

The IPTN Conference or How I Learned to Lay Brick

What a fantastic opportunity I had these last three days - to have this conference here in Columbia at Blandair. I tried to absorb as much as I could from as many of the presentations as possible. Overall, I gained a real appreciation of science and knowledge behind the work and how labor- intensive it must have been originally. Below is list of just some of the knowledge I was exposed to:

- How to plaster ceiling in the main house in the former billiards room.
- The HABS documentation of main house by the folks from National Park Service who performed the work. Also got to watch them doing their field notes for the slave quarters.
- How to mothball a building - what to look for - how to stabilize in the old stone house
- Restoration of windows with the special steamer box method
- How to build a dry stone wall
- Basics of timber frame repair and history of the technique at the old grainery barn
- How to make mortar the old way, how to tell what kind of mortar was used, why cement is so bad, and how to lay brick. And then I actually did it - put mortar on and attempted to place the brick correctly on the level!
- How to make shingles.
- How to repair or build porches and porticos using the old pattern books to reproduce column dimensions.

Woodlawn Slave Quarters Connection

Also made a very valuable networking connection for the future of the Woodlawn Slave Quarters with Dr. Warren Perry, from Connecticut State University. He has been involved with the slave burial grounds in New York City and the project in Annapolis that discovered the African spiritual items in the Carroll House. I was able to take him over to the Woodlawn Slave Quarters and he was enthralled. He believes that it would be a great site for archeological digs and will be able to get the hook up with the Annapolis folks. This all should be good support to get Columbia Association to do something with the site.