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## **"Where the Wappetaw Independent Congregational Church Stood...", Archaeological Testing at 38CH1682, Charleston County, SC**

Christopher Ohm Clement

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## **"Where the Wappetaw Independent Congregational Church Stood...", Archaeological Testing at 38CH1682, Charleston County, SC**

### **Description**

This report presents the results of limited archaeological testing at Wappetaw Independent Church (38CH1682), Charleston County, South Carolina. Wappetaw was founded by a group of 51 Congregationalist emigrants from New England, who arrived in the Carolinas around 1696. The primary focus of documentary research for this project was the earliest years of settlement; settlement patterning and motivations for immigration are examined. Archaeologically, remains of the last church to occupy the site (ca. 1783-1897) were securely identified, and a tentative reconstruction of the foundation of this structure is provided. Evidence of earlier structures was also encountered, and indicates that at least one earlier church stood on the property. Archaeological evidence confirms documentary data that this earlier church was occupied by British forces during the American Revolution, and tends to confirm that it was burned at the time of their departure.

### **Keywords**

Excavations, Churches, Wando Neck, Charleston County, South Carolina, Archeology

### **Disciplines**

Anthropology

### **Publisher**

The South Carolina Institute of Archeology and Anthropology--University of South Carolina

Wappetaw Independent Church Stood...  
Archaeological Excavation at SCB1682  
Charleston County, SC

Christopher Ohm Clement  
and  
Ramona M. Grunden

Research Manuscript Series 22

This project was funded by the congregations of Mount Pleasant  
Presbyterian Church, Mount Pleasant, SC, and New Wappetaw  
Presbyterian Church, McClellanville, SC, in anticipation of the  
tricentennial celebration of Wappetaw Independent Church.

Prepared by the

Cultural Resources Consulting Division  
South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology  
University of South Carolina  
Columbia, SC

March, 1998

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## Acknowledgements

Although the actual fieldwork for this project took place over only a few days, the number of people who helped out with the research is large. Butch Hills, with help from Randy McClure, served as point man and intermediary between ourselves and the congregations of Mt. Pleasant and New Wappetaw Presbyterian Churches. From our perspective, it was largely their efforts which led to the instigation, funding and completion of this project. Undoubtedly they were assisted by many others whom we never heard from directly. Butch and Randy also had a keen interest in the fieldwork while it was actually under way. Martha Zierden (Charleston Museum) and Bob Morgan (US Forest Service) attended an early planning meeting at New Wappetaw Presbyterian and suggested or confirmed many aspects the research design used for this project.

Assistance in the field was provided by Mike Stoner, usually employed by SCIAA's Santa Elena Project, and by Sean Taylor, an undergraduate at the University of South Carolina Department of Anthropology. With their help we were able to accomplish much more excavation in the time available. Several interested individuals visited the site while excavation was in progress. Though nameless, they deserve thanks for their enthusiasm and encouragement. Visitors often present a difficult situation for archaeologists in the field because talking with these folks takes time away from their primary task, digging. At the same time, we are usually loathe to pass up the opportunity to educate interested people about what archaeologists do. In this regard, Bob Morgan ran interference with the public, talking to them, explaining, and generally freeing us up for excavation. We hope he got some interesting tidbits through his efforts that will help with his own research.

The post-fieldwork research phase of this project turned into a much larger endeavor than planned, largely because so many interesting questions were raised. They began with our reading of "Wappetaw", a looseleaf notebook stuffed with historical and genealogical information about the Church compiled by Mrs. Agnes Baldwin. The information contained in the notebook provided a starting point that sent us in many directions. Much additional information was gathered by internet searches and inter library loan through the University of South Carolina, but other individuals helped as well. M.O. Clement, a retired professor at Dartmouth College (and my father), culled some references from Dartmouth's Baker Library that would otherwise have been unavailable to us, while Monica Beck (Old Dorchester State Park) and Martha Zierden provided insight into the settlement of the Carolinas by New Englanders in the 17th c.

A number of people within SCIAA and the University of South Carolina ensured the success of this project well before fieldwork began. Of special note is Sherry Bailey, SCIAA's

Business Manager, who was able to hurdle the bureaucratic obstacle course. State Archaeologist and SCIAA Director, Bruce Rippeteau, and the administrative staff of SCIAA managed the internal bureaucracy. Steve Smith, Head of the Cultural Resources Consulting Division, allowed us to spend a great deal more time on this than the budget allowed, while the research staff of SCIAA are always helpful, providing advice, criticism and encouragement.

Finally, we wish to thank the owners of the Morrison House, McClellanville, where we stayed during fieldwork. We half seriously referred to the project as archaeology heaven: a beautiful site to work and wonderful weather to do it in. The house provided the icing on the cake. Yes, we slept in the beds, but we got more use out of the dock, the chairs in the yard, and the screened porch. Crab dip and shrimp dip with beautiful sunsets . . . we might as well have been on vacation.



## **Abstract**

This report presents the results of limited archaeological testing at Wappetaw Independent Church (38CH1682), Charleston County, South Carolina. Wappetaw was founded by a group of 51 Congregationalist emigrants from New England, who arrived in the Carolinas around 1696. The primary focus of documentary research for this project was the earliest years of settlement; settlement patterning and motivations for immigration are examined. Archaeologically, remains of the last church to occupy the site (ca. 1783-1897) were securely identified, and a tentative reconstruction of the foundation of this structure is provided. Evidence of earlier structures was also encountered, and indicates that at least one earlier church stood on the property. Archaeological evidence confirms documentary data that this earlier church was occupied by British forces during the American Revolution, and tends to confirm that it was burned at the time of their departure.

**"Where the Wappetaw Independent Congregational Church Stood..."**  
**Archaeological Testing at 38CH1682**  
**Charleston County, SC**

This report presents the results of a program of limited archaeological testing at the site of Wappetaw Independent Church (38CH1682), located in Charleston County, SC. Wappetaw Church began when a group of 51 Congregationalists arrived in Charles Town from Ipswich, Massachusetts, probably in early 1696. Ultimately they settled in an area some 15 miles northeast of Charles Town and in 1699 initiated a call for a minister (McIver 1957). The subsequent church was rebuilt at least once and remained a house of worship for more than a century and a half, ultimately falling into disuse and disrepair in the late 19th century.

This project was sponsored by the congregations of New Wappetaw Presbyterian Church, McClellanville, and Mt. Pleasant Presbyterian Church, Mt. Pleasant, in preparation for their tricentennial celebrations in 1999. Fieldwork was conducted by staff of the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology's Cultural Resources Consulting Division, who were joined by volunteers Mike Stoner (SCIAA) and Sean Taylor (USC Department of Anthropology).

**Project Location**

The site of Wappetaw Independent Church is located in present-day Charleston County, SC, on Wando Neck, a narrow strip of land paralleling the coast and bounded by the Wando River to the west and the Atlantic Ocean to the east (Figure 1). Geographers place this area in the Sea Island portion of South Carolina's coastal zone, which is characterized by a series of low, marshy islands backed by similarly low mainland areas. The sea islands, in turn, are divided into active barrier islands fronting the sea, such as Hunting and Fripp Islands, and more protected erosion remnant islands such as St. Helena Island. The formation processes which led to the latter type are pertinent to Wando Neck in that erosion remnant islands were once part of the mainland inland of the coastal strand itself; they were created during the early Holocene when coastal, Pleistocene-derived streams were gradually inundated by rising sea level (Kovacik and Winberry 1987:24-25). Wando Neck, slightly elevated and inland

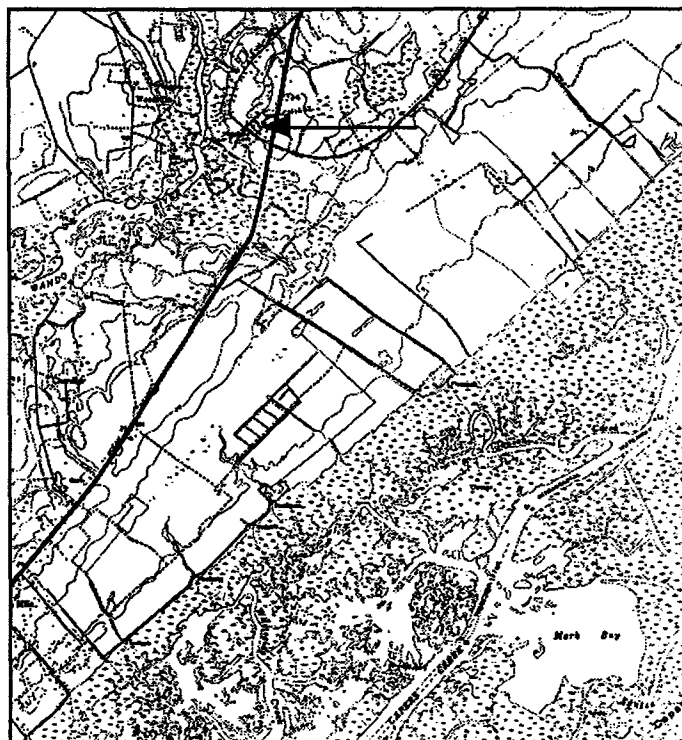


Figure 1. USGS topographic map showing location of Wappetaw Independent Church.

from the inundated area forming the sea islands, remained as part of the mainland.

The general orientation of the neck is northeast-to-southwest, and it is characterized by nearly level topography with a maximum elevation near the project area of just over 20 feet above sea level. Soils within the immediate area are classified as the Seewee-Rutledge Association, a group of sandy soils occurring on nearly level land as a series of low troughs and ridges parallel to the sea. These soils are somewhat poorly to moderately well drained (Soil Conservation Service 1971:1-2). To either side of Wando Neck's high ground are low-lying, permanently inundated swamps bounding the Wando River and the Atlantic. The Wappetaw Independent Church site itself occupies an area of Chipley loamy fine sand, a generally deep and sandy, nearly level, moderately well drained to somewhat poorly drained soil (Soil Conservation Service 1971:10-11). It is located within 400 meters of the modern channel of the Wando River (at a point where the river immediately abuts high ground), and less than 300 meters from the floodplain. It should be pointed out that the juxtaposition of the main channel and high ground made this area very desirable for settlement during the late 17th and early 18th centuries (see South and Hartley 1980). State Road 17, formerly the main stage route between Charleston and points north, follows the high ground along the approximate center of Wando Neck. The town of Mount Pleasant lies at the neck's southern terminus, and is separated from the city of Charleston by Charleston Harbor at the mouth of the Ashley, Cooper and Wando Rivers.

The church site itself occupies land currently belonging to New Wappetaw Independent Church, Mt. Pleasant. The site consists of approximately 1.4 well maintained acres, shaded by several large live oaks. The property is just off SR17 and is bounded to the southwest by SR584. The remaining three sides of the property are defined by a tree line and dense underbrush. Historical features evident on the landscape include several grave markers dating from the 19th and 20th centuries and the remains of an abandoned road, visible as a linear depression running approximately northwest-to-southeast (Figure 2).

### **Project Goals**

Although church parishioners in McClellanville and Mt. Pleasant believed that the location of the Wappetaw Cemetery as marked on modern maps was the site of the church structure itself, a primary goal of the project was to confirm this. In addition, there were other questions that this project was designed to address. These concerned the number of structures on the property, both at any single time and diachronically, the size and orientation of the structure(s), and the method of construction. If possible, an approximate date of construction for the earliest structure was desired, as was definition and identification of activity areas within the church yard. Thus, the specific project goals can be defined as follows:



Figure 2. Photograph of site showing linear depression and a few of the burial markers. Looking approximately southeast.

- 1--Locate archaeological remains of structure(s) within the parcel;
- 2--Determine which location held the remains of the church itself, and/or its earliest manifestation;
- 3--Determine construction techniques, approximate dimensions and orientation;
- 4--Recover sufficient artifacts for dating purposes;
- 5--Sufficiently investigate the exterior areas of the structure(s) to determine if specialized activity areas were present and determine what these activities may have been.

Archaeological research successfully met the majority of goals, as described in the body of this report. Prior to discussing the methods employed in this research and the results, the following section places Wappetaw Independent Church in historical context.

### **Historical Context for Wappetaw Independent Church**

The goal of this section is less a specific reconstruction of the history of the church than a general statement regarding the natural and cultural environment the parishioners found themselves in from a diachronic perspective. However, significantly more historical research went into certain periods of time because it was felt that Institute researchers had better access to data due to their specific research interests or due to their University affiliation than would independent or avocational researchers. An effort to determine the identity of the original settlers was made, as was an effort to learn more about the historical situation in New England during the period that emigration took place. In addition, some periods are of particular significance in terms of church history from the perspective of preparing a National Register of Historic Places nomination form. Most important of these includes the role of the site during the Revolutionary War.

