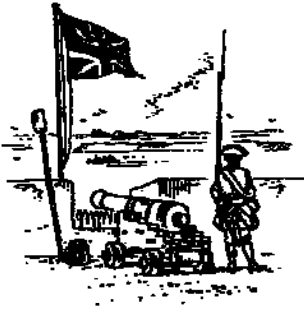




Tabby: Coastal Concrete

Outpost for an Empire



Fort Frederica National Monument commemorates a period of colonial American history when two empires clashed for control over what is now the southeastern United States. Fort Frederica provided the stage for the final act of a drama between Spain and Great Britain in this region for more than two centuries.

Established in 1736, Frederica grew into one of the largest garrison towns in British North America. Once home to up to 500 people in the 1740s; little remains of Frederica today to show this once thriving settlement. Only faint traces of Frederica remain.

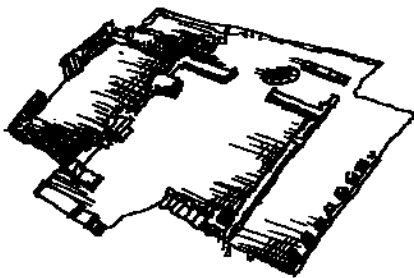
Construction Techniques



One reason that anything can be seen at Frederica is due to the type of material used in some its structures. Called tabby, from the Spanish *tapia*, it is similar to concrete. Tabby's use extended beyond St. Simon's Island. It was used by the Spanish in Florida and, during the plantation period, north-ward to South Carolina.

Tabby consisted of materials found in abundance in Georgia. Oyster shells were burned into a lime powder and mixed with sand, water, and whole shells forming a type of concrete. Once mixed, these materials were poured into wooden forms in courses 12 to 18 inches deep. After hardening, the process was repeated. Some buildings were made completely of tabby, while others were a combination of tabby, wood, and brick. When finished, the tabby was covered with stucco to give it a

Frederica's Decline



Since tabby was labor intensive (three days just to burn oyster shells into powder for the lime base), its use indicates that Frederica was intended as a permanent settlement. However after the War of Jenkin's Ear/Austrian Succession Great Britain and Spain signed a peace treaty in 1748 which signaled the end of Frederica's military role.

Less than a year later, Frederica's military garrison was with- drawn and with it all governmental funding. The town never regained its former prosperity. Those structures that were not burned in the great fire of 1758 were scavenged for their materials. All that remains are a few tabby ruins.

Fort Frederica's Staff demonstrates Tabby Making as done centuries ago, using equal parts: sand, water, oyster shells, and lime.
