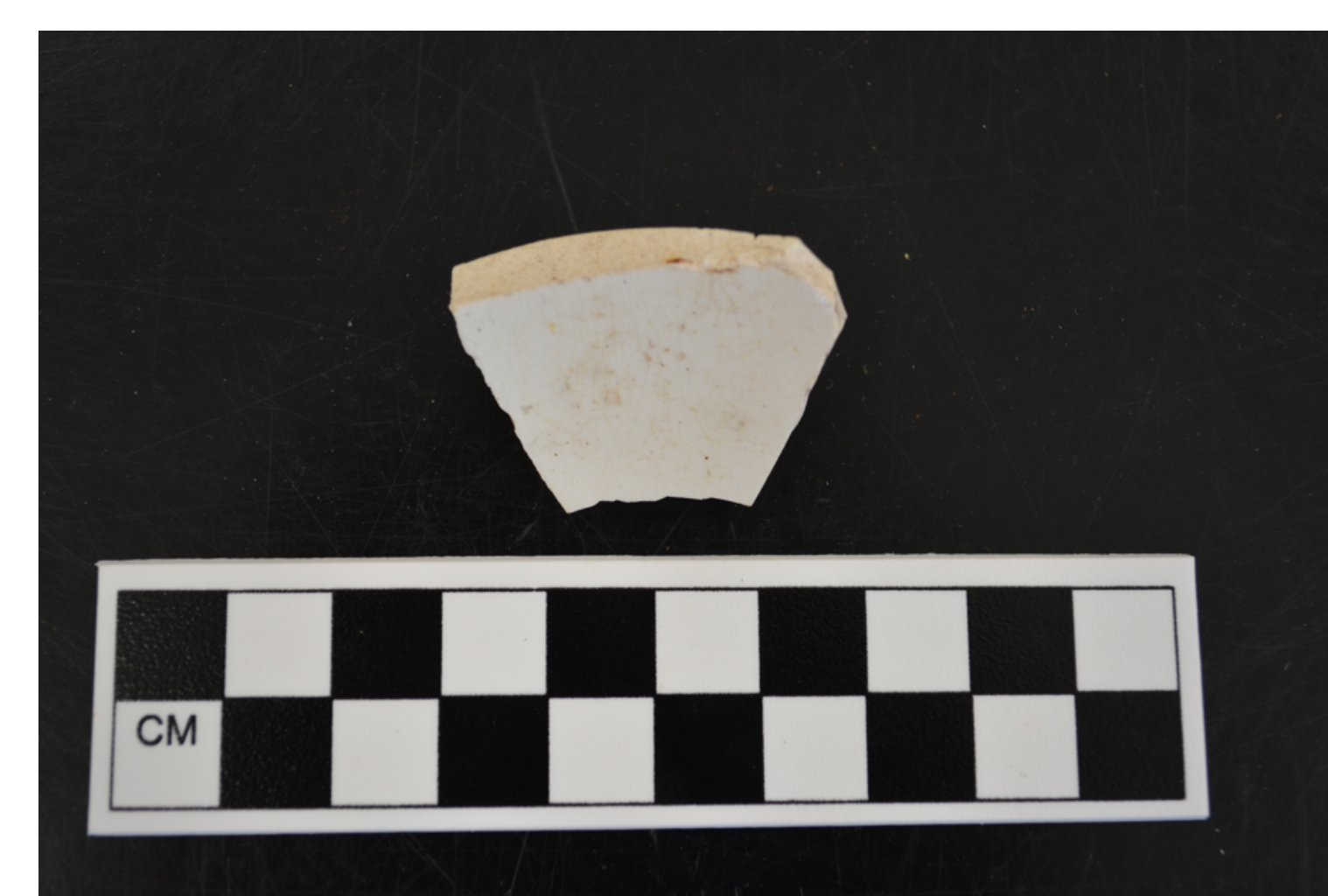