### **Settlement at Wappetaw**

The exact motivation for the movement of the Wappetaw settlers to Carolina may never be fully known, but it is likely that they were many and varied. One of the more attractive explanations, because of its inherent sensationalism, is that the settlers were disaffected from the New England population as a result of the infamous Salem witch trials. These trials, occurring primarily in 1692, resulted not only in the deaths of some 20 people (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1974) but more importantly indicated serious schisms in colonial society. Nevertheless, by 1696 these schisms appear to have been mostly mended (Phillips 1933:305-307) and are unlikely to have accounted for emigration. Furthermore, there is evidence that Ipswich, although immediately adjacent to Salem, was never fully caught up in the witchcraft scare, probably because of the levelheadedness and courage of the town's ministers, William Hubbard and John Wise (Phillips 1933:297; Perley 1928:281). A more important factor may have been the simple need for new land as by this time the Massachusetts Bay Colony had grown rather large and emigration was common to the colony's hinterlands. Finally, there is at least some indication in the documents that simply spreading the church was an important consideration (Salley 1911:191). This latter point bears further investigation in light of the political situation in the Carolinas at the time. From the period ca. 1692-1706, efforts to limit the political rights of "dissenters" by Church of England members were at their peak in the Carolina colony (Wallace 1951). Thus there may have been efforts originating in Carolina to draw a greater population of dissenters into the colony at the close of the 17th c. It is worth pointing out that three Governors between 1693 and 1700 were dissenters.

The Wappetaw settlers were not the only group to come from New England to Carolina in the late 17th c. In fact, at least one other group arrived in the same year, and there may have been others. On June 26, 1696, the Rev. William Hubbard wrote to Governor Archdale that "a considerable number" of individuals wished to emigrate (Felt 1823:70). They subsequently did so on October 11. Although it is possible that this letter relates to the Wappetaw settlers as Hubbard's ministry was in Ipswich, the timing appears to be somewhat off. A subsequent group, probably

the settlers of Dorchester, SC, was advised by Governor Archdale to:

- 1--respect the religious practices of those already in Carolina;
- 2--pay attention to the local climate as it was so different from that of New England;
- 3--obey the law;
- 4--ensure that the chosen site for settlement afforded sufficient and suitable land for planting, and water for industry and transportation. Permission to occupy this location had been granted prior to settlement.

A few additional points about this letter. First, it gives an interesting view of just how common immigration from the Massachusetts Bay Colony was in the late 17th c. by cautioning that immigrants behave properly on arrival in Carolina "in that we have been informed, that many of N-England going into that countrie (Carolina), have so demeaned themselves as that they have been a scandal to N-England and have been an offence (sic) to the sober and well minded in Carolina, and an ill-example unto others" (Merrens 1977:13). Second, the letter highlights the different settlement strategy used by the Dorchester group. This settlement used a New England model based on a geographically tightly bounded village community surrounded by communal or individual lands for agricultural production. In contrast, the Wappetaw group chose a more dispersed settlement strategy. With no other centrally cohesive presence, the church may have played a larger role in community organization, or may indicate that there was concomitantly less social cohesion among the Wappetaw settlers.

Although both hypotheses require further research, it is likely that the roots of the alternative strategies can be traced beyond New England and back to the mother country. Cronon (1983:73-74) distinguishes between two types of landholding in England that were transferred, at least in part, to New England. First are areas of England in which a medieval system of land tenure remained common in the 17th c. In such regions "strong manorial control had been exercised over lands held in common by peasant farmers" (Cronon 1983:74). When a Massachusetts Bay settlement was created by individuals primarily from one of these areas, more land was held for common use. This appears to more closely correspond to the Dorchester model.

In contrast, other regions of England had drifted away from this medieval system towards a more modern system in which land was held by the individual who utilized it (Cronon 1983:74). This system, when transferred to New England, resulted in less land as common holdings and more as individual holdings. Cronon specifically points to Ipswich as an example, and by extension it is logical to attach it to the Wappetaw settlers.

Although the particular settlement patterns may vary, the Dorchester settlers provide one model for the steps taken during such a potentially hazardous undertaking as removing to Carolina.

Of the several people in the Dorchester group, one had been living in Carolina for some years (Salley 1911:191). Upon deciding to emigrate, eight men made the journey to Carolina by ship in order to pick out suitable lands for settlement. After making this crucial decision, all or several returned to the Massachusetts Bay Colony to retrieve their families. Only then did full emigration take place.

By 1706 the Wappetaw settlers were well integrated into the local area. An attack on Charles Town by combined forces of France and Spain during this year was unsuccessful, in great part due to the efforts of the Wappetaw settlers. When the enemy threatened the town on August 25 by lying-to outside of the harbor, the "country companies" marched to the defense. Among these was the company of Captain John Fenwick, who were brought across from Wando Neck on the 27th. On the 30th, augmented by about 25 men each from Captain Jonathon Lynch's company and Captain William Cantey's company, the approximately 50 men of Captain Fenwick's company returned to the neck and engaged about 160 Spaniards and Frenchmen, successfully defeating them and killing, wounding or capturing some 52 of the enemy. Only one colonist, a William Adams ("formerly of N. England"), was lost in the engagement. On the following Tuesday Fenwick's men came across an enemy contingent who had landed at Seewee (now Bull's) Bay. Again there was an engagement, and again Fenwick's company got the best of it, killing 12-14 and capturing about 50 more (*The Boston News-Letter*, October 7-October 14, 1706). If the Wappetaw settlers were not accepted into the community prior to this event, their prominent role in driving off the enemy would have gained them acceptance immediately afterward.

### **Colonial Period**

When the Wappetaw settlers arrived in Carolina sometime in 1696, they encountered an area that had been colonized for more than 25 years, and that was rapidly being transformed into a viable community with strong economic prospects. The settlement of Carolina by the British had occurred in 1670 under the auspices of the Lords Proprietors, a powerful group of men who had gained favor with King Charles II of England during that country's Civil War (Wallace 1951:22). In 1680 the original settlers abandoned their first settlement on Albemarle Point in favor of Oyster Point, which they named Charles Town in honor of the king. Initially numbering less than 150 people, the colony grew rapidly to 2,200 by about 1682, and to approximately 7,000 by the turn of the 18th century (Mills 1826:177; Wallace 1951:38).

The settlement of Carolina occurred at a time when lands on Great Britain's flagship colony in the West Indies, Barbados, were rapidly becoming unavailable due the increasing population, and many of the original settlers of Carolina arrived from this colony. They brought with them a predilection for large-scale agricultural production of staple crops for export, an economic system that they attempted to implement in the Carolinas. During the earliest years of settlement, however, they were largely unsuccessful in this attempt, lacking both the manpower and the capital to initiate

production on such a scale. Instead, the Carolina economy focused initially on what Richard Hakluyt (1584, in Taylor 1935) called "merchantable commodities", by which he meant naturally occurring local products which were unavailable in the mother country (Cronon 1983:20). In Carolina, these commodities included deerskins, lumber and naval stores.

The deerskin trade provided perhaps the first economic impetus for the fledgling colony. Lacking sufficient manpower to clear lands for agricultural production, the first settlers of Carolina turned to trade in order to support themselves and justify the colony's existence to its benefactors. The deerskin trade began on a local scale, but soon outstripped readily available supplies in the immediate vicinity. By the turn of the 18th century Carolina traders were ranging as far afield as the Mississippi River, and were exporting some 50,000 hides to Great Britain annually (Kovacik and Winberry 1987:69-70). As the deerskin traders were forced farther afield by competition, locally the settlers turned to forest products. In 1671, a shipment of 12 cypress planks was sent to the Lords Proprietors from Carolina in an effort to boost the lumber trade with the mother country (Clowse 1971:61). Prohibitive shipping costs, however, dictated that the bulk of this trade be carried out with the West Indian colonies where large-scale sugar production had already caused a local shortage of lumber for staves (Batie 1976). But competition with other North American colonies for the West Indian lumber market was fierce, profits were disappointing and the colonists turned to naval stores shortly after the turn of the 18th century. The increased production of naval stores was initiated by European political developments that slowly decreased access to the traditional source of these products, Sweden. In 1704 a subsidy for naval stores produced in the American colonies was instigated by Parliament. The colonists responded to this economic boon with a rapid increase in production; between 4,000 and 7,000 barrels of naval stores were produced annually in the years 1705 to 1714. About one third of this total production was derived from Carolina (Clowse 1971:174-175).

At the time of settlement the colonists brought with them a variety of livestock including cattle and pigs, and these animals were so successful in the Carolina environment that they provided the next major economic impetus of the colony. While large-scale production of staple crops for export proved unsuccessful during the early years of settlement, by 1674 sufficient subsistence crops including corn, beans and tubers were being grown by small-scale producers to allow their export. In conjunction with this production, herding was pursued--crop areas were fenced off while cattle and pigs were allowed to roam freely. The grasses, roots, nuts, and berries that occurred naturally in the Carolina environment provided excellent forage for European domesticated animals, and the cattle population of the colony grew rapidly. Where a well-off colonist might own three or four cows in the 1670's, by 1710 the possession of 200 head was common and some individuals owned up to 1,000 head (Otto 1986:117-118). Pigs were probably equally successful at adapting to the new environment. By 1682 the Carolina colonists were exporting salt beef and salt pork to the Caribbean, and by the end of the 17th century herding had



become the largest agricultural undertaking in the colony and had spread throughout the coastal plain in the Charles Town area (Haan 1982:350; Otto 1986:117, 1989:30,32).

Despite these successes, the Carolina colonists continued to seek a staple crop. The earliest such crop, and one that would continue to play a vital role in the economy, was rice. Rice was produced in the colony as early as 1674, when it was exported in small quantities (Otto 1989:33). In the mid 1690's experimentation began with different varieties, and by 1699 the crop had taken off--approximately 2,100 barrels were exported in that year. By 1712, when some 12,727 barrels were produced, rice had supplanted herding as the dominant export from the colony (Clowse 1971:130-131; Otto 1989:34-37). Requiring large amounts of low-lying land and access to navigable waterways, rice cultivation spread rapidly throughout much of the settled low country (Kovacik and Winberry 1987:72-74).

During the earliest years of settlement labor was provided by a variety of sources. Indentured labor--Europeans who sold their services for a specified number of years in order to gain passage across the Atlantic--was at first prevalent but proved less economically viable than the alternatives and gradually dropped from use. Similarly, the labor of enslaved Native Americans was also attempted, but this too, became untenable, primarily because the Indians were able to leave the plantations and go back to their earlier lifeways. What came to be the dominant labor force in South Carolina, a trend that began with the earliest settlement of the colony and gradually increased, was enslaved Africans and their African-American descendants. The introduction of rice cultivation at an early date in the colony certainly had a very great positive impact on this development.

This, then, was the setting that the Wappetaw settlers encountered on landing in Carolina--a colony already transformed from one based on an extractive economic system to a renewable economic system, and one that was rapidly changing from herding and trading to large-scale agriculture. This is not a situation with which they would have been uncomfortable. Where the New England colonies were never able to identify a suitable plantation crop, the incipient nature of the Carolina plantation system allowed the Wappetaw settlers the opportunity to "get in on the ground floor". It is likely that the settlers capitalized on the suitability of the land and climate for livestock production by allowing cattle and pigs to roam freely, while they themselves concentrated on readying lands for planting. No easy task as the forests had to be cleared before any crop could be introduced, and the difficulty was increased by a probable relative absence of labor. Initially, crops would have been of the subsistence variety, but as lands were prepared the ability to cultivate rice increased. Concomitantly, capital for this endeavor was slowly amassed through the livestock industry and secondarily through the export of surplus crops. African slaves were bought, and rice cultivation was adopted, probably supplemented considerably by continued livestock production as the two practices are not mutually exclusive. An ideal working plantation during this

early period was estimated to utilize a slave labor force numbering 30 persons (Phillips 1974:9).

The year 1715 saw a brief, violent hiatus in the economic development of the colony as a result of the Yamassee War. The Wappetaw settlers were likely effected in ways similar to their neighbors. Initiated by attacks on outlying settlements, by June of 1715 attacks were successfully conducted by the Yamassee and their allies within 30 miles of Charleston itself and a month later within 12 miles (Haan 1982). Although Wappetaw lies outside of this 12 mile perimeter, it is protected by the Wando River and the settlers probably remained in place, though with some trepidation. Nevertheless, on the whole, the Yamassee War had far reaching effects on the colony. What few indians were in the area of Wappetaw at settlement, and at least one group is shown south of the Wando as late as 1715 (Moll 1715), were seen no more after 1715. On a political level, the near success of the Yamassee in driving the colony into the sea contributed to the ultimate downfall of the Lords Proprietors. By 1729 a royal government was instituted, one which allowed a great deal more autonomy on the part of individual colonists. This fact alone contributed greatly to rapid economic growth of the area in the succeeding years (Phillips 1974:9).

