

**ASSESSMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE AND  
CEMETERY 38CH1549, MULLET HALL  
PLANTATION,  
JOHNS ISLAND, CHARLESTON COUNTY,  
SOUTH CAROLINA**



**Chicora Research Contribution 580**

**ASSESSMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE AND CEMETERY  
38CH1549,  
MULLET HALL PLANTATION, JOHNS ISLAND, CHARLESTON  
COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA**

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# Introduction

## Previous Investigations

The cemetery identified as 38CH1549 was first identified to Chicora archaeologists during a reconnaissance survey of the Mullet Hall property in 1994 (Adams and Trinkley 1994:33). At the time, W. L. Limehouse pointed out the approximate location, commenting that the cemetery was damaged during Hurricane Hugo in 1989 and/or the subsequent logging that took place as part of the clean-up (W.L. Limehouse, personal communication 1994). There are, however, other stories circulating that suggest the cemetery may have been farmed. There are other stories that identify yet another graveyard on which

Limehouse built dog kennels.

Regardless, the 1994 work was unable to identify any grave depressions, markers, or grave goods (common in African American coastal cemeteries). The location was identified only approximately (Figure 1).

In 2008, an effort was again made to better define the cemetery boundaries. The area had significantly grown up since 1994. Although depressions that might be graves were identified, we were unable to eliminate possible tree throws as an explanation. A penetrometer survey revealed consistently soft soils (under 100-psi compaction). No markers or living memorials were encountered.

Only one possible grave item was found and it was not clearly associated with a depression. Consequently, the boundaries for the site remained unchanged from 1994 and the site remained potentially eligible for inclusion on the National Register (today the evaluation would be that the site requires additional evaluation).

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was approved by the State Historic Preservation Office (signed August 17, 2015), the Corps of Engineers (signed September 3, 2015), and Kiawah River Plantation Holdings (signed August 6,

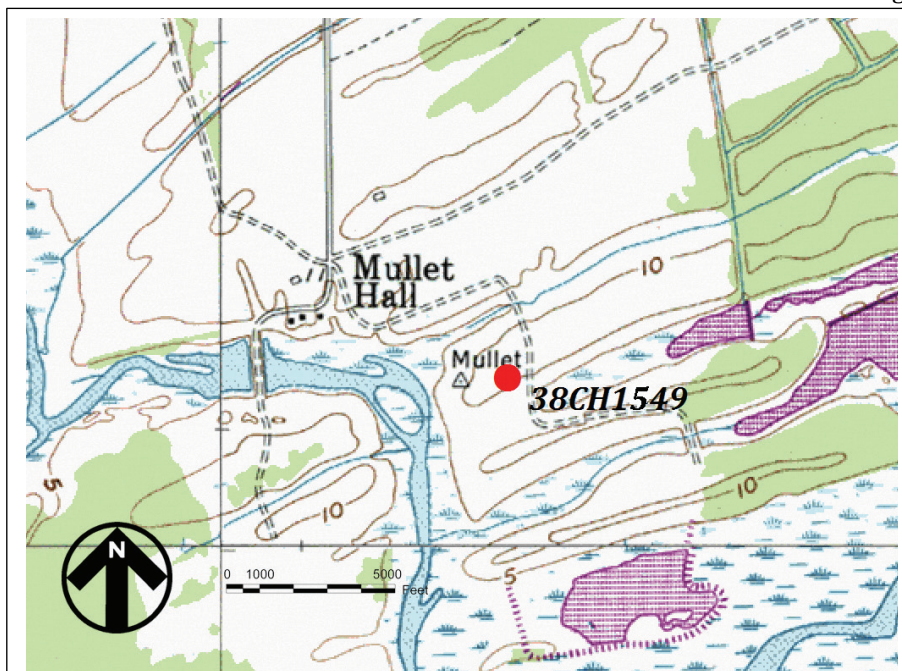


Figure 1. Portion of the Legareville 1959 (PR71) USGS topographic map showing the approximate location of 38CH1549 as a result of the 1994 and 2008 investigations.

2015) in partial fulfillment of Permit Number SAC-2008-01605-2IG. The MOA specified that additional work would be conducted at 38CH1549 prior to any ground disturbing activities. The goal of this work was to allow the site location to be identified and the site to be assessed for its National Register eligibility (by SC law, damage to a cemetery is a felony, although this law is rarely enforced).

## Setting

The location of 38CH1549 is about 400-500 feet west of a tributary of the Kiawah River known locally as Mullet Hall Creek. The creek is lined with hardwoods, many of which are live oak, while the more interior area, also in hardwoods, includes laurel oak and pecan. Many of these have invaded the area after cultivation ceased (discussed below). Prior to bush hogging in anticipation of this project, the area had become

the topography appears relatively level. The soils are rapidly permeable Wando sands.

## Historical Overview

The cemetery is not shown on any of the common historic maps or plats for Mullet Hall. The earliest record we have found are the comments by USGS surveyor Ray L. Schoppe in 1933 when the Mullet Hall Horizontal Control Point was established adjacent to a small creek running into the Kiawah River (Figure 3). The point was established on the edge of what was described at the time as an “old field.” Reference Markers 1 and 2 were established to help relocate the Mullet point in the future and Reference Mark 1 was placed just west of what Schoppe identified as a “cemetery.”

Figure 4 compares several aerial photographs showing the gradual changes in the property. The 1939 aerial, closest in age to the sketch plan shown in Figure 3, shows the band of woods adjacent to the marsh as reported by Schoppe in 1933 and also shows the “old field” that was beginning to grow up in woods. Whether the cemetery was visible to Schoppe or he was told of its location is uncertain.

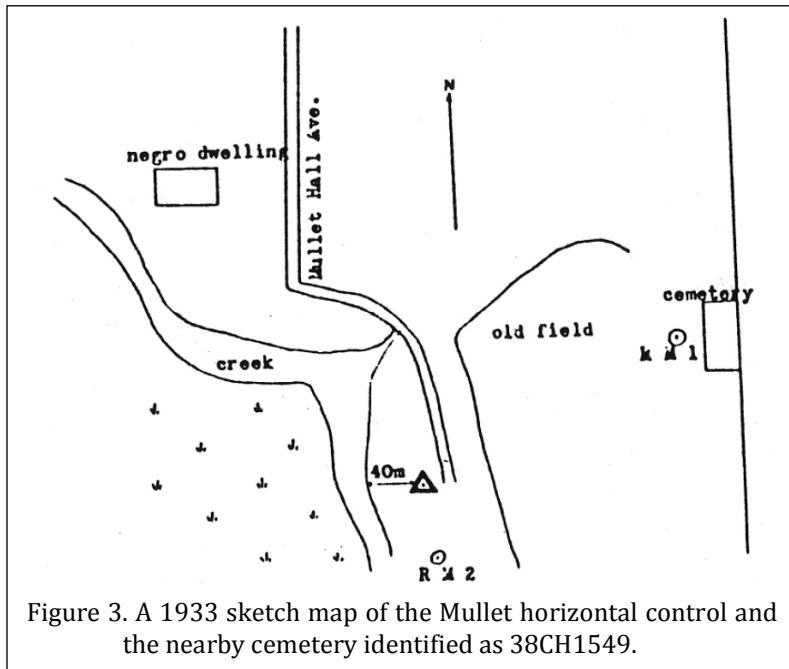
In 1939, there is no clearly visible access road to the cemetery, although careful inspection reveals that a road was present across the marsh slough north of the



Figure 2. Site 38CH1549 at the time of the 1994 survey, showing the dense vegetation that overtook the property.

heavily overgrown (Figure 2), making walking through it a difficult chore. Elevations are about 7 to 10 feet above mean sea level (AMSL), although





cemetery in the location shown by Schoppe. By 1949, the route across the marsh had moved to the west and an access road is clearly visible west of the posited cemetery.