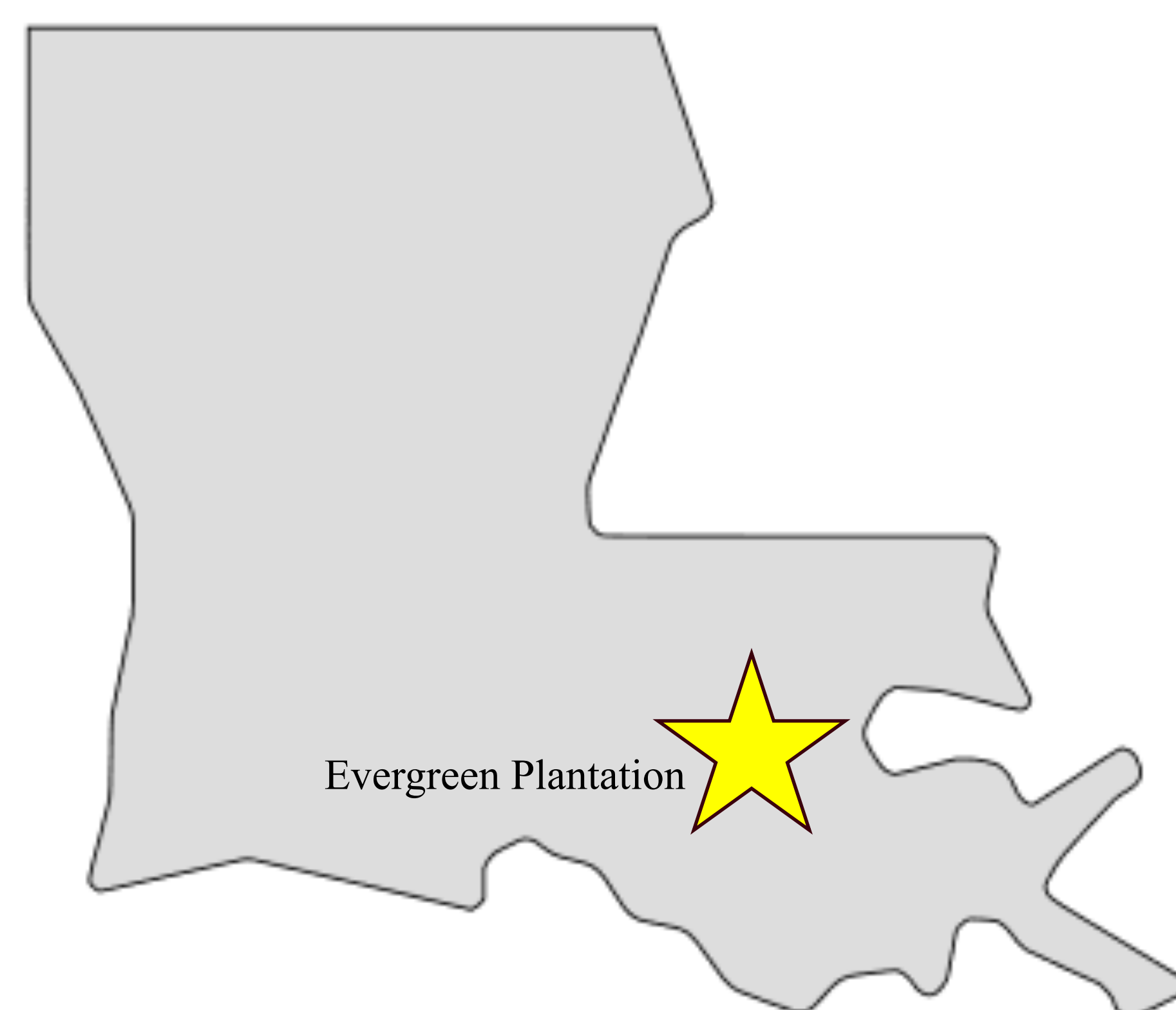