A second viable commercial crop, indigo, was reintroduced to Carolina in the mid 18th c. Although production had been tried before, it was not until King George's War (1739-1748) that the British supply from the French and Spanish West Indies was interrupted. In 1749 the Crown supplied a bounty on indigo produced in her American colonies, and during the French and Indian war (1754-1763) the Carolina crop exceeded a half million lbs per annum, peaking at well over 1 million lbs in the mid 1770s. One reason for the success of indigo was that it could be grown in conjunction with rice. Where rice was typically grown in low lying, inundated areas, indigo was grown on the higher ground behind the rice fields. Despite this advantage, when the indigo bounty was stopped by the American Revolution, the crop quickly but temporarily declined in popularity. However, in the pre-Revolution period, it had added a valuable economic resource to lowcountry planters (Kovacik and Winberry 1987:74-75).

In a report written for the USDA Forest Service, New South and Associates present an extensive discussion of colonial-period landuse on the Neck. Although much of their discussion focuses heavily on the particular sites under investigation, many of their more general points are applicable to the parishioners of Wappetaw Independent Church. Land grant data is one area they pursue, and they confirm continued growth of the Wando Neck throughout the 18th c. Growth appears to have occurred in spurts, with the initial impetus in the period 1696-1717 followed by a cessation until the 1730's when a small upswing is seen. Finally, a period of accelerated land acquisition leading up to the Revolutionary War from the 1750's is apparent (Cable et al. 1995:65). This should not be construed to indicate that the population of the local area grew concomitantly, at least not the white population, although certainly new families entered the scene. Rather, cartographic data presented in the New South report suggests to them that while lands continued to

be doled out via grants, a second trend for this period is the gradual consolidation of lands into larger and larger landholdings, indicating that much of the granting activity during the 18th c. involved land speculation rather than new settlement. While this conclusion is almost certainly valid, I would caution that it should be somewhat less strongly stated. Maps of the day were frequently funded through the help of subscriptions; that is, while they typically include accurate representations of geographical features, only the houses of families who subscribed to the cartographic effort by donation are likely to be included while those who did not subscribe are typically not depicted on the map. Thus, whether a particular house is represented on a given map is largely dependent on the economic capabilities of the house's owners--the less well-off are usually omitted, leading the number of small-holdings in a given area to be under represented and under counted.

The specific effect of the trends discussed in the preceding paragraph on the Wappetaw settlers cannot be determined with any degree of certainty in the absence of their names and without significantly more documentary research than allowed by the present project. In general, though, three trajectories were likely followed by individual families. First, and probably the most common but also the most difficult to track given the potential limitations to cartographic evidence discussed above, many families likely maintained an economic status quo, remaining as small holders and growing small amounts of cash crops and livestock for sale but relying significantly on subsistence crops for day-to-day needs. In daily interaction they would have worked and lived closely with the few slaves they could afford, possibly up to and including the sharing of daily meals. This group of yeoman farmers would have formed the backbone of the Wappetaw congregation. While neither their economic nor their moral force would have been great as individuals, as a group they would have exerted a strong and profound steadying influence. Second, a significantly smaller group would have become economically successful. These gentleman planters would have large landholdings worked by many slaves and would be more highly visible in the historical record. They would also have employed several whites in the neighborhood, primarily as overseers. They would serve as the leaders of the church community, and it is from this group that leadership in the larger society would have been drawn. Third, it is highly unlikely that all of the original settlers remained in the Wappetaw area. Some of the initial immigrants may have returned to the Massachusetts Bay Colony, unwilling or unable to make a go of it in Carolina; others may have moved on seeking greener pastures elsewhere. Heirs of the original settlers, particularly younger sons of large planters but to some extent sons of the yeomen as well, would also tend to remove themselves from the local community. With an inheritance system primarily based on primogeniture, especially for the wealthy, the economic opportunities for younger sons would have been extremely limited. However, as stated above, there would have been some replacement of this out migration by newcomers, who may also have become church members. As with the original families, their economic status would have played a large part in their ability to participate in church matters.

## Revolutionary War

Wappetaw Independent Church played only a small role in the Revolutionary War, but one that adds an important element to the site's significance on a state and local level. The war in South Carolina lasted from late 1775, when loyalist and patriot forces clashed at Ninety Six, until late in 1782 when the British evacuated Charleston (Lumpkin 1981). The intervening seven years were marked by several set piece battles between soldiers and militiamen operating essentially as regular troops, as well as innumerable clashes in an ongoing guerrilla conflict. The war in South Carolina was a brutal affair pitting neighbor against neighbor in which both sides committed atrocious acts of violence that fanned the flames of hatred and made revenge a key strategy on both sides of the lines.

Although the men of Wappetaw undoubtedly played a role throughout the war as either loyalists or patriots (throughout the war the numbers of colonists serving on either side were roughly equal), the area surrounding the church did not see action until Charleston was besieged by the British in 1780. The battle for Charleston lasted from 11 February to 12 May, 1780 (Lumpkin 1981), but not until very late in the campaign could actions have taken place in the vicinity of Wappetaw Church. The British plan of attack was a ponderously orchestrated affair that began to the south of the city when they initially invested Seabrook Island to secure a base-of-operations for the upcoming siege. Not until this area was fully garrisoned and fortified did the British Commander, Sir Henry Clinton, proceed to besiege the city, which he did by occupying positions on Charleston Neck on March 20. Still, the patriot forces in Charleston maintained lines of communication, supply and reinforcement to the east of the Cooper River. From the city the southernmost of these lines ran across the Cooper River then northeast up Wando Neck before turning northward at Wappetaw Independent Church to cross the Wando River (Figure 3). The river crossing was the most defensible point from the patriots' perspective, and Wappetaw Church, adjacent to the crossing's approach, may have been part of this defense system. Indeed, when the patriots rallied to reinforce the east side of the Cooper at Lempriere's Point, a secondary goal was "to secure Wappetaw, an advantageous bridge, for the retreat of the army..." (McIntosh, in *Southern Historical Review* 1848:299). However, British cavalry operations under the command of Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton began in the area shortly after Huger's (patriot) cavalry troop was routed at Monck's Corner, and by April 17 the patriot forces heard that "1000 or 1500 of the enemy, under Gen. Lord Cornwallis, had passed Monk's (sic) Corner, Strawberry, Bonneaus's ferry and Wappetaw, and actually arrived within six miles of the said post (Lempriere's)" (DeBrahm, in *Southern Historical Review* 1848:298). When patriot forces under Captain Parker advanced to within 300 yards of the bridge at Wappetaw, they found it held by British troops encamped at the church (Laurens to Lincoln, 20 April 1780). By April 28, only the strong point at Fort Moultrie remained in patriot control while "(t)he (British) army in St. Thomas's made various movements to occupy different positions for the convenience of forage and provisions, and to



is the notoriety and near-legendary status afforded Marion by the writings of Mason Locke Weems (who was also, incidentally, apparently responsible for the cherry tree myth of George Washington--see Rankin 1973:x). One small skirmish appears to have occurred in the vicinity of the church, possibly in October 1781 (Lipscomb 1991:19). Lipscomb (n.d.:31-31) describes this action as follows:

...sometime during the fall of 1781, the British post at Wappetaw Meeting House (commanded by Captain McNeil) came under attack by a corps of state troops and militia commanded by Colonel Hezekiah Maham. Although this battle was probably of some significance, it represents yet another gap in the published historical record. Apparently, the British must have taken a beating, since a number of royal troops are said to have been killed or captured. This outpost was located about thirteen miles north of the modern community of Mount Pleasant, in a church building that the British had converted into a fortified stronghold. The Wappetaw Independent or Congregational Church seems to have experienced a series of misfortunes during the Revolution. Not only was the house of worship appropriated for military use, but the pastor is said to have been murdered in the parsonage house by his slaves during these unsettled times. The British added the crowning piece of mischief by burning the meeting house together with the church records when they abandoned the post at the close of the war (parentheses added from Lipscomb n.d.:30).

Lipscomb's account, which is derived from Howe (1870, volume 1:461-462) and from the pension accounts of John China and Thomas Broughton available at the National Archives, is interesting for a number of reasons. Most importantly, however, he indicates that the church was burned after the autumn of 1781. This contradicts an account by Johnson (1851:580), who indicates that the structure was burned by Tarleton during the late stages of the siege of Charleston (ca. April 1780). Lipscomb notes (n.d.:43) that "Broughton's memory for dates is better than that of most Revolutionary pensioners, but he has a tendency to match them with the wrong battles". Nevertheless, Rankin (1973:260) notes that by late November "the redoubt at Wappetaw Meeting House" had been abandoned by the British as they fell back on Charleston, suggesting that the burning episode took place during the closing months of the war in South Carolina rather than during 1780. Operating from Charleston the British continued to mount raids on the surrounding countryside until Charleston was finally evacuated on 14 December 1782, effectively ending the war in the state.

### **Antebellum Period**

The Revolutionary War largely decimated the economic resources of South Carolina. In the lowcountry, rice exports were halved by the loss of the British market, although recovery was fairly quick as by 1790 they totaled approximately 100,000 barrels, marking the emergence of a larger European market to complement that of Britain. Indigo production also rebounded to more than 839,000 lbs in 1790 although this crop was to be abandoned in the mid 1790s as a result of low prices due to overproduction in the state as well as in India, Latin America and Louisiana. The

loss of indigo created a temporary vacuum in the local economy, particularly as it complemented rice production, but this vacuum was soon filled by the production of long-staple cotton. Long-staple cotton requires a long growing season, and does well in the salt air and more arid conditions of the coastal region. These ecological requirements meant that its production was limited to the Sea Islands and adjacent coastal areas. The near proximity of the Wappetaw area and the ecological similarities means that it was likely produced locally as well, providing a valuable alternative economic resource in the face of the collapsing indigo industry. South Carolina produced some 60% of the nation's long-staple cotton in the early years of the 19th c., but competition from Florida soon reduced this figure to about 43%. Long-staple cotton, unlike the closely related short-staple cotton that was produced in the interior, was in great demand for the manufacture of high quality textiles and lace, and was economically a very desirable crop. As such, it rapidly impacted landuse in the area of production. As with its predecessor, indigo, it required high ground or well drained low lying areas. By the 1830s the majority of these areas were already in crop, and in an effort to increase available acreage planters frequently reclaimed land that would otherwise have been unsuitable through large-scale ditching efforts or through the construction of dikes in coves and between salt-marsh islands. These latter areas would then be drained and turned over to cotton production. Despite these efforts, demand continued to outstrip supply and additional efforts to increase the crop were quickly adopted. Foremost among these was fertilization, which became necessary because fields were rapidly exhausted by continuous cropping, itself necessitated by continued efforts to keep production levels high in the absence of new areas for cultivation (Kovacik and Winberry 1987:90-91).

The immediately post-Revolutionary War years also saw the introduction of short-staple cotton, a staple crop that opened up the interiors of the state to large-scale plantation agriculture similar to that which had been practiced on the coast since the colonial period. One result is that there was a large exodus to the interior to pursue economic opportunities. Richland County, for example, saw a better than 450% population increase between 1790 and 1860 while the increase in Chester County for the same period was more than 250% (US Census data, see Table 1). From Charleston County the most likely candidate for emigration would have been the small landholder, and their holdings would have been snapped up by those who remained and possessed the economic resources. Thus, land would tend to become concentrated in the hands of fewer individuals. In addition, as primogeniture continued to be practiced, younger sons of established planters would also have been among this exodus. Finally, large, successful planters were also among the emigrants. Census data for Charleston County reflect this outmigration, with a population increase of only 4% from 1790 to 1860. This figure, however, is misleading. Throughout the antebellum period the city of Charleston continued to grow at a rapid rate, so much so that by 1840 Charleston County had more people employed in manufacturing and trade (1,317), "navigation of the oceans" (300), the "learned professions" (359), and commerce (779) than any other county in the state. In contrast, only 9,787 people were employed in agriculture (compared

to, for example, 16,845 in Beaufort County). Thus, growth of the city effectively offset the declining population of the countryside--there was far greater emigration to the upcountry than the census data indicates.

Table 1. Comparison of population increase between the Lowcountry, the Fall Line and the Piedmont (from US Census).

<u>County</u>	<b>1790</b>	<b>1800</b>	<b>1810</b>	<b>1820</b>	<b>1830</b>	<b>1840</b>	<b>1850</b>	<b>1860</b>
Charleston	66,985	50,791	63,179	80,212	76,293	82,661	72,805	70,100
Richland	3,930	6,097	9,027	12,321	14,772	16,397	20,243	18,307
Chester	6,866	8,185	11,479	14,189	17,182	17,747	18,038	18,122

The growth of the city of Charleston adds another variable to the agricultural situation in the vicinity of Wappetaw Church, for it created an opportunity for small holders that was an alternative to emigration. Again, Beaufort County provides data for comparison. Where only 18% of the farms and plantations in Beaufort County were smaller than 50 acres, fully 34% of the Charleston County farms were this size in 1850 (US Census data). While many Charleston County planters had their primary agricultural lands in Georgetown and Beaufort Counties and only maintained small plantations in the study area devoted almost entirely to formal gardens, the census data indicates that truck farming, the production of subsistence crops for sale in the city, was a viable economic pursuit. The possibility that such small farms remained in the Wappetaw area should not be ruled out, particularly given the good transportation routes into the city, both on the Wando River and along modern SR17.