In 1957, the dense woods thought to be the cemetery are even better defined and although there are tracks in the old field, the area remained uncultivated except for a small strip to the north of the posited cemetery (Figure 4). The access road shifts from the west of the cemetery to the east and appears to be heavily traveled.

By 1971, the access road has again shifted, this time back to the west of the cemetery and the area around the cemetery has continued to grow up in hardwoods. The area thought to be the cemetery, however, is the most heavily wooded and there is no indication of any activities affecting the burial ground. A 1977 aerial (not illustrated) shows no dramatic changes in this area of Mullet Hall.

A pre-Hurricane Hugo aerial from February 1989 shows the area more wooded, but otherwise very similar to 1971 and 1977. A 1994 aerial shows no evidence of extensive damage or

second growth. While there was certainly damage (Chicora archaeologists saw much of that damage on nearby Kiawah), it seems unlikely that tree loss was significant in the cemetery area. A 1994 false infrared aerial shows a dense hardwood stand not dissimilar to the situation at 38CH1549 today (Figure 6). Thus, while Hugo may have had some impact on the cemetery, we question whether it was as significant as has been suggested in the past. It was in 1994 that the Schwacke survey showed the cemetery as a relatively small rectangle. By 1999, much of Mullet Hall south of the settlement was beginning to be converted into dense woodlots and this process was essentially complete by 2003.

## Understanding African American Cemeteries

Going into this investigation we made the assumption that 38CH1549 was African American, not simply because this was the oral tradition among local Euro-Americans, but also because the site location and condition were consistent with other African American cemeteries investigated by Chicora in places such as lower Charleston County (Trinkley and Hacker 1997), Wadmalaw Island (Trinkley 2005a), and west of the Ashley (Trinkley 2005b).

Key elements found in most African American cemeteries include loose kin-based groupings. "Family" plots, in the conventional "Rural Cemetery Movement" sense, with clear lines, neat orientations and arrangements, coping, and fencing, are not present. But related family members, often representing very extended family connections, are loosely grouped in the same area. Orientations are roughly east-west, but show considerable individuality and variation. While this is often attributed to Judeo-Christian influences, there are a vast number of sun-worshipping cultures with a recognition that the sun gives life – going

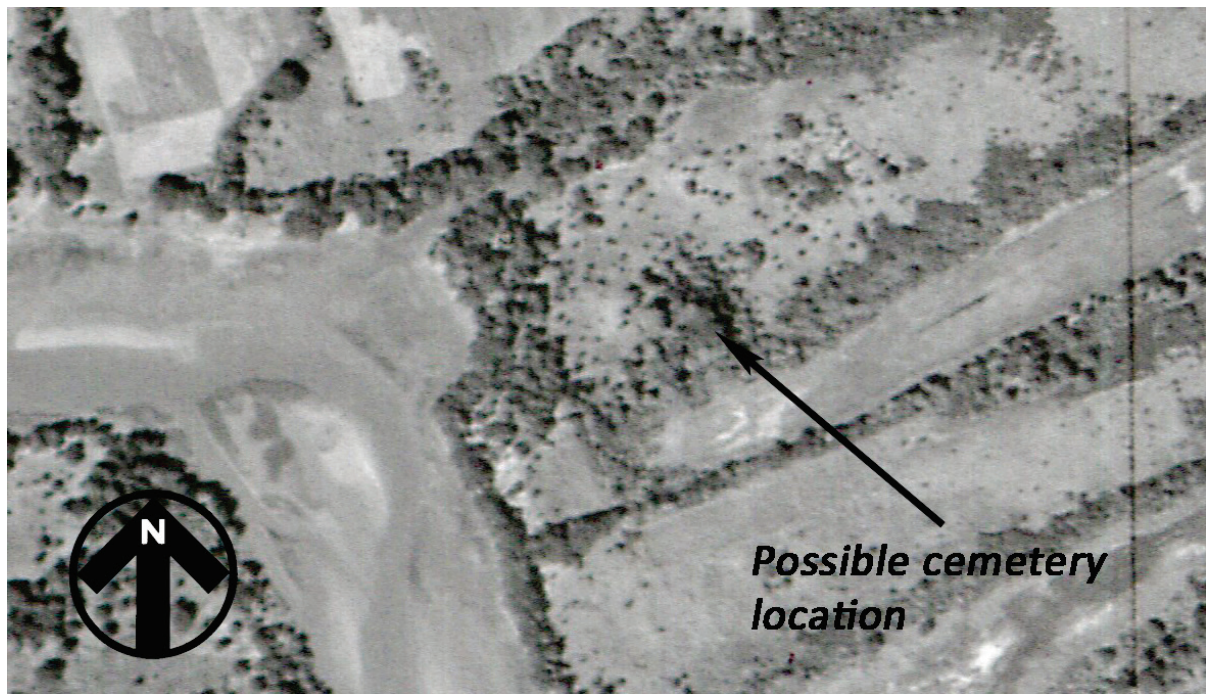


Figure 4. Possible cemetery location in 1939 (upper image) and 1949 (lower image).