Evergreen Plantation and the African Diaspora

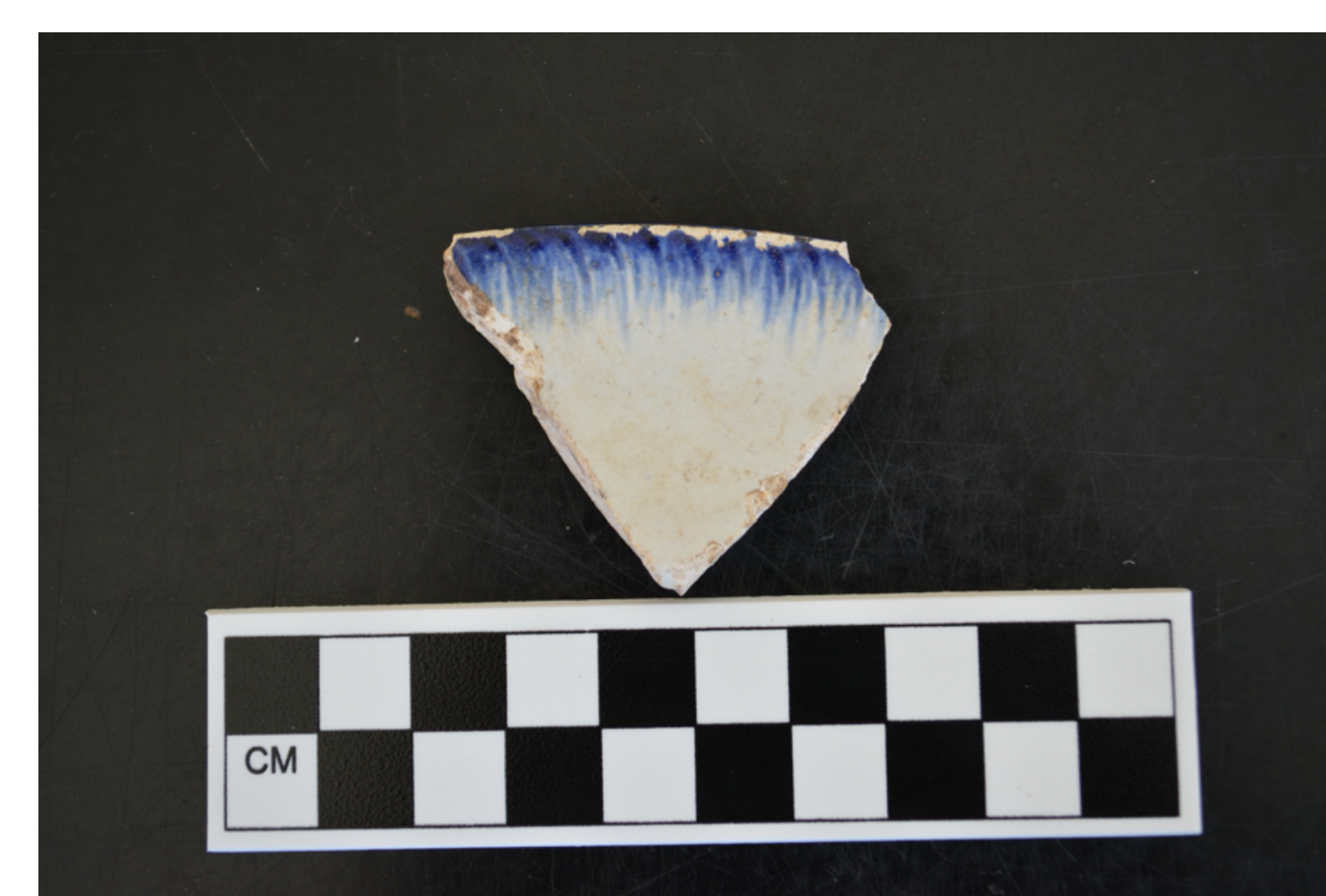
Abbigail Sproul and Dr. Jayur Mehta
Department of Anthropology

Introduction

Founded in 1777, and located on the banks of the Mississippi, Louisiana's Evergreen Plantation holds the distinction as the South's most intact plantation complex, with 37 structures on the National Register of Historic Places. During the time when slavery was still legal in the United States, Evergreen had over 400 enslaved individuals living in its 22 cabins. The Evergreen Plantation Archaeological Survey, which began in 2018, is a study of the lives of those enslaved persons involving the excavation of Evergreen's slave cabins and a potential religious structure associated with the cabins. This project focuses on the analysis of artifacts found during excavations during the Summer of 2021. The purpose of the project, overall, is to create a better understanding of the lives of Evergreen's enslaved population and further educate the public on slavery and plantation life. Part of this understanding comes from the analysis of the ceramic materials excavated from the site, by typing and dating the artifacts collected.