The church was certainly effected by these developments. While the congregation itself may have declined or stabilized in the face of emigration to the upcountry, at the same time it also became, on average, more affluent as a result of the concentration of lands into larger holdings. One interesting problem is what effect these trends had on the reconstruction of the church building itself in the wake of its burning during the war. The date of this reconstruction has not been determined, but its timing would have been a critical factor. Logically, it can be assumed that the reconstruction took place shortly after the war as the congregation would have been anxious to return to its house of worship. This assumption is shared by McIver (1957:84), who notes that the Wappetaw congregation was incorporated as "the Independent Church in Christ Church parish" in 1786. However, this was a period of trying economic circumstances for the area, and so funding for any reconstruction project would have been tight and the building would likely have met only the bare minimum requirements. Nevertheless, as the church was a reflection of both the spiritual commitment of the community as well as a binding force within the community, every effort would have gone in to making the building as nice as possible. McIver (1957:84) describes it as "a large wooden structure with a heavy double front door and two side doors leading to the galleries". As economic circumstances changed for the better during the course of the antebellum period, additional touches would have been added. Interior and exterior changes and additions would likely reflect this process, as would the acquisition of communion silver and linens. Combating



this general trend towards opulence would have been a stagnation in membership. Thus, while the church as reconstructed was a large building in anticipation of continued population growth in the area similar to that observed during the colonial period, in actuality there would have been little need for later additions designed to house a larger congregation. Adding to this would have been the gradual geographic fragmentation of the congregation. As planter wealth increased in the antebellum period, a series of villages sprang up around areas where the opulent planter class summered. McClellanville is one such village (though it was apparently not yet referred to as a village), and it is likely that a chapel, the direct antecedent of New Wappetaw Presbyterian Church, was established there at a relatively early date. Parishioners who formerly worshipped at the Wappetaw Church building would have chosen the chapel due to its proximity to a population center, however small that center may have been. A similar mechanism would have drawn parishioners to the Wappetaw-allied chapel at Mount Pleasant. This latter house of worship, later to become the Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Church, was in operation at least as early as 1858, and probably somewhat earlier. Many of the pews were reserved for families who had played a large role in the earlier history of Wappetaw Independent Church, and the Wappetaw minister himself preached there (News and Courier, August 13, 1858, in McIver 1957:90).

### **Civil War**

During the Civil War the area immediately surrounding Wappetaw Church was of more strategic importance than an active theater of operation. Shortly after the shelling of Fort Sumter by Confederate artillery, General P.G.T. Beauregard, in command of the defense of Charleston, ordered that sites on either side of Bull's Bay be selected for batteries and that construction begin immediately (Burton 1970:63). In addition, the defenses of the city included a line of earthworks constructed across the Wando Neck between Copahie Sound to the south and Holbeck Creek to the north (Davis et al. 1978:Plate 131). This placed Wappetaw Church some 10 miles outside of the city's perimeter. When Port Royal fell to the Federal navy in November 1861, and was subsequently occupied by Union ground forces, it rendered the defense of the sea islands and much of the coast of South Carolina untenable. General Robert E. Lee, in command of Confederate forces in East Florida, Georgia and South Carolina, ordered a withdrawal from the sea islands in February 1862. Essentially, he was withdrawing from areas that could be commanded by naval gunfire. In March his successor, Lieutenant General John C. Pemberton, ordered the batteries at Georgetown to be dismantled and the guns shipped to Charleston. With the exception of a probably small number of troops acting as outposts, the coastal strand was left unprotected. Even the batteries at Bull's Bay were apparently unoccupied in mid-July.

With a firm foothold on the Carolina coast at Port Royal, Federal forces began to lay the ground for the siege of Charleston. As during the Revolutionary War, however, the great majority of fighting took place on the southern approaches to the city; the northern approaches, including the Wando Neck, saw very little action. This is not to say, however, that the area was completely

unaffected. While many of the men went off to war and other residents likely fled to other parts of the state, the people who remained were in a constant state of alertness due to the presence of the Federal fleet off Charleston harbor and Federal troops to the south of the city. These people would likely have been evacuated during periods when attack from the northern quarter seemed imminent. The Federals contemplated such a flanking maneuver in April and December 1863, and again in June 1864 (Burton 1970). Nothing came of these plans however, and military activity in the Wappetaw Church area throughout the majority of the siege of Charleston was likely sporadic and of small scale, consisting of Federal raiding parties intent on foraging supplies and tying up Confederate defenders. They would have posed a distinct threat to whatever inhabitants opted to stay in the area rather than evacuating to the city.

The only Federal force of any size in the immediate vicinity of Wappetaw Church arrived during the closing days of the siege of Charleston. General Sherman, having completed his "march to the sea" from Atlanta to Savannah, began moving northward and threatening Charleston. He had, however, no intention of attempting to take the city, as he believed the losses he would suffer in such an undertaking would be too great. However, as he approached the city he ordered the units besieging the city to mount feints that would ensure that the garrison would not be used against the main column (Burton 1970:313). On 11 February 1865 the 55th Massachusetts Regiment embarked, along with the 144th New York and the 32nd United States Colored Troops, on transports to mount a diversionary landing at Bull's Bay. Although they were held up by poor weather for several days, during which they were also peppered by a Confederate two-gun battery on shore, they effected a landing on Graham's Creek near Buck Hall Plantation on 17 and 18 February. Not surprisingly, they met little or no resistance as Charleston was evacuated by Confederate forces that very night. The lack of previous Federal activity in the area was immediately apparent by the abundance of forage they encountered. In contrast to areas south of the city, where the 55th was usually stationed and where rations were typically short, on Wando Neck "the advantages of foraging were now felt; and the officers and men were supplied with fresh beef, mutton, and sweet potatoes, from the neighboring plantations" (Fox 1868:55-56). The following day, 19 February, the formation heard of the evacuation of Charleston and, discovering no Confederate troops to their front, advanced first to Andersonville, where a line of rifle pits and a small earthwork were encountered, and then on to Mount Pleasant. They reached the main road from Charleston to Georgetown in the afternoon and discovered that the 2,400 men of the Second South Carolina Regulars had passed up towards Georgetown that morning. No attempt to follow was made, and the formation gained the main defensive line at Christ Church and bivouacked for the night. The 55th was in trail on this march and was responsible for gathering provisions and controlling the many slaves who joined the formation (Fox 1868:56). McIver reports that the pews and woodwork at Wappetaw Church were burned as firewood in 1865 (1957:92), and as this is the first body of Federal troops to enter the area, it is highly unlikely that the event occurred at an earlier date. No mention of the burning is found in the official records of the War (nor is such an

event likely to be recorded) and so the culprits can not be accurately identified. There remains the possibility that the destruction occurred at the hands of the many slaves who flocked to join the Federal troops at the conclusion of the siege, or that the units left behind in Charleston and the vicinity when the main body moved on to the northward were responsible. Be that as it may, the formation of which the 55th Massachusetts was a part moved on to Mount Pleasant on the 21st, and were the first body of troops to enter the town. On the following day, they boarded transports for Charleston Neck (Fox 1868:56-57).

### **Post bellum Period**

Little needs to be said about the post bellum period with regard to the Wappetaw Independent Church structure investigated. The Civil War virtually destroyed the economic and social fabric of the southern states, and the process of recovery was slow. In 1867 the chapel at Mount Pleasant united with the Charleston Presbytery to become the Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Church. Shortly thereafter, in 1872, the McClellanville branch of Wappetaw built New Wappetaw. Worship at the site of the old Wappetaw Church effectively ended, although a service was held there in 1875 by ministers from the Charleston Presbytery returning from a meeting in McClellanville. Abandoned, the Wappetaw Independent Church building finally collapsed in 1897 (McIver 1957:92-93).

### **Project Methods**

In order to gain a better understanding of the Wappetaw Independent Church structure, a program of limited archaeological testing was conducted at the site of the church. The site was gridded in feet, with a baseline running from an arbitrarily defined datum at 500N500E, located in the southwest corner of the property (Figure 4), to 660N500E. Both of these points were marked with metal reference markers (rebar), and were left in place, flush with the ground and with a yellow plastic cap on top to facilitate relocation, at the conclusion of fieldwork. The grid was oriented to magnetic north. Additional grid points were located at 550N500E, 550N570E and 660N570E (all were removed at the conclusion of fieldwork) to define the actual area where excavation was undertaken. This small area, measuring 120 feet N-S by 70 feet E-W, was selected for excavation in order to ensure that no burials were unintentionally impacted. Thus, while it is likely that other features associated with the church structure exist outside of the gridded area, it is equally likely that unmarked burials exist outside as well. The project design acknowledged that impacting these burials would not add substantially to the information recovered by the project given its stated goals.

Excavation was conducted in two stages (Figure 5). All excavation units were defined by their southeast corner and all soil was screened through quarter inch hardware screen. Initial excavation consisted of a series of 50 square shovel tests measuring approximately 12 inches on a side. These were excavated on grid at 10 foot intervals in a modified cruciform pattern to a depth



Figure 4. Transit set up over datum (500N500E), shown in relation to the Toomer monument. Ms. Grunden is pointing to the tie-in point at the base.

not exceeding 18 inches. This depth was selected as sufficient to impact architectural remains while again avoiding unmarked burials. The purpose of the program of shovel testing was to preliminarily define the area occupied by the structure or structures, to define activity areas surrounding the structure(s), and to recover artifacts associated with these activities. With the exception of architectural debris (primarily brick fragments, mortar and plaster) all artifacts were collected and returned to the laboratory for analysis and curation. A subjective estimate of the amount of architectural debris was made for each shovel test by stockpiling the material recovered adjacent to the excavated shovel test and judging its density as low, medium, high, or very high. This data was recorded on the overall site plan and used to guide the location of additional excavation units. These additional units consisted of a series of trenches measuring 10 x 2 feet. Trenches were located in areas where shovel test data indicated a high likelihood of intact architectural remains and were excavated in natural levels. They were oriented perpendicular to the estimated orientation of these remains in order to increase the probability of intersecting wall or foundation remnants. A total of six trenches were excavated on the site. With the exception of building rubble all artifacts were collected, and all *in situ* architectural remains were mapped in plan view.

## Results

A principal goal of this project was to identify architectural remains of Wappetaw Independent Church. The density of building rubble at the site gives a preliminary impression of the architectural remains and will be discussed first in this section. Several of the encountered features appear to be *in situ* structural remains and add additional detail. That discussion will be followed by the analysis of the artifacts recovered. Finally, the recovered data will be interpreted

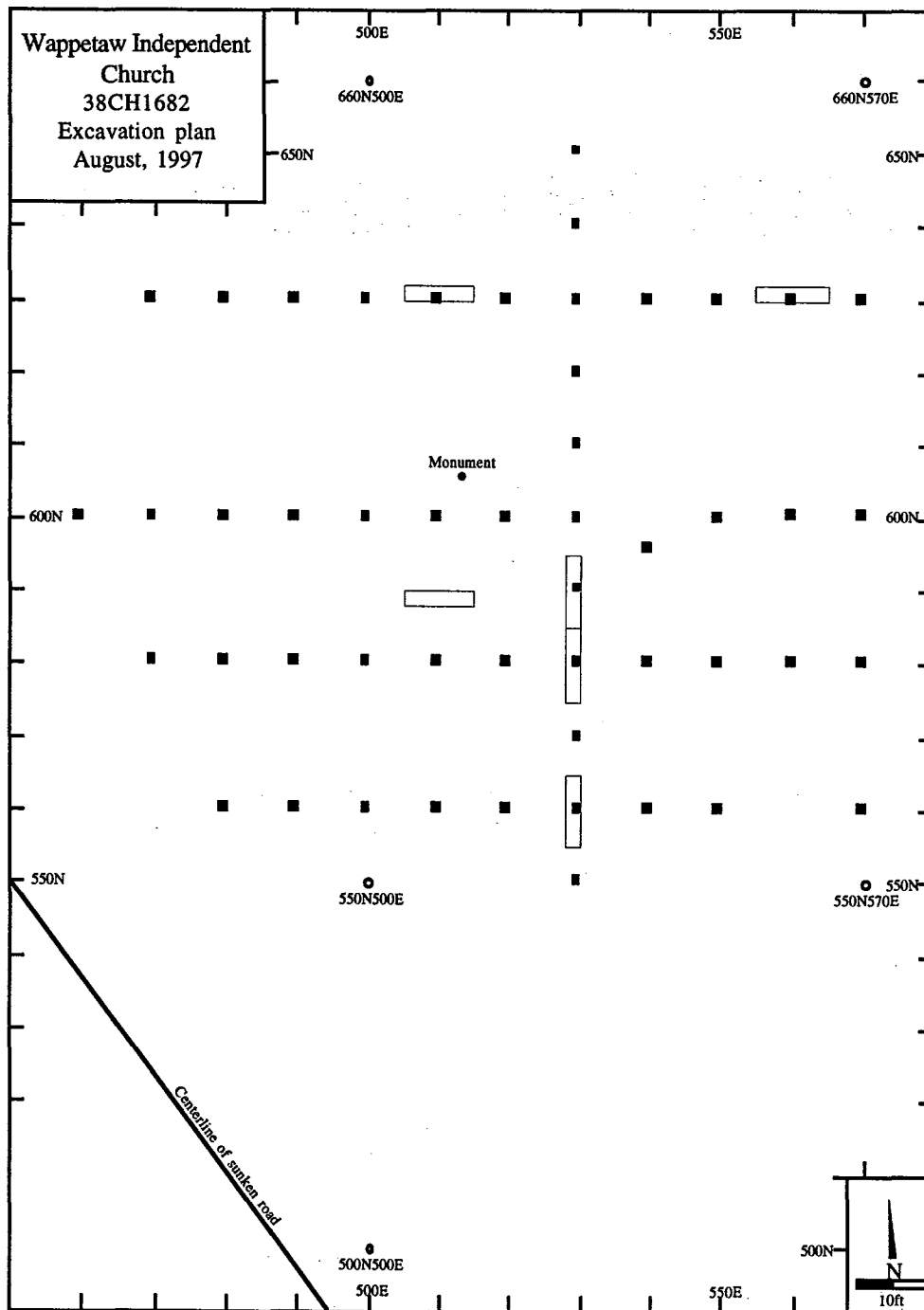


Figure 5. Excavation plan at Wappetaw Independent Church.

with an eye towards determining the size and orientation of structures on the site, their dates, and the activities carried out in its environs.