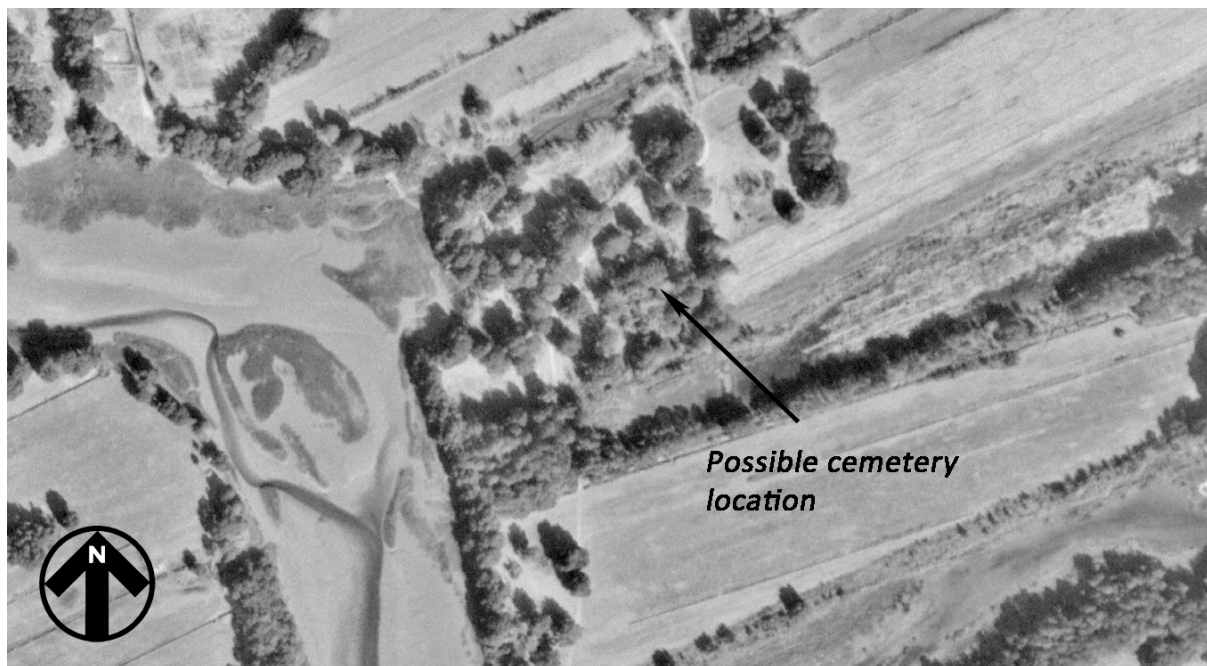


Figure 5. Possible cemetery location in 1957 (upper image) and 1971 (lower image).

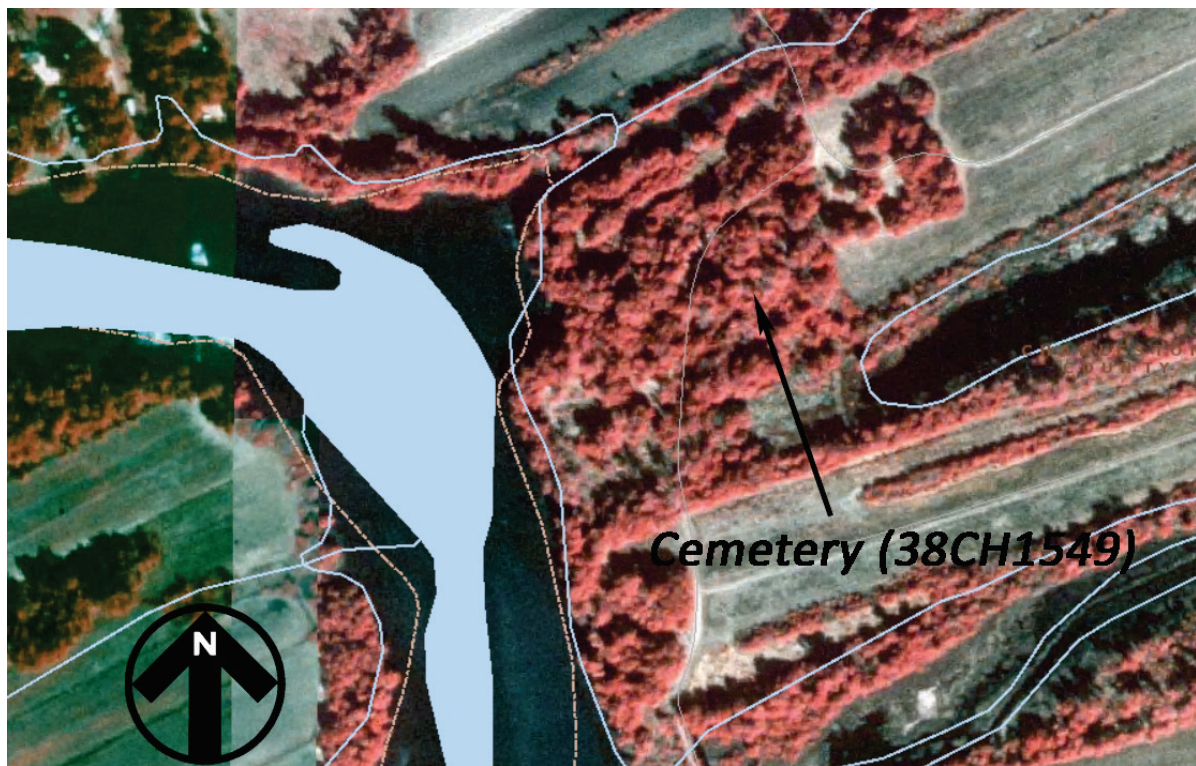


Figure 6. False infrared aerial of the cemetery area in 1994 (SCDNR).

back to the Egyptians. Some have also suggested east-facing burials may suggest an intentional orientation to Africa or Mecca. There is no evidence supporting one supposition over the others (Nichols 1989).

Some of the variation seen in African American graveyards is the result of “making do,” placing burials in association with other family members or in kin-groups with limited space. Some variation is the result of burials by family members using only the sun to guide the east-west orientation, or slight movement to avoid obstacles or other graves. Some variation may also be the result of special circumstances, such as an individual’s desire to be buried in a particular spot or society’s religious or magical view that a certain individual needed to be buried a certain way. As a result, the burial ground may appear jumbled and unorganized.

There are also “abnormal” burial positions. Several accounts speak of individuals

being buried face down in order to prevent the return of the spirit. There are similar accounts of individuals buried north-south, or “cross-wise with the world.” In South Carolina, there is oral tradition that those dying of drowning are buried where the tide can wash over the grave (Hyatt 1974).

Another key element is the presence of impermanent markers. While the use of wood or alternative markers (such as cedars, yucca, daffodils, snowbells, or other heirloom plants) may have been associated with the poverty of African Americans, there is also a strong vernacular association with different materials such as wood or concrete, materials that can be more easily shaped and modeled than stone. Commercial marble markers are occasionally present, but are generally small and lack much ornamentation. Most graves, however, will be evidenced only by slightly sunken depressions in the soil where the coffin and shaft have collapsed. Over time, these grave depressions will be filled in, further



obscuring the location of graves (Conner 1989).

Graves may appear untended, since these rural burial grounds largely did not participate in the Euro-American “beautification of death” movement. A distinctive characteristic often remarked on by researchers is the prevalence of grave goods found on African American graves. These items may include bottles (some still filled with liquid, possibly medicine), ceramics, lamps, furniture, and other items associated with the individual during their life. At least one early source refers to these items as “necessities.” Unfortunately, many of these items have been removed from graves today, either during “clean-up” episodes or by theft. Others have been buried in the soil and may not be immediately apparent.

Another element of black mortuary belief is an association with the place, not ownership of a 3x10 foot plot. Consequently, African Americans point to a cemetery as theirs, not to a plot. They have historically wanted to be buried with kin and ancestors, not own a particular plot of land. As a result, cemeteries have historically been cleaned up only when a new burial needs to be placed or during certain events, not on a routine basis, as one would clean a yard.