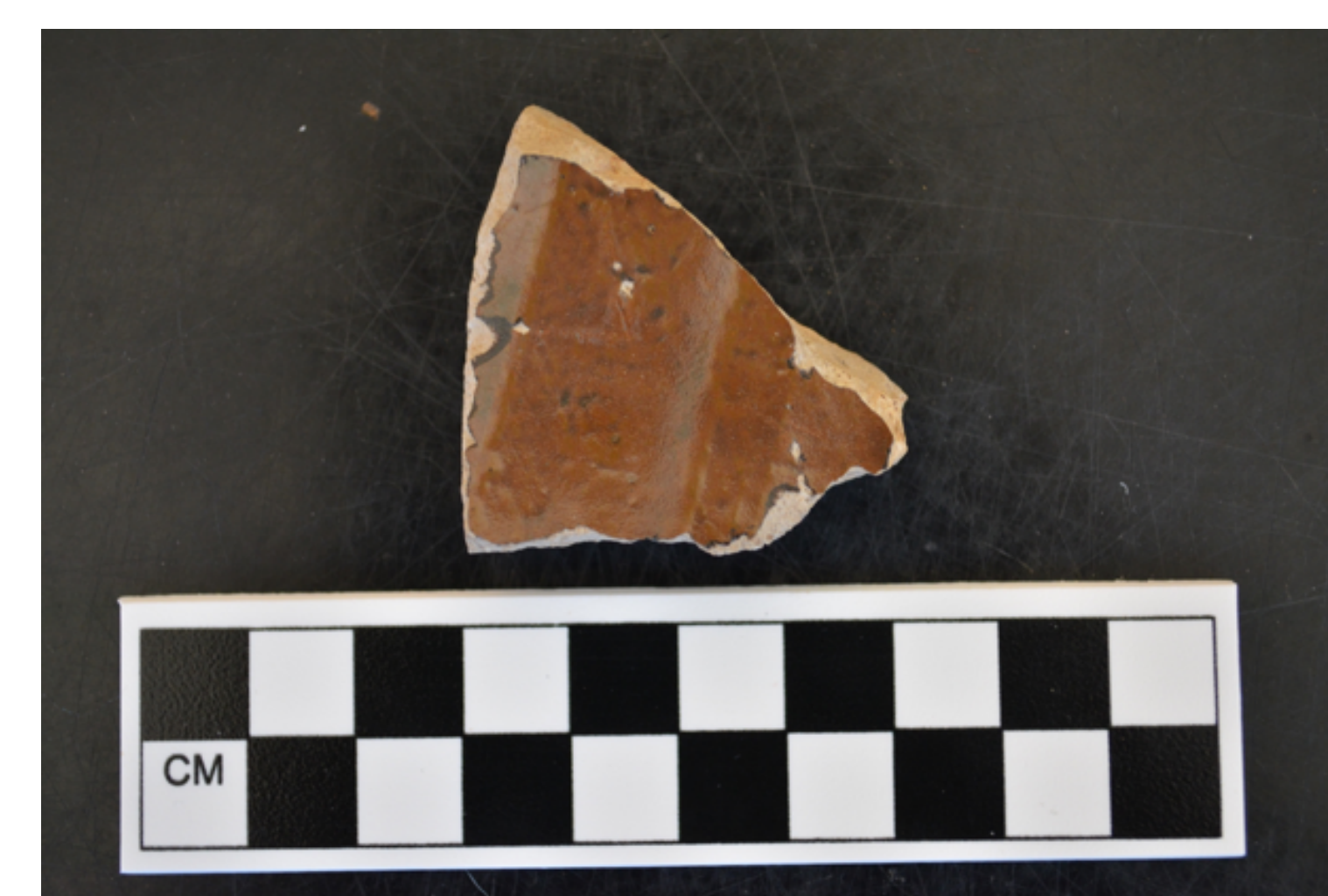
Left—Pearlware saucer base; c. 1775-1830
Right—Pearlware plate base; c. 1784-1840



Edge-molded whiteware, plate rim; c. 1800-2000



Pearlware transfer print, body sherd; c. 1784-1840



Stoneware plate body; c. 1685-1785

Ceramic Analysis

The analysis of ceramic artifacts recovered during the summer 2021 excavation of Evergreen Plantation provides important information in the process of dating the remains of the structures from which they originate. Ceramic sherds are separated from other artifacts and grouped based on where they were discovered, and then analyzed using ceramics analysis manuals and databases. Sherds are typed based on the ceramic materials used, the glaze on the artifact, and any patterns or maker's marks present on the surface. The vessel type is also identified based on the shape of the sherd itself. The process is currently ongoing and a large quantity of ceramic artifacts have been dated to the late 18th and early 18th centuries, providing us with a general timeframe for the use of their associated structures.

Results

Given that the analysis on ceramics is still being conducted and the analysis of glass and metal artifacts has yet to begin, there are no conclusive results regarding the dating of the Evergreen structures being investigated. However, as of right now the ceramics are suggesting a time frame of roughly the late 1700s to the early to mid 1800s. Many of the ceramics have date ranges starting in the 1760s and 1770s and ending in the 1830s and 1840s. This overlap of date ranges suggests that the particular structures excavated were mostly in operation during this time period, but further analysis of artifacts and future excavations of these structures is needed to definitively confirm these preliminary results.

Conclusion

The investigation of artifacts from Evergreen Plantation is still ongoing and will focus on the dating of metals and glass once the ceramic analysis of artifacts found during the Summer 2021 excavation have been completed. Another excavation will take place during the summer of 2022 and will hopefully provide more artifacts to assist in the dating of the structures under investigation. Aside from the variety of ceramics found at Evergreen Plantation, a large quantity of metals and glass have also been found and their future analysis will be of great importance in determining the time period of the structures being excavated. Analysis of these objects will help to better define the operating period of these structures and, in conjunction with ceramics data, help us better understand what plantation life was like for Evergreen's enslaved population.

References

- Bower, Amy. "A Guide to Historic Ceramics in the Antebellum South." (2009)
- "Digital Ceramic Type Collection." *Florida Museum*, 25 Jan. 2019, <https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/histarch/ceramic-types/>.
- *Evergreen Plantation*, 2018, <https://www.evergreenplantation.org/>.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Mehta of the Department of Anthropology for mentoring me and giving me the opportunity to assist in the research on Evergreen Plantation. I would also like to thank the CRE, UROP, and my colloquium leaders for guiding me and providing me with the opportunity to do undergraduate research.