### Shovel Test Data

As discussed in the methods section, the building rubble encountered in each shovel test was evaluated in terms of its density, with each test containing a low, medium, high, or very high

density. After fieldwork was completed, this ordinal data was converted into interval data, with each category assigned a numeric value as follows:

Low density	1
Medium density	2
High density	3
Very high density	4

These data were then used to generate a contour map of the site's rubble density using Golden Graphics *Surfer* software (Figure 6). This map shows one strong linear array of high density illustrated by the dashed line A-A', as well as two peaks in density (connected by the dashed line B-B'). In the approximate center of these high points is a low area (C). Based on these data, either A-A' or B-B' could be equated with a

structural foundation, while C may indicate the central area of a building. However, it should also be pointed out that the apparent patterns observed may also be a result of sampling bias, as the shovel tests were not evenly spread across the gridded area.

## Trenches

A series of six trenches were excavated during the course of fieldwork. With one exception, each contained *in situ* evidence of intact structural remains, most of which can be directly associated with the church structure(s). Each trench was located to intersect an area that appeared to have a high probability of containing intact structural remains based on the shovel test data, and will be discussed separately.

### 555N530E

Trench 555N530E is the southernmost trench excavated at the site and was oriented on a north-south axis. The location was selected for trenching to investigate surface indications that a tabby deposit was located in the immediate vicinity. In addition, the artifacts recovered from the

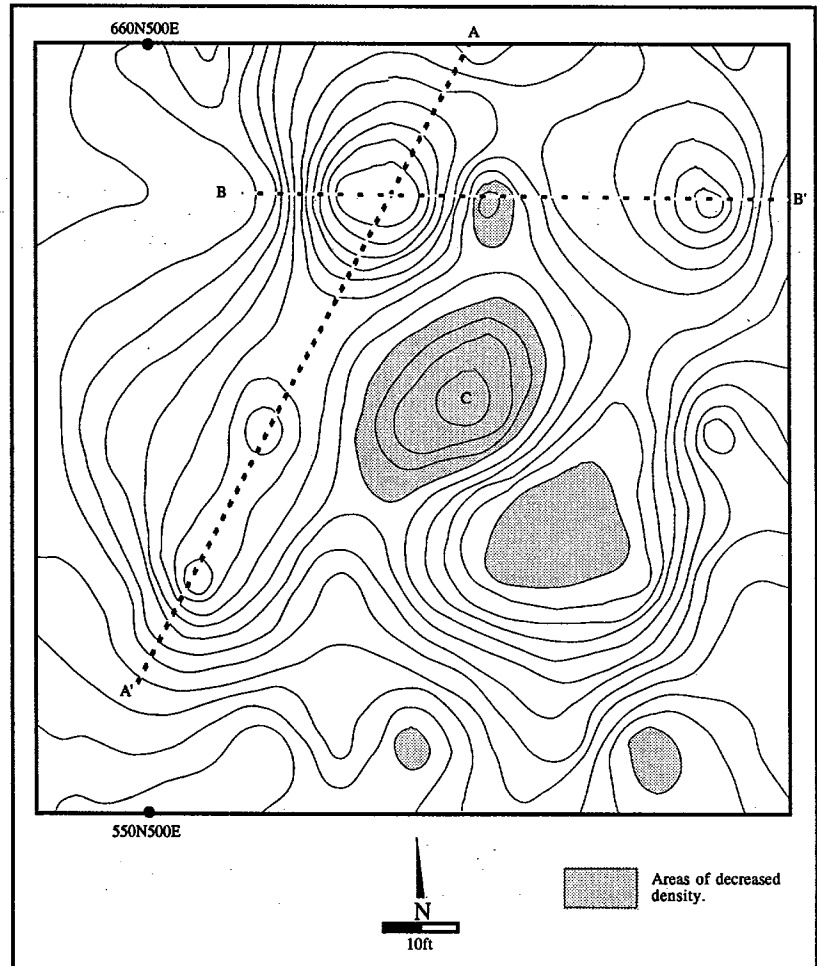


Figure 6. Density distribution of building rubble encountered in shovel tests.

shovel testing program indicated that an activity area was located close by. Trench 555N530E was situated to intersect the tabby deposit. The initial assumption in the field was that the tabby indicated a wall location, and as tabby construction decreased in the lowcountry during the early 19th c., it was believed that it may mark the location of an early structure on the property. Excavation yielded an apparent footing with rubble scattered to either side that may indicate the remains of a wall (Figure 7). The northern limits of the tabby deposit were not determined by excavation. However, from the north wall of 555N530E, the deposit extended approximately 7.6 feet to the south, while the densest area of compaction, marking the probable footing, was located between 563N and 561.5N. An intrusive pit has impacted this latter feature to some extent.

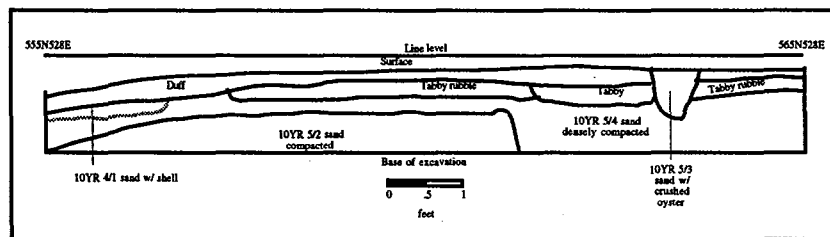


Figure 7. West wall profile of 555N530E.

#### 575N530E

Trench 575N530E, oriented on a north-south axis, was located to intersect an area of high building rubble density identified in shovel test 580N530E. Although building rubble was encountered during excavation, none appeared to be *in situ*. Rather, the deposit appeared to be scatter associated with building construction or demolition. No features were encountered in 575N530E.

#### 585N530E

Trench 585N530E was excavated as a continuation of 575N530E, and resulted in a 20 foot long north-south exposure in the approximate center of the gridded area. One feature was encountered, at the extreme northern end of the trench (Figure 8). This feature is an *in situ* pier footing consisting of one whole brick, one brick bat and one probable whole brick extending from the wall of the excavation unit. Mortar is visible between and on the bricks. Although this pier was only partially exposed, its orientation appears to be approximately N55°E. The soil surrounding the feature is a mottled orange (Figure 9), a color which is typically associated with heat. Finally, a

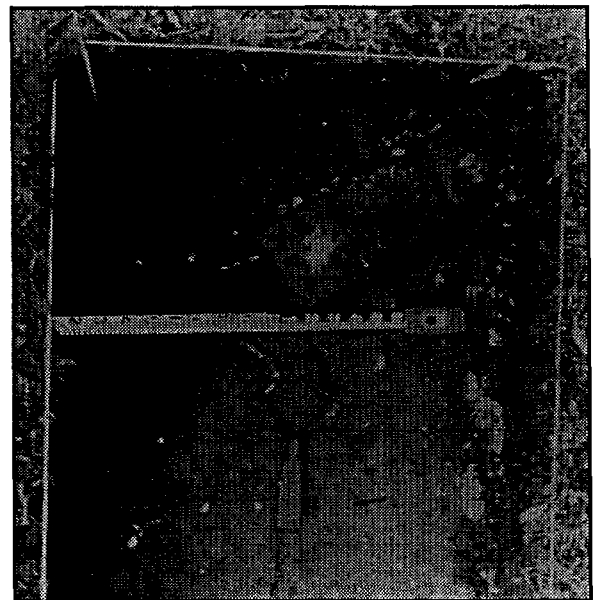


Figure 8. Structural remains in 585N530E. Scale in tenths of feet; trowel indicates north.

concentration of musket balls was encountered in the matrix immediately surrounding the feature. These are discussed more fully below.

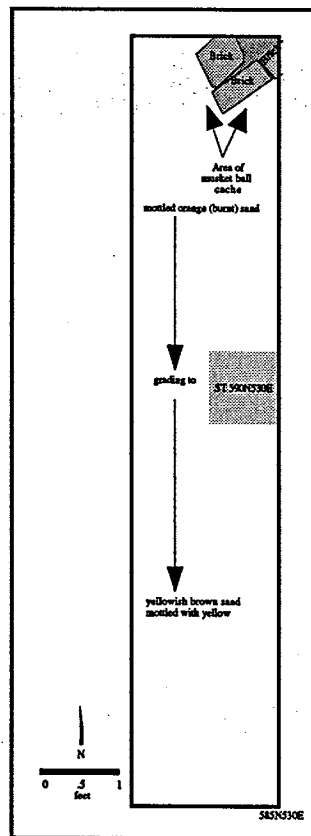


Figure 9. Plan view of 585N530E.

### 588N515E

Five foot trenches were excavated at grid locations 588N510E and 588N515E. These were joined during excavation to make one 10 foot trench designated 588N515E and oriented on an east-west axis. One well-defined feature was encountered in the approximate center of this trench (Figure 10). It consisted of a single *in situ* brick or brick bat extending from the south wall of the unit in association with a linear soil stain of orange sand mottled with brick and mortar rubble. The orientation of this feature is approximately N5°E. To the west is an area of charcoal flecked soil that is indicative of burning, as is the overall orange cast of the feature matrix itself. The extreme eastern portion of the unit contains an area of yellow sand and dark brown

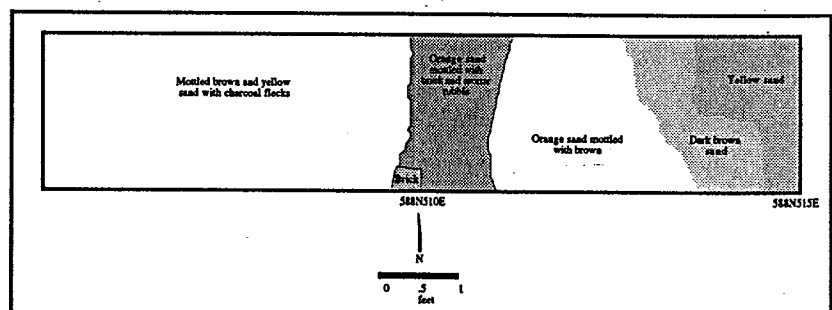


Figure 10. Plan view of 588N515E.



sand that may also mark a feature location, but that is too ill-defined to make a more secure identification.

### 630N515E

Trench 630N515E was oriented on an east-west axis and located in the northern portion of the gridded area. This location was selected to intersect an area of high rubble density encountered by shovel test 630N510E. Excavation of the trench revealed a linear soil stain at an elevation of 5.36 inches below surface (Figures 11 and 12). The stain consisted of brick rubble and mortar in a matrix of very dark yellowish brown to very dark grayish brown sand, and extended from the southern wall of the unit to the northern wall. The orientation of this stain is approximately N32°E. To either side of the feature was soil of a similar color to the feature matrix, but characterized by charcoal and mortar flecking. Continued excavation of the trench revealed a series of three postmolds at an elevation of 5.48 inches below surface (Figure 13). Two were roughly square and contained dense deposits of charcoal; one was oriented approximately north-south while the other was oriented roughly parallel to the overlying soil stain. The third postmold is circular in shape and contained only moderate amounts of charcoal. There is no indication that these postmolds intruded upon the overlying linear feature. Rather, they appear to be related to an earlier construction episode at the site.