Many African American cemeteries likely originated during slavery, although proving this is often impossible and these burial grounds are better referred to as “African American” than as “slave.” For the twentieth century, which provides the best oral and written histories, many cemeteries were begun by agricultural workers on plantations and continued to be used – and maintained – until the exodus of blacks during Jim Crow.

Many burial grounds begun in slavery continued to be used in the postbellum, largely because of the strong association with ancestors. As a result, these graveyards often contain far more burials than initially thought or suspected. It is also not uncommon for more recent burials to intrude into earlier ones. While repugnant to white society, in African American culture the desire to be with

one’s ancestors was a driving force that maintained the use of “filled” grounds, generating the belief that “there is always room for one more.” Often the burial grounds were also limited in size by surrounding white owners, forcing burials on top of previous burials.

Many of these characteristics create disastrous conflict between the existing locations of African American burial grounds and modern development. Their white owners never formally deeded many of the burial grounds. That, coupled with the appearance of “abandonment” has resulted in numerous court cases as African American graves and burial grounds are found in areas anticipated for development. In South Carolina, court cases have occurred in Beaufort, Charleston, and Georgetown counties. Outcomes favoring the preservation of the graves are never certain and many states - including South Carolina – do not require archaeological removal of burials. Instead, graves are typically removed by funeral homes and others unskilled in the recovery of skeletonized human remains and their associated artifacts. This has significantly affected the ability of professional archaeologists and bioanthropologists to learn more about African American graves and mortuary practices.

## **Cemeteries as Archaeological Sites**

Cemeteries are most often viewed in the context of historic places, design and workmanship, landscape, or historic people (National Register Criteria A, B, and C). Especially in the past, relatively few cemeteries were recorded or evaluated as archaeological resources. National Register Bulletin 41 clearly indicates that cemeteries can, and should, be assessed under criteria D: that they have yielded or may be likely to yield, information in prehistory or history.

Unlike cemeteries eligible under Criteria A, B, C, those evaluated under Criterion D (except for the graves of significant persons) do not need to meet the special requirements of the Criteria Considerations. As a result, the assessment process

may actually be simpler and more straightforward (although certainly the process must be careful and respectful given the high level of emotions often associated with this type of resource).

National Register Bulletin 36 clearly outlines how historic resources, even cemeteries, should be evaluated. The Bulletin established five steps for forming a clearly defined explicit rationale for either the site's eligibility or lack of eligibility. Briefly, these steps are:

- identification of the site's data sets or categories of archaeological information such as (for cemeteries) grave goods, coffin hardware, human remains, landscape features, coffin remains, or associated plantings;
- identification of the historic context applicable to the cemetery, providing a framework for the evaluative process;
- identification of the important research questions the cemetery might be able to address, given the data sets and the context;
- evaluation of the cemetery's archaeological integrity to ensure that the data sets were sufficiently well preserved to address the research questions; and
- identification of "important" research questions among all of those that might be asked and answered at the cemetery.

An important issue is assessing integrity. Under Criterion D, integrity of location, design, materials, and association are essential, with integrity of setting often assisting in the evaluative process. Location refers to the actual physical place. If the cemetery can provide important information then it likely has integrity of location. Design, in reference to archaeological sites, means the patterning of features and areas. A cemetery with the upper two feet bulldozed, for example, might lack integrity of design, if the research

questions focused on questions of grave goods and ethnicity. If, however, the research questions focused on the association of socioeconomic status and coffin hardware, then the cemetery might still reflect integrity of design. Integrity of materials generally refers to the completeness and preservation of the assemblage. If the research question involves connections between African and slave burial rituals, then preservation of grave features would be essential. Similarly, if the research questions focus on biocultural study of disease, health, and nutrition, then the physical remains must have a relatively high degree of material integrity. Integrity of association, under Criterion D, means only that there is a clear connection between the research questions and the data sets. If there is good preservation of plantings and the research question is the examination of African American use of plants in the burial ritual, then the site would possess good integrity of association. Finally, integrity of setting includes the total landscape, including both natural and man-made features. National Register Bulletin 36 notes that, "historical archaeological sites may be nominated under Criterion D without integrity of setting if they have important information potential." Nevertheless, if the site does possess integrity of setting (i.e., if there has been no dramatic alteration of the landscape), then this helps support a positive evaluation.

Cemeteries are exceptional data sources, even if they are never excavated. There are a number of research issues appropriate to archaeological investigation that do not require destructive techniques. The use of a penetrometer or ground penetrating radar (GPR), for example, can often help document the exact location and orientation of graves. Mapping a cemetery to reveal its size, complexity, and nature of above-ground features may provide information on socioeconomic status and social organization. There may be above ground features or artifacts that can provide information on ethnicity and the burial ritual itself. There may also be evidence of previous burials exposed and on the surface if the cemetery has a long history of use. The markers, their materials, and their execution may provide

information on trade and business patterns (which may tie into consumer choice studies being conducted using strictly archaeological materials at nearby sites).

Evaluating a cemetery's eligibility for inclusion on the National Register is a critical preservation step, especially in South Carolina. A cemetery that is not eligible for the National Register, if ever moved, will not be studied by bioanthropologists, but rather will be subject to commercial, low-bid removal. Tremendous amounts of information will be lost. By recognizing, in the assessment process, that the cemetery includes important archaeological and biocultural data, there is a better chance that these data sets will be examined during the move.

It is also important to recognize the archaeological potential of cemeteries to ensure that the data sets are not damaged or destroyed by cemetery maintenance activities. The process of establishing new pathways, changing landscape plans, enlarging plots, or refurbishing fences can all have adverse impacts on the archaeological record. If there is no recognition of the archaeological potential of the cemetery, no thought will be given to how "clean-up" projects might affect the integrity of these remains.





# Investigations

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The posited cemetery (38CH1459) is situated east of a colonial site (38CH2244), although the two were not thought to intrude (Figure 7).

Situated in a wooded area with abundant tree roots and considerable downed limbs, we determined that efforts to identify the cemetery using ground penetrating radar (GPR) would likely be unsuccessful. As an alternative, we chose to mechanically strip portions of the posited cemetery area, beginning at the far eastern edge.

Prior to stripping, several additional steps were taken in an effort to identify the cemetery location. Although all of the Mullet data were reported as destroyed, Thomas and Hutton was able to approximate their locations. This provided a valuable clue since the cemetery was illustrated east of Reference Mark 1. We also georeferenced several aerial photographs in an effort to determine where the dense vegetation seen in those photographs was located.

Although neither effort was sufficient to determine the cemetery location, they both suggested that the cemetery was situated somewhere west of Chicora's 1993 location, but not entirely in the Schwacke survey area.

