hour at Holy City Brewing

1021 Aragon Ave, North Charleston 29405

Friday, March 6th at 5:00–8:00 PM

Longtime brewery Holy City will be home to the ASSC Friday Night Happy Hour event on March 6th. Come catch up with old friends while sampling some of the best beer brewed in Charleston. There are plenty of other drinks and food options, including a raw bar. Easy parking is located on-site.

Optional Tour Locations and Information

Conference attendees are invited to join us for exciting outdoor events organized by the ASSC in partnership with our colleagues at The Warren Lasch Conservation Center, Charles Towne Landing State Historic Site, and The Charleston Museum.

For a registration fee of \$30.00, you will receive tickets to guided tours with research staff and archaeologists, offering a rare, behind-the-scenes look at the important archaeological and conservation work underway at these three sites. Tour capacity is limited to 40 guests, so register now to secure your spot!

Tour tickets at all facilities may also be used for self-guided tours for those unable to make the time slots. The ticket package will also be available for self-guided tours only once the guided tour slots are filled.

The Warren Lasch Conservation Center

1250 Supply Street, Building 255, North Charleston 29405

Friday, March 6th at 3:00 PM

Located on the former Charleston Navy Base, the WLCC Director, Dr. Stéphanie Cretté, and research staff will provide a behind-the-scenes tour of the world-class Warren Lasch conservation lab. Attendees will be able to view the Civil War submarine H.L. Hunley and associated artifacts, as well as other ongoing conservation projects from across the state. Free parking is available at the facility.



ADDITIONAL VENUES & TOUR INFORMATION

Charles Towne Landing Historic Site

1500 Old Towne Rd, Charleston 29407

Sunday, March 8th at 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM

Visit Charles Towne Landing on Sunday for a tour of the site's ongoing archaeological excavations with State Parks Archaeologist Nicole Isenbarger. Charles Towne Landing is the site of the earliest permanent English settlement in South Carolina, established in 1670. Nicole will lead tours showcasing the property's history and the latest archaeological work at the site. Registrants may choose to attend either the morning or afternoon timeslot.

The Charleston Museum

Sunday, March 8th at 12:00 PM

John Fisher, Curator of Archaeology at The Charleston Museum, will be leading a behind-the-scenes tour of the Museum's storeroom and curation facilities. Guests will have an opportunity to view off-exhibit collections from across the Lowcountry, from both collectors and professional excavations alike.

The Charleston Museum – Heyward Washington House

87 Church Street

Sunday, March 8th at 4:00 PM

Heyward-Washington House

The Charleston Museum will also offer a guided tour of the Heyward-Washington House Museum, a key early house in downtown Charleston. The current house dates to 1772 and was owned by Thomas Heyward, Jr., one of the four South Carolinians who signed the Declaration of Independence. The tour will cover the history of the standing structures and previous archaeological work that uncovered contexts dating back to the early 18th century.