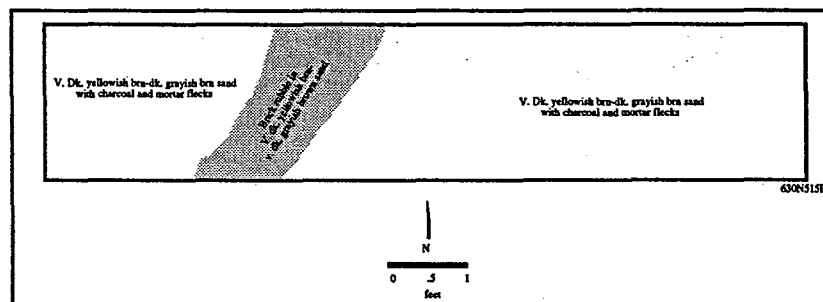


Figure 11. Plan view of 630N515E at 5.36 inches below surface.

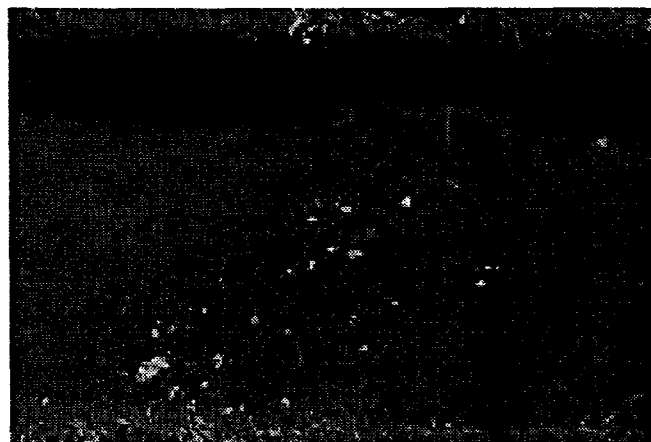


Figure 12. Soil stain in trench 588N515E. North at top.

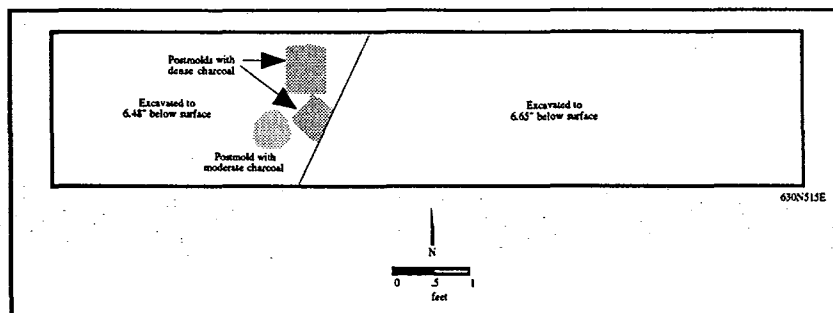


Figure 13. Postmolds in 630N515E.

### 630N565E

Trench 630N565E was located in the northeastern corner of the gridded area straddling shovel test 630N560E, and was oriented on an east-west axis. Two distinct architectural features were located in the unit (Figure 14). Extending from the north wall roughly in the unit center are the remains of a probable brick pier similar to that encountered in 585N530E. It is formed of one whole brick, one brick

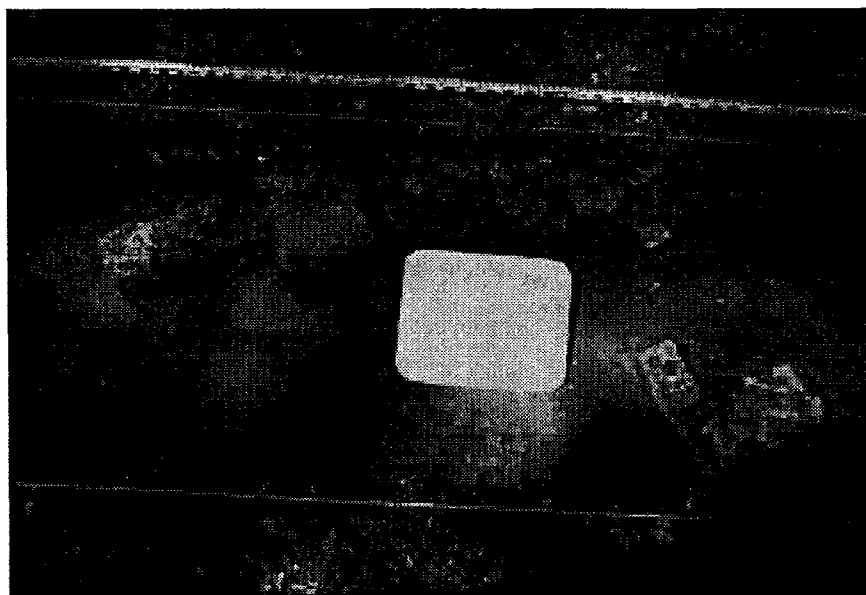


Figure 14. Structural remains in 630N565E. Scale in tenths of feet; north at top of page.

bat, and one brick or brick bat protruding from the north wall of the unit. Mortar is visible both between and on these bricks. The orientation of this feature is approximately N60°E. Immediately to the east of this feature is a second, composed of a distinct linear stain of dark yellowish brown sandy soil overlain by one whole brick and one brick bat. Both show traces of mortar indicating that they are *in situ*. Protruding from the north wall of the unit where it is intersected by the linear stain is an area of dense brick rubble and mortar. The orientation of this feature is approximately N328°E, roughly perpendicular to the orientation of both the other feature within the unit and that encountered in 585N530E.

### **Artifact Analysis**

Artifacts in an archaeological context are not valuable in monetary terms, though the least preprocessing artifact may in fact be quite valuable to an archaeologist for the information it imparts. Building rubble and other architectural remains can tell us what kind of structure was on a

site, when it was built, how large it was and (relatively speaking) what the socioeconomic status of those using it was. Ceramics and bottle glass are also indicators of status, as well as providing clues about food ways and trade networks. Other artifact groups provide a great deal of data on the daily activities of those occupying a site. Bone fragments show what types of meat were being consumed and with what (relative) frequency. Pipe stem and bowl fragments (or their absence) tell us if tobacco was an indulgence, and the presence or absence of expensive ceramic types indicate degree of wealth. Buttons and buckles can give clues to the types of clothing worn, while furniture hardware tells us about the interior of a structure. Thimbles and scissors (quite expensive in the colonial period), toys, and jewelry fragments all hint at how those on a site lived from day to day. However, it must always be taken into account that what survives in the archaeological record is not all, or even the greatest part, of the source of the collection. Much of what is used and lost on a site does not survive archaeologically. Plant foods, clothing, paper and other items which decay rapidly are not often recovered from Lowcountry sites. It is also important to keep in mind that what gets broken most often, thus becoming part of the archaeological record, is that which is used most often, and that people have (and will) be less inclined to discard broken or flawed items which are considered valuable.

Shovel testing and trenches at the Wappetaw Church site produced an artifact collection in which, not unexpectedly and consistent with a church site, architectural materials predominate. Ceramics, bottle glass and miscellaneous items were also recovered. The assemblage is sufficient to provide preliminary data on activity and building episodes on the property, although additional investigations will surely refine and revise the current information.

The most prevalent artifact recovered was building debris, classified as rubble. This category includes brick rubble, tabby, daub, plaster, and mortar. Rubble was collected from shovel tests and subjectively quantified on site in order to determine placement of test units which would be likely to uncover building remains, but was not otherwise analyzed.

For analytical purposes nails can be divided into three broad types based on manufacturing and chronological changes: 1) hand-wrought nails, 2) machine-cut nails, and, 3) wire drawn nails. Hand wrought nails were the earliest type. Wrought nails have been made since Roman times (Edwards and Wells 1993:15) and continued to be used for specialty work into the late nineteenth century. However, they were no longer in common usage after the early 1830s when the automatic header machine made machine-cut nails much cheaper, faster and in greater quantities. In early machine-cut nails the grain of metal ran perpendicular to the shaft causing the nails to be brittle and easily broken when clinched. But in 1840 a machine known as a squeezer was invented which allowed machine-cut nails to be made with the grain of metal running lengthwise and thus stronger (Loveday 1983:17-18). Perfection of the automatic feeder in the 1870s and 1880s made the production of machine-cut nails fully mechanized. Square nails can be further separated, as for

some time after the advent of machine cut nails the heads were applied by hand (Noel Hume 1969:252-254). Separation at this level requires that the nails be in an excellent state of preservation, a condition not encountered at Wappetaw. Wire nails, which were developed in Europe in the early to mid-nineteenth century, began to be manufactured in the United States during the 1850s. Although their production was even less time and labor intensive, machinery for wire nails was not perfected until the 1860s and 70s and machine-cut nails continued to be preferred by builders into the 1890s (Nelson 1968:10). Another problem with wire nails was they were at first made from iron which contained many imperfections making the nails weak (Edwards and Wells 1993:2). Only small wire brads were found to be suitable when made from this type of iron. Around 1885 Bessemer steel was developed which was stronger and more suitable for making wire nails (Edwards and Wells 1993:2). Wire nails could now be made faster and more cheaply than cut nails and by 1900 had almost completely replaced the cut nail industry (Loveday 1983:20).

The Wappetaw nail collection was separated into four groups: 1) unidentifiable, that is those nails which were so corroded that type was not discernible with a comfortable degree of accuracy; 2) machine cut nails; 3) wrought nails; and, 4) square nails, those nails which could be identified only as not wire, but which were either too fragmented or corroded to determine method of manufacture. No wire nails were identified in the collection, and if present in the unidentifiable category they are almost certainly from fence posts. There were 40 nails classed as unidentifiable, 18 from shovel tests and 22 from test units. The largest group is the square nail category, with 356 nails, 88 in shovel tests and 268 in test units. There were 93 wrought nails recovered, 9 in shovel tests and 84 in test units (Figure 15). Machine cut nails numbered 71, 30 in shovel tests and 41 in test units.

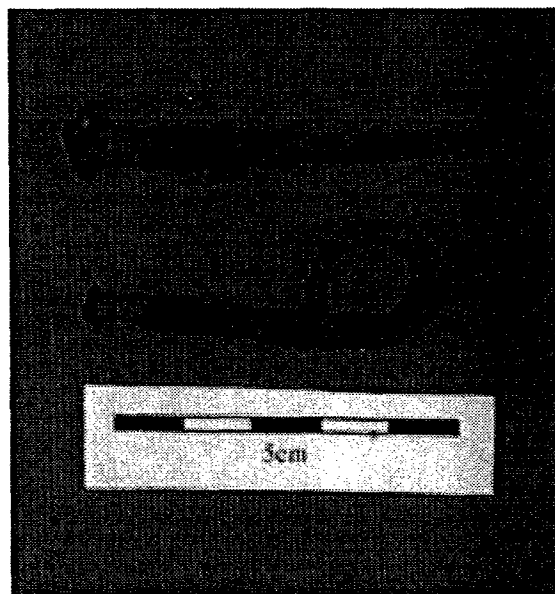


Figure 15. Hand wrought nails from 600N490E.

A total of 351 fragments of window glass was recovered from Wappetaw. Window glass from archaeological contexts has been used as a dating tool with limited success (Adams 1980; Trinkley and Caballero 1983). The dating method is based on the assumptions that window pane thickness increased over time, that a building with one construction episode will exhibit a single mode of pane thickness, and that differing modal distribution can indicate additions or renovations over time (Roenke 1978:43; Moir 1987:78). Roenke (1978) has established a series of date ranges for window pane thickness (Table 2) which was compared with the Wappetaw collection. The thickness of each fragment of window glass from the Wappetaw site was measured in inches with

a sliding dial caliper. Measurements were taken in the center and on two edges. The three measurements (often dissimilar) were then averaged for each fragment. Thickness ranged from a minimum of .037 inches to a maximum of .106 inches. The mode, that is the thickness that occurred most frequently in the collection, is 0.053 inches, with 22 fragments of window glass having that measurement. The fact that the mode encompasses only 7% of the collection indicates that this collection of window glass was not acquired in a short span of time. The secondary mode is .052 inches (N=20), and there are four tertiary modes of .047, .048, .055 and .057 inches. All of these measurements, if used as modes, date the collection to the first half of the 19th century.

Table 2. Suggested Age Ranges of Primary Modes of Window Glass Thickness (from Roenke 1978:116).