A track hoe with a toothless bucket was used to make the north-south cuts, each about 8 to 10 feet in width and varying in length from about 100 to 175 feet (Figure 7). Cuts were excavated to a depth of about 1.5 to 2 feet in a series of 0.5 foot increments. Spoil was stacked conveniently on the sides of the cuts, allowing convenient backfilling.

Burials were anticipated to be recognized as dark, frequently mottled, stains in the subsoil. Further characteristics would include an roughly

east-west orientation, and a size of about 2-3 feet in width and 4-6 feet in length. Previous work has revealed that in sandy soils burial stains range from clearly obvious to vague. Therefore, very careful attention was paid to each successively deeper cut.

As the cuts were being made archaeologists monitored both the cut floor and the spoil, looking for evidence of burials, artifacts, or other features. Artifacts were bagged by cut number, but no further locational information was collected. Features were evaluated as possible burials.

A series of four cuts were placed within what we originally thought was the cemetery. Cuts 1 -3 produced no features consistent with a burial, although all of them produced minor amounts of colonial pottery, as well as late nineteenth to early twentieth century ceramics and glass. The former was attributed to dispersed material from the colonial site, 38CH2244, while the latter was thought to represent dispersed grave goods, even though no burials were identified.

The mechanical cuts continued to the west, with Cut 4 producing the first burial at its north end.

West of Cut 4 we were extending into colonial site 38CH2244. We determined that while this was not ideal, identifying the cemetery with its human remains took priority over loss of artifacts in the plowzone.

Cut 5 was found to be in the heart of the cemetery, with 15 probable burials identified through their stains. This cut was extended to the north and south until we had about 20 feet with no evidence of burials, in order to help define the

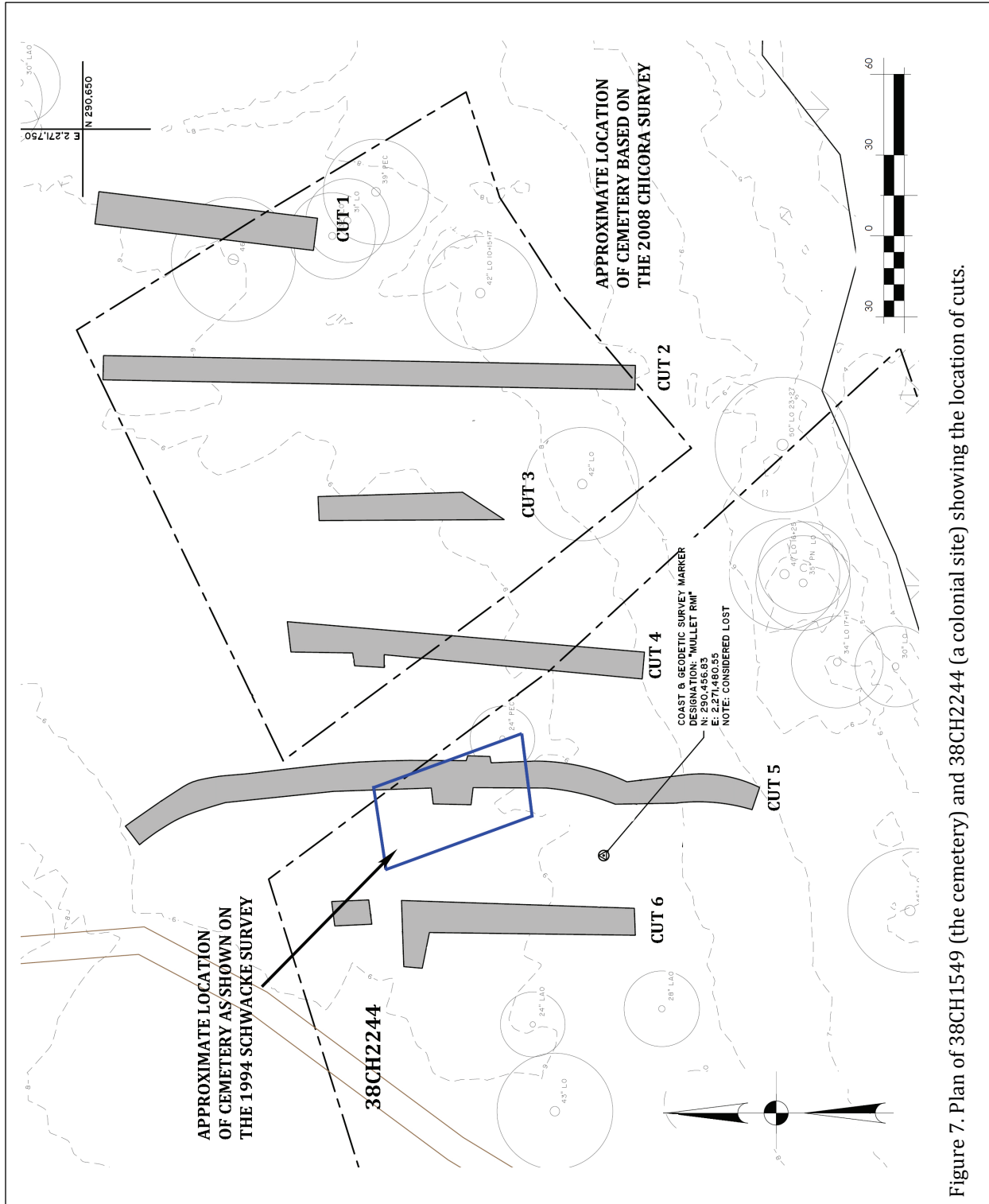


Figure 7. Plan of 38CH1549 (the cemetery) and 38CH2244 (a colonial site) showing the location of cuts.

north and south cemetery boundaries.

A final cut (Cut 6) was made to the west. Only one burial was identified in the center of the cut, with no burials found to the north or south.

We believe that these cuts provide boundaries for the cemetery. The cuts also revealed four historic features associated not with the cemetery, but with 38CH2244. These will be discussed in the assessment report for that site. However, while one of these colonial features was being excavated, we discovered that it intruded into Burial 8, with the skull being exposed. This find is discussed in a following section; the remains were reburied.

Also recovered were two marble gravestones, one with a footstone. They have been repaired by Chicora and re-erected at the site. Other items recovered include a small quantity of burial hardware, some associated with Burial 8, other likely the result of disturbance of one burial by another. Fragmented burial goods were found in each cut and these items were identified and reburied in their appropriate cut. No artifacts were collected from the site.

## INVESTIGATIONS

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# Findings

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## Trench Excavations

Seventeen probable burial stains were identified in three cuts. Cut 4 produced one stain (Burial 1); Cut 5 produced 15 probable burials (Burials 2-16); and Cut 6 produced one additional stain (Burial 17). All were recognized as dark, rectangular stains oriented east-west in the yellow subsoil (Figure 8).



Figure 8. Burials 13 and 14 in Cut 5. View to the west.

## Grave Goods

Concerning the broken items found in African American cemeteries, William Pollitzer has remarked, “in light of the meaning behind this clustered assortment, it seems a sacrilege to call them grave decorations, for they are an integral part of the belief system of the interred and those who buried them” (Pollitzer 1999:183). As previously explained, all of the items thought to represent grave goods, as dispersed as they might have been, were examined, photographed, and reinterred.

Table 1 itemizes the items found in the six cuts. Items are dispersed across the landscape, suggesting either plowing or various “clean-ups” in which items were removed from the cemetery and discarded on the periphery. Most of the items, however, are associated with Cut 5, where the bulk of the identified burials are located. We should note that there is no domestic site that might have contributed these items, so we feel confident that they were originally part of the assemblages found on the graves.

From Cut 3, the white porcelain represents a small pitcher. There is also one manganese fluted tumbler and white clear glass tumbler present in that cut.

Cut 4 produced a whiteware plate with a mark for C.C. Thompson Pottery Company in East Liverpool, Ohio. This mark was used between about 1890 and 1910 (Kovel 1986:6).

The intact bottle recovered from Cut 5 is silk screened “Sun Crest.” Jeter (1987:69) indicates that this bottle had a very short period of use, ranging from 1952 to 1955. Other fragments in this cut represent a white porcelain plate, a whiteware splatter bowl, an aqua or light green glass jar, three manganese tumblers, a “pressed” manganese bowl, and two manganese bottles.

Cut 6 yielded an oval or rectangular whiteware platter fragment, and a milk glass jar for cream or ointment.

Associated with Burial 2 was a prolific amount of material. A number of fragments

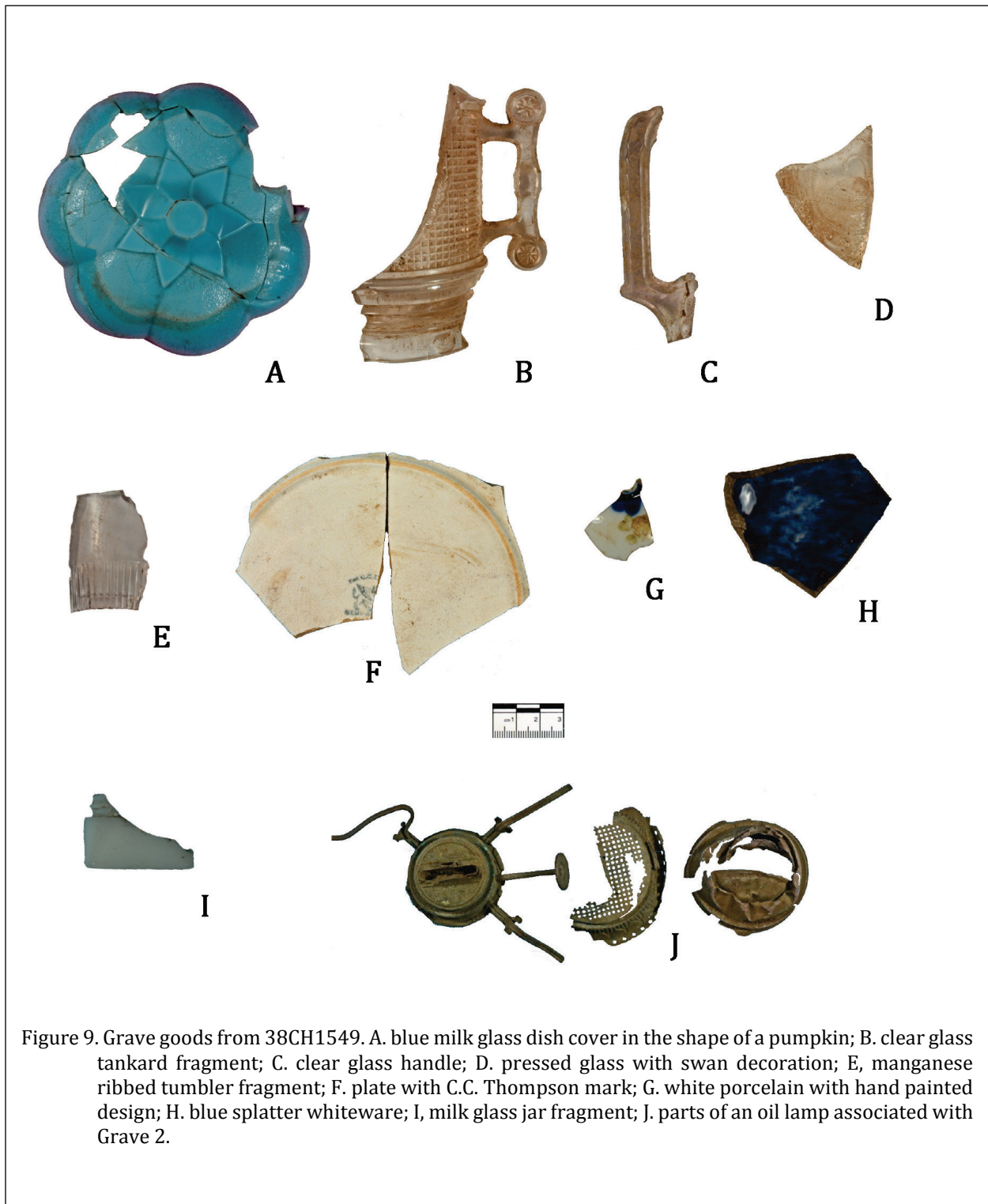


Figure 9. Grave goods from 38CH1549. A. blue milk glass dish cover in the shape of a pumpkin; B. clear glass tankard fragment; C. clear glass handle; D. pressed glass with swan decoration; E. manganese ribbed tumbler fragment; F. plate with C.C. Thompson mark; G. white porcelain with hand painted design; H. blue splatter whiteware; I. milk glass jar fragment; J. parts of an oil lamp associated with Grave 2.

associated with a brass oil lamp were recovered. The wick knob for this lamp was marked, "P & A. Co. Pat. 1.16.83 & 8.17.97" revealing that the item post-dates the 1897 patent. The manganese glass included a handle from a tankard and at least two bowls. Also present were two white porcelain cups, a whiteware plate, and a whiteware cup. The whiteware plate had the maker's mark for Crescent Pottery, in operation from 1899 through 1902 (Lage 2004:74).

plot.

Due to poor preservation of most sub-adult remains, the comparable data set is small. Therefore, we have recorded the available measurements of this individual (Table 2) following the recommendations of Buikstra and Ubelaker (1994).

The skull was in very good condition, with some warpage, one nick from a shovel, and coffin

wear on the right lateral occipital and left lateral temporal. Only the hyoid, basilar portion of the occipital, and six of the maxillary teeth were missing post-mortem; these materials are likely still located in the burial plot (they were not recovered from the screening of Feature 2).

The skull, while in very good condition, did separate into individual bone pieces, as a majority of the cranial sutures were open, indicating an individual under the age of twelve years (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994: 44) (Figure 10a). The metopic suture of the frontal bones is fused, typical for an

individual over the age of one year (Baker et.al. 2005:31). The mandibular symphysis was also completely fused, again, typical for an individual of over one year of age (Baker et.al. 2005:50). The parietal eminences are very pronounced, typical in infants and young children (Baker et.al. 2005:33) (Figure 10a).