Date Range	Mode Thickness (inches)	Mode Thickness (mm)
1810-1825	0.055	1.40
1820-1835	0.055	1.40
1830-1840	0.045	1.10
1835-1845	0.045-0.055	1.10-1.40
1845-1855	0.065	1.65
1850-1865	0.075	1.90
1855-1885	0.085	2.20
1870-1900	0.095	2.40
1900-1915	0.015	2.70

A small collection of ceramics was recovered during shovel testing and excavation. The largest group consists of colono ware, an unglazed utilitarian earthen ware made of local clay by African Americans or Indians (Figure 16). Although it is most often found at slave house sites and plantation kitchen sites it is also found in urban contexts and at plantation big house excavations. Colono ware is attributed to the late 17th to the early 19th century, but is most common on sites of the mid-

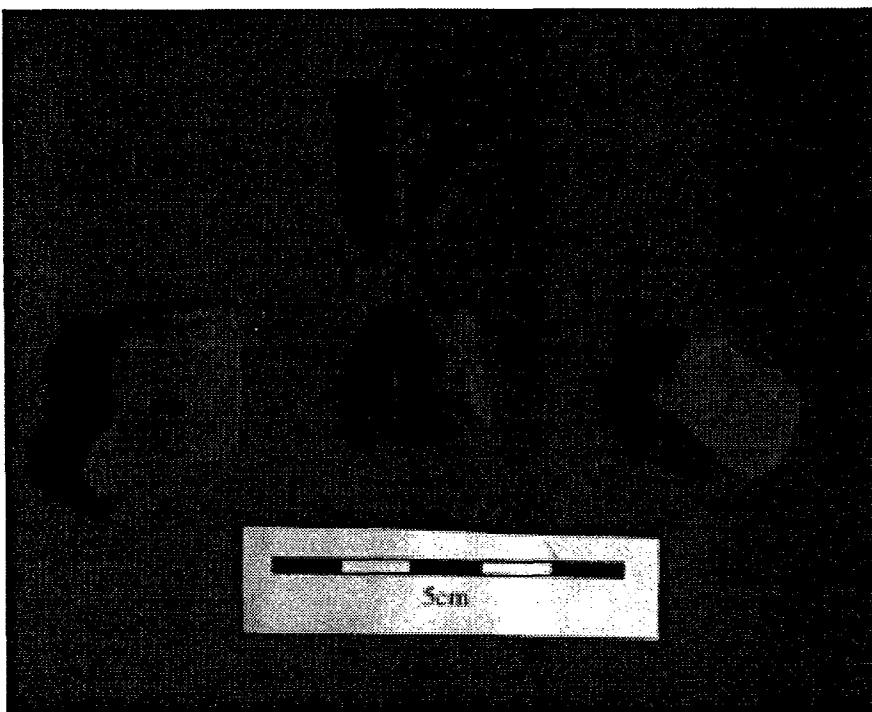


Figure 16. Complicated stamped sherd from 630N530E (top); colono ware sherds from 555N530E (bottom).

18th century (Ferguson 1992; Wheaton et al. 1983). The Wappetaw collection contains 22 sherds of colono ware. All were too small to determine vessel shape or function. The second largest

group of ceramics recovered consists of prehistoric sherds (N=16). Of those, one is a complicated stamped sherd indicative of late prehistoric occupation, two are residual (too small to be analyzed) and the remainder are cord marked. Cord marked sherds are not temporally sensitive, and indicate only that prehistoric people occupied the site sometime in the Woodland period of ca. 1,000 BC-1,100AD. Also recovered were eight combed yellow slipware sherds, 2 sherds of delft ware (1 polychrome, 1 blue on white), 2 fragments of porcelain, 1 sherd of Rockingham/ Bennington ware and 1 transfer printed pearl ware sherd (Figure 17). The pearl ware and the Rockingham ware are types not available until the late 18th century. The other types can be found on 17th and 18th century sites, but given the absence of some early ceramic types it is unlikely that this collection is 17th century in origin. Similar assemblages are found on sites of the mid 18th century in the Charleston area, although the Wappetaw assemblage is lacking in high status ceramic types.

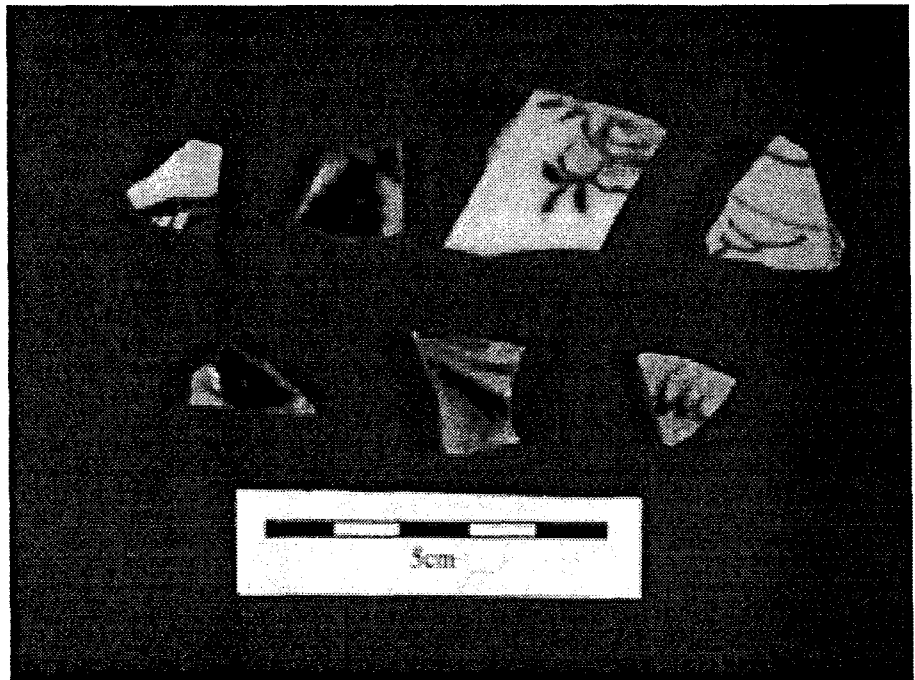


Figure 17. European ceramics. Top row, left to right: blue-on-white delft (555N530E); transfer printed pearlware (580N560E); porcelain (630N540E); polychrome delft (560N510E). Bottom row, combed yellow slipware. Left to right: 555N530E; 550N560E; 555N530E.

The small collection of bottle glass recovered contains 1 modern beer bottle fragment; 2 pieces of aqua glass of late 19th to early 20th century origin and 23 pieces of dark green bottle glass. Dark green glass is common on sites until the postbellum era, when glass color became more varied. The dark green glass fragments found at Wappetaw are not large enough to determine bottle shape, and add little to our knowledge of activity on the site.

The miscellaneous collection contains chicken and cow bones, unidentified metal objects, a hinge fragment, a small brass grommet, barbed wire, a hatchet head, 8 pipe stem fragments (Figure 18), 2 lead shot, a puddle of lead, a gunflint, and 7 musket balls (Figure 19). The musket balls are .75 caliber and are most likely from a British rather than American military presence on the site (James Legg personal communication, September 1997, February 1998).

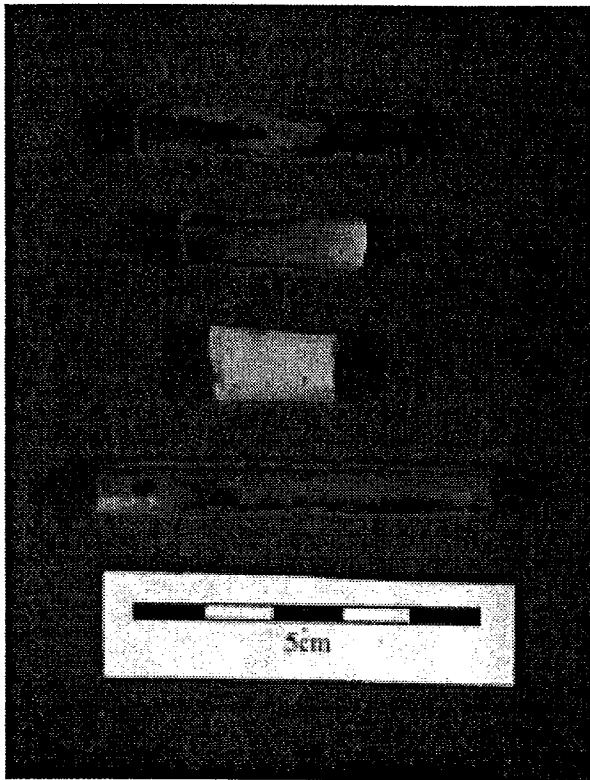


Figure 18. Pipestem fragments. Top to bottom: 630N515E; 630N515E; 555N530E; 630N540E.

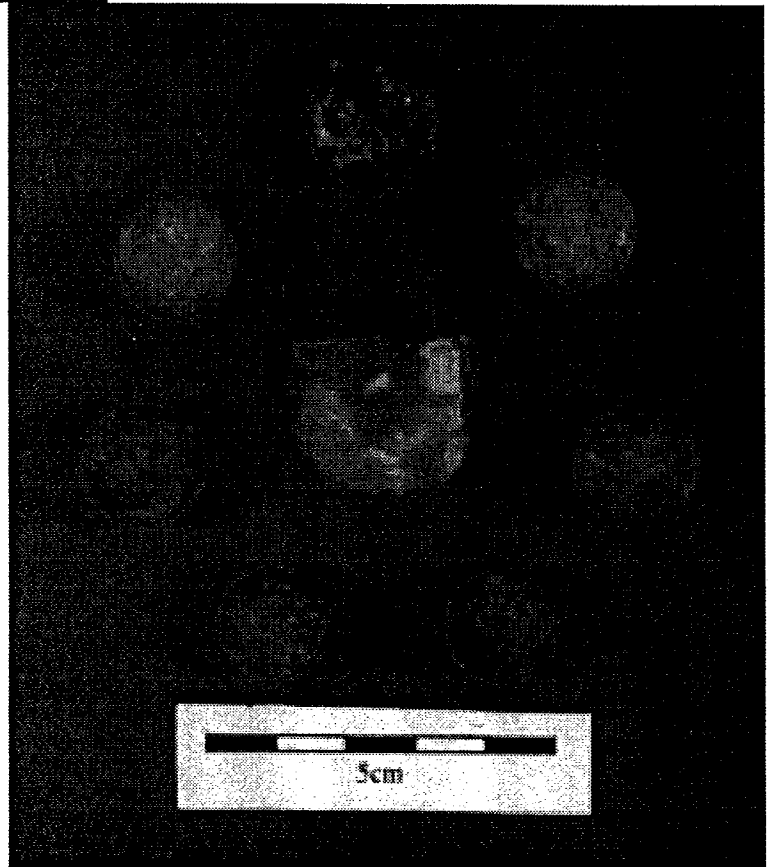


Figure 19. Musket balls and gunflint. Musket balls from 585N530E. Gunflint from 555N530E.

## Interpretation

It is readily apparent by the features encountered during excavation that at least two structures have occupied the site of Wappetaw Church. The latest of these structures is represented by the brick features located in trenches 585N530E and in 630N565E. Based on the relationship of these features to the linear ditch that is visible on the surface near the modern road, the feature in 630N565E oriented to N328°E is likely to be the back, or northeast wall of the structure. The relationship of the other two features to the structure is more difficult to determine. Given that the feature in 585N530E is located near the southern limit of the area containing dense rubble debris (see Figure 6), it seems likely that it represents a second outside wall on the southeast side of the structure. If this supposition is correct, then the similarly oriented feature in 630N565E represents an internal support, as the two features are not in alignment. In turn, this suggests that the row of supports paralleling the structure's back-to-front axis are separated by a distance of approximately 10 feet, which would indicate that the structure's full size is a multiple of 10 (e.g., 20, 30, 40 feet, etc.). A width (i.e., parallel to the road) of 40 feet is suggested by the rubble density map. This width puts the northwest wall squarely atop the feature encountered in 630N515E. Finally, and this is perhaps the weakest point in this argument, if the faint stains identified in the extreme eastern end of trench 588N515E are indicative of a nearby wall fragment or pier that was missed by excavation, then the front (southwest) wall of the structure is approximately 60 feet from the back. Figure 20 illustrates this tentative reconstruction. In summary, the northeast wall is documented archaeologically in 630N565E; the southeast wall is also fairly well identified, in the north end 585N530E. The remaining two walls are less well defined, but may be visible in trenches 630N515E (northwest wall) and 588N515E (southwest wall). The end result of this interpretation is a 40 x 60 foot structure with the long axis running perpendicular to the abandoned road at the front of the property. If this interpretation is correct, then it seems likely that the structure's front door was located on the end of the building closest to the road with additional doors, described by McIver (1957:84), on the two long walls. The numerous nails encountered during excavation, combined with the presence of piers rather than continuous foundations, indicates that this was a wooden structure.

A principal problem with the above reconstruction is the orientation of the features in trenches 588N515E and 630N515E; neither the linear stain encountered in the upper portion of the latter unit, nor the postmolds below, are oriented to the axis proposed for the last structure on the site. Rather, the orientation of the stain and one of the square postmolds in 630N515E argues for a building axis of N32°E while the orientation of the other square postmold indicates a building on a roughly north-south axis. This latter orientation is supported by the linear stain in 588N515E. Without further archaeological investigation these features remain anomalous. However, as the postmolds are not intrusive on the other anomalous features, they would appear to represent the earliest construction episode, possibly of a post-in-ground structure that later burned. In conjunction with the orange, charcoal flecked soil encountered in several excavations, there would



appear to be good confirmation that the church was burned at the close of the Revolutionary War. The overlying linear stain may represent yet another structure not documented historically, or remains of the military presence on the site.