At the time of death, this sub-adult had twelve fully erupted deciduous teeth: four incisors and two first molars each in the maxilla and the mandible. Another four deciduous teeth, two canines and two second molars each in the maxilla and mandible, were visible in their crypts but not

Table 1.  
Cemetery artifacts identified at 38CH1549

	Cut 1	Cut 2	Cut 3	Cut 4	Cut 5	Cut 5 - Burial 2	Cut 5 - Burial 8	Cut 6
White porcelain, undec.					1	3		1
White porcelain, decal, floral					1	1		
White porcelain, hand painted and decal			2					
White porcelain, tinted					1			
Whiteware, undec.				6	4	9		2
Whiteware, splatter					1	1		
Glass, aqua/light green	2				2	1		
Glass, blue milk						2		
Glass, white milk		1						1
Glass, manganese			2	2	13	6		
Glass, manganese, poly hand painted					1			
Glass, clear			1	1				
Bottle, clear medicine							2	
Bottle, soda					1			
Oil lamp frags						15		
Lamp chimney glass						15		
Coffin handle fragment					1			
Coffin hardware/trimmings							9	
Coffin nails with adhering wood							2	
UID iron			1					

These items are consistent with the grave goods reported from other African American cemeteries. They represent items used by the deceased during their life. After analysis all items were returned to the cemetery.

## Skeletal Remains

Burial 8 was partially exposed during the excavation of Feature 2 (a colonial trash pit) in Cut 5. The only portion of the skeleton exposed was the skull (cranium and mandible), which was largely intact. The remainder of the skeletal material was undisturbed, and remains unexposed in situ. After examination, the skull was returned to the burial

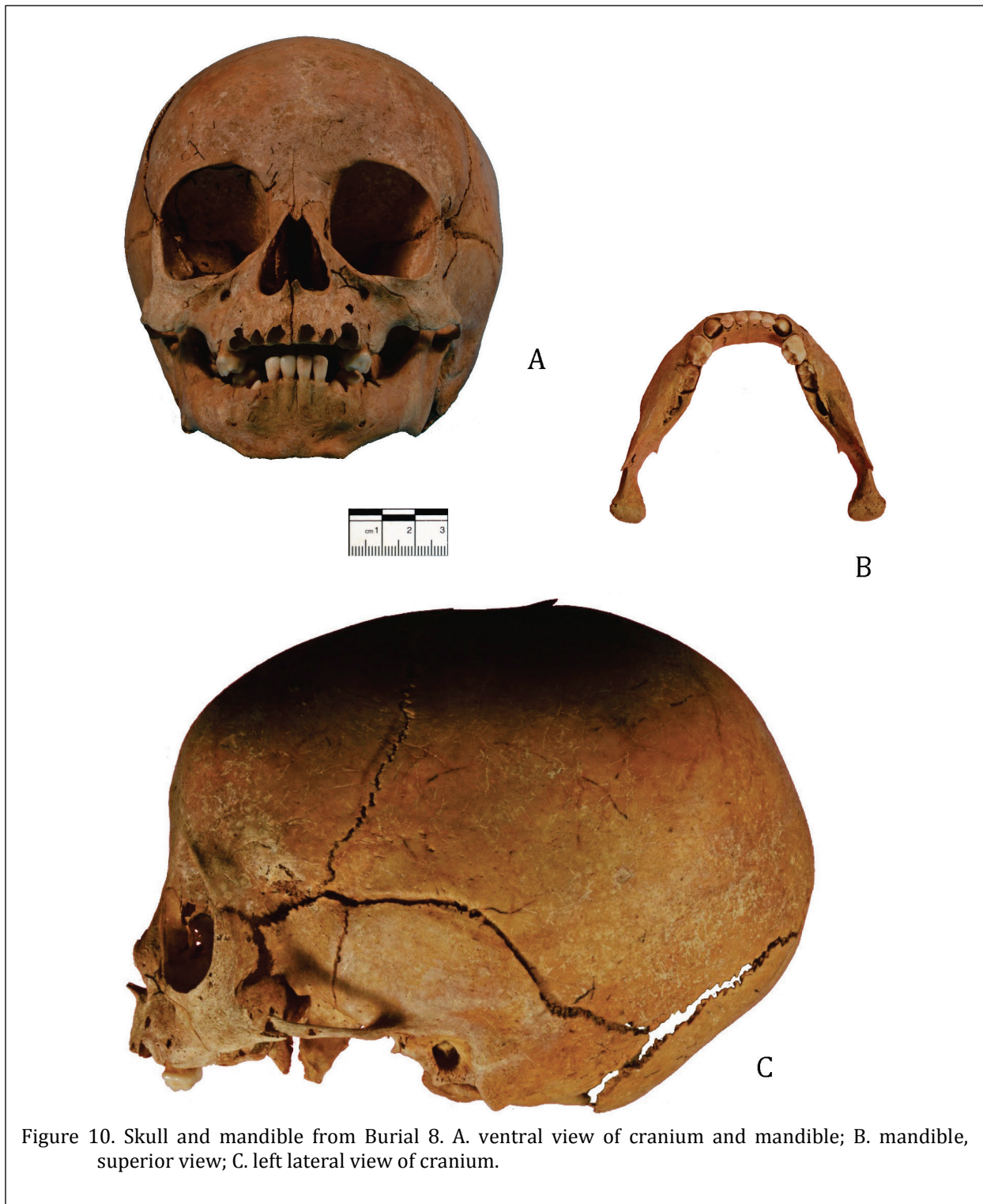


Figure 10. Skull and mandible from Burial 8. A. ventral view of cranium and mandible; B. mandible, superior view; C. left lateral view of cranium.



Table 2.  
Cranial measurements (in mm)

Maximum Cranial Length	157*	Interorbital Breadth	16
Maximum Cranial Breadth	116*	Frontal Chord	96
Bizygomatic Diameter	88*	Parietal Chord	95*
Basion-Bregma Height	115*	Occipital Chord	93*
Cranial Base Length	82*	Foramen Magnum Length	27*
Basion-Prosthion Length	77*	Foramen Magnum Breadth	16*
Maxillo-Alveolar Breadth	50*	Mastoid Length	19
Maxillo-Alveolar Length	33*	Chin Height	21
Biauricular Breadth	87*	Height of Mandibular Body	17
Upper Facial Height	38	Breadth of the Mandibular Body	10
Minimum Frontal Breadth	77	Bigonial Width	63
Upper Frontal Breadth	78	Bicondylar Breadth	82
Nasal Height	23	Minimum Ramus Breadth	22
Nasal Breadth	18	Maximum Ramus Height	31
Orbital Breadth	32	Mandibular Length	47
Orbital Height	32	Mandibular Angle	141°
Biorbital Breadth	74		

\* = measurement is approximate

yet erupted. There were also crowns of the secondary first molars developing in their crypts, both in the maxilla and mandible. When compared to dental charts, this stage of tooth development indicates an age of 18 months ( $\pm 6$  months) (Ubelaker 1989:64).