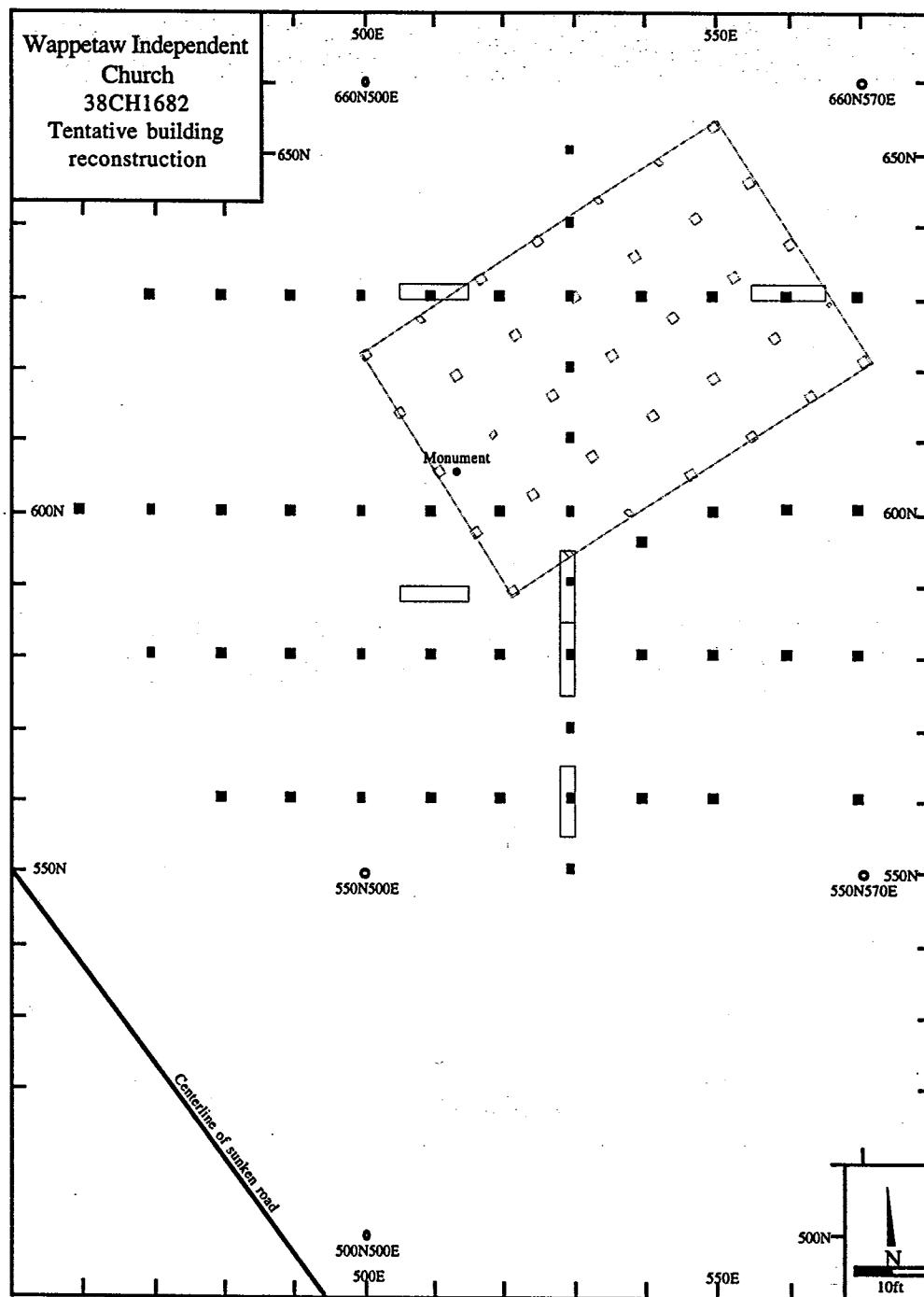


Figure 20. Tentative reconstruction of the foundation of the last Wappetaw Independent Church.

The artifact collection from Wappetaw adds a little detail to the building reconstruction presented above. In the broadest terms, the number of nails encountered at the site tells us that it

was a wooden building, while the glass fragments indicate glazed windows. The absence of wire nails at the site is not surprising given the church's 19th century abandonment. It is also not surprising that both machine cut and wrought nails are present on the site, since it was rebuilt at least once after the American Revolution. The presence of a large number of machine cut nails may indicate additions and repairs to the structure, but given its history is unlikely to represent a 19th c. rebuilding episode. If further investigations are undertaken, nail density by type might be useful for reconstructing the documented building episodes. It is also possible, given larger samples, to sort nails by size (10d, etc.) and type (brads, etc.), which allows conjectures about flooring, shingles and other details of construction. The wide range of window thickness modes documented in the artifact analysis section of this report may indicate a piecemeal approach to glazing the windows of the church as church funds permitted or as bequests stipulated, although this is unlikely during the relatively affluent antebellum era. Alternatively it may reflect the installation of replacement panes over time. Finally, it should be pointed out that this dating method is primarily useful for 19th c. assemblages. The presence of a structure on the site in the 18th c. may certainly have effected the outcome of the window glass analysis. Additional archaeological research at the site may refine this data.

The artifact collection from Wappetaw tells us something about the buildings but also reveals a little about activity on the property. Most relevant in this regard is the small collection of ceramics from the site, most of mid-18th c. origin. It is possible that these are derived from congregation activities, however, the relative lack of ceramics from the 19th c. would seem to preclude this conclusion as similar activities during this latter period should leave a similar archaeological signature. More likely, then, most of the ceramic collection is the result of the documented British military presence at the site during the Revolutionary War. These artifacts tend to cluster in the southern and southwestern portion of the gridded area and so, very tentatively, may be associated with the tabby structure encountered in trench 555N530E. Also associated with the military presence is the small cache of musket balls, which were encountered in the northern end of trench 585N530E. It is likely that metal detector hobbyists have visited the site in the past, and if so likely removed musket and/or minie balls and buttons (civilian and military). To what degree, if any, such activity has affected the current collection is unknown, but no obvious evidence of looting was encountered during surface inspection of the site or during excavation. Pipe smoking also took place on the property, but can not be as confidently associated with the military presence though this certainly contributed smoking artifacts to the site assemblage.

### **Directions for Further Research**

A primary goal of this research was to identify structural remains of the various Wappetaw Church buildings. The reconstruction of the last structure to occupy the site is very tentative as discussed in the interpretation section of this report. However, it is also easily tested. Testing the reconstruction through the excavation of additional units located to intersect the proposed corners

should be an important goal of future research at the site. Prior to additional testing, however, an effort to more precisely define the extent of the cemetery that surrounds the site should be undertaken using a program of remote sensing. The program of testing described in this report was constrained by the nearness of this cemetery, and it is possible that additional features associated with the church are located outside of the gridded area. Without knowing the precise boundaries of the cemetery, future excavations run the risk of impacting unmarked graves; without knowing the locations of these graves it would be risky to expand the area of excavation.

Despite some success in identifying the remains of the last structure to occupy the site, earlier church structures remain an enigma. The limited data recovered by the present project suggests that there was at least one other such structure as evidenced by the postmolds encountered in the northern end of the site, a proposition that is supported by the documentary record. Future research should also be designed to further define this structure, focusing initially on the area surrounding the encountered postmolds. The shallow trench that was superimposed over the postmolds could be examined at the same time.

Further afield, the British military presence at the site adds significantly to future efforts to put the church on the National Register of Historic Places. It is likely that the surrounding area contains additional evidence of this occupation in the form of earthworks and bivouac sites; we know that a skirmish took place in the immediate vicinity. An effort to locate these sites by talking with residents of the area may prove successful. Although these sites may be suitable for additional archaeological research, simply knowing their precise locations would enhance the significance of the church site itself.

Finally, as a long-term goal (possibly in conjunction with the US Forest Service?), efforts should be made to explore domestic occupations in the immediate vicinity associated with the Wappetaw congregation. Who were these people? What did they do for a living? For recreation? These are a few of the questions that might be addressed. The archaeology discussed in this report has necessarily focused on Wappetaw Church itself. The cultural context presented in the beginning of this report, however, also attempts to get a handle on the people who made up the congregation. The discussion of economic and population trends in particular reflect this effort, but without the names of the congregation, especially the founders of the church, the kinds of detailed information required to reconstruct the day-to-day lives of the congregation are inaccessible. Reconstruction of this sort is a principal goal of archaeology; after all, Wappetaw Independent Church was not founded for the benefit of the church itself, but for the people who made up the congregation. An understanding of these people, both as individuals and as a community, would be a fitting tribute from their spiritual descendants.

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# WAPPETAW CHURCH ARTIFACT INVENTORY

Provenience	Exc/zone	uid	nailssq	nails wr	nails cut	nails	ceramics	glass	other
ST 550N 530E	RG						1 colono ware	3 dkgreen	
ST 560N 500E	CC						1 colono ware		
ST 560N 510E	CC						1 polychrome delft		
ST 560N 520E	RG						1 prehistoric; 1 lead glazed slipware	3 dkgreen	
ST 560N 540E	RG						2 residual		hinge; bone
ST 560N 550E	RG						1 lead glazed slipware		
ST 560N 570E	RG								rubble only
ST 570N 530E	RG						1 colono ware/prehistoric		
ST 580N 470E	RG								rubble only
ST 580N 480E	RG								rubble only
ST 580N 490E	RG						1 colono ware		
ST 580N 500E	RG						2 colono ware		1 lead shot
ST 580N 510E	RG								rubble only
ST 580N 520E	RG		1	1			3 prehistoric	2 window; 1 modern	coal
ST 580N 530E	CC		3						
ST 580N 540E	CC							1 window	
ST 580N 550E	CC			7			1 prehistoric "gaming piece"	5 window	
ST 580N 560E	RG						1 transfer print pearlware		1 daub
ST 580N 570E	CC			3			1 prehistoric	1 dkgreen	bone; daub
ST 590N 530E	RG			5				6 window	plaster
ST 595N 540E	RG			6					
ST 600N 470E	RG								1 grommet
ST 600N 480E	CC					1			bone
ST 600N 490E	CC				2			2 window	
ST 600N 500E	CC			1					
ST 600N 510E	CC		2					1 window	
ST 600N 520E	CC			2				1 window	
ST 600N 530E	CC				1				
ST 600N 550E	RG								rubble only
ST 600N 560E	RG			2					bone; uid metal
ST 600N 570E	RG			2					
ST 610N 530E				2				2 window	
ST 620N 530E	CC		1						



# WAPPETAW CHURCH ARTIFACT INVENTORY

Provenience	Exc/zone uid	nailssq	nails wr	nails cut	nails	ceramics	glass	other
ST 630N 480E	RG							rubble only
ST 630N 490E	RG							rubble only
ST 630N 500E	RG	1						
ST 630N 510E	RG	1						
ST 630N 520E	RG							rubble only
ST 630N 530E	CC							rubble only
ST 630N 540E	CC	3				2 porcelain		pipestem
ST 630N 550E	CC							rubble only
ST 630N 560E	CC		2	1		1 complicated stamped prehistoric	1 window	
ST 630N 570E	CC	5	6	2			3 window; 1 dkgr	
ST 640N 530E	RG		4	3				
ST 650N 530E	CC	1						1 flat metal
TU 630N 515E	Zone 1		128	37	10	1 prehistoric	87 window	bone; 3 pipe fragments
	Zone 2	2		4		1 prehistoric	4 window	
	Zone 3		8	1			1 window	bone
TU 555N 530E	Zone 1	5				3 colonoware	1 dkgr	1 gunflint
						2 prehistoric; 2 lead glazed slipware		1 pipestem
	Zone 2	15	2	1	2	7 colonoware	1 dkgr	bone
						1 prehistoric; 3 lead glazed slipware	1 window	2 pipestem
	Zone 3							2 bone
	wall cleaning		1			1 lead glazed slipware; 1 delft		
TU 588N 515E			27	5	18		2 dkgr; 46 window	
TU 588N 510E	Zone 1		3	3			2 dkgr; 7 window	barb wire
	Zone 2		11	4		1 colonoware; 1 prehistoric	3 dk gr; 7 window	1 hatchet
						1 bennington stoneware	2 aqua	
TU 630N 565E			62	28	9	1 prehistoric; 1 colonoware	5 dkgr; 10 window	2 pipe fragments; 1 shot
								1 lead puddle
TU 575N 530E			26	1	2	4 colonoware	1 dkgr; 30 window	
TU 585N 530E	RG		47		29		52 window	7 musket balls