The erupted teeth were in excellent condition at time of death, exhibiting no hypoplasia, caries, calculus, or staining. However, both mandibular molars were tilted inward, causing the buccal surfaces to serve as occlusal surfaces. This resulted in abnormal wear and polishing on the mandibular buccal surfaces, as the maxillary molars used them as biting and chewing surfaces. As there was no evidence of trauma, or unusual wear on the incisors, it is likely that the twisting of the mandibular molars was genetic in origin (Figure 9b).

Although only the skull has been examined, because dental development is the most reliable method for estimating age at death for sub-adults, it is likely that this individual was aged between 12 months and 2 years (Baker et al. 2005:157). It appears the individual was healthy, as no trauma, disease or nutritional issues were noted in the skull, but that does not preclude

that these issues may be present in the postcranial bones.

The categories of sex and racial affiliation have not been addressed for this individual; those categories can only be accurately determined with morphology that is not yet present in an individual of this age (Baker et al. 2005: 10).

## Coffin Hardware

Cut 5 produced an isolated short bar lug (Figure 11). Originally silver plated, only the base metal remains.

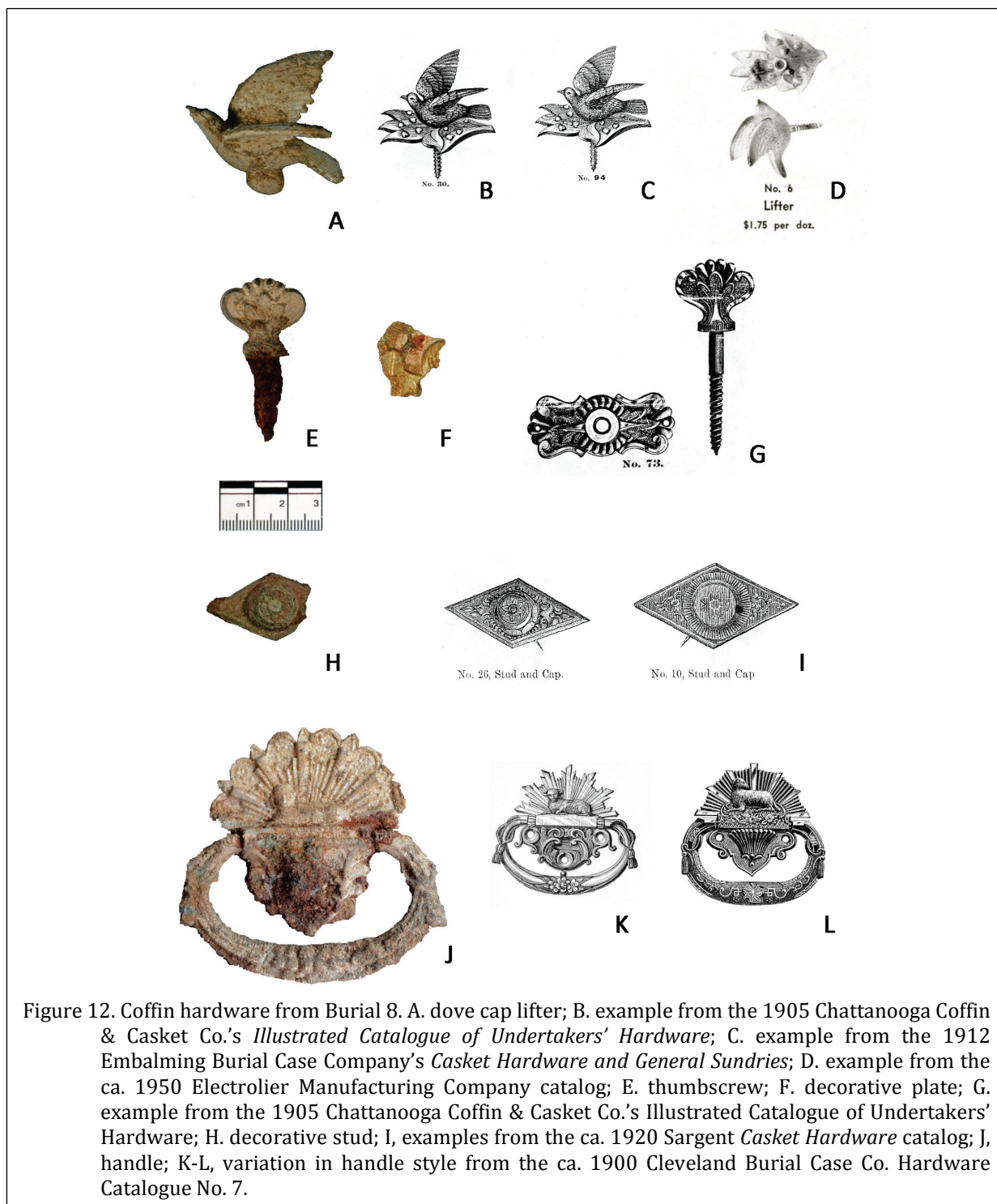
The short bar handles tend to replace swing bail handles during the last several decades of the nineteenth century, gradually being replaced themselves by extension bar handles.



Figure 11. Lug recovered from Cut 5.



# FINDINGS



While no identical match has been found in available catalogs, similar versions are found in catalogs from the first two decades of the twentieth century. The recovery of an isolated piece of hardware suggests that at least this one burial has been intruded into by more recent inhumations.

Burial 8 produced several hardware items, including a casket handle, cap lifter, a small bit of decorative foil, (probably the remnants of a screw plate or escutcheon), three decorative thumbscrews, and a diamond-shaped stud tack. Also present was plate glass from a viewing port and three empty glass bottles that were likely used to position the head.

A variety of cap lifters, used to remove the face or body cover of the casket, were available, but we have found the dove motif in relatively few catalogs, mostly dating to the first third of the twentieth century. The dove is always found resting on somewhat stylized snow drop leaves with small snow drop flowers (Figure 12a-d).

Thumbscrews, used to secure the casket cover or cover, were also manufactured in a variety of designs, although a nearly identical motif was found (Figure 12e-g). These were generally set on a plate, only a small portion of which was recovered.

Studs were purely decorative and were manufactured of thin metal in a variety of designs. The specimens from Burial 8 were heavily corroded and broken, making identification of the motif difficult. We believe, however, that the Sargent catalog has specimens that are nearly identical (Figure 12h-i).

The coffin handle shows a lamb against a background of rays. While the general style is quite common for children, there are a great many variations (the sheep may face forward or to one side, the rays will vary, and the handles exhibit a broad range of motifs) and no exact match was found.

The three bottles found in the casket were

clustered at the head and all are identical (Figure 13). Embalming bottles were occasionally used to help position the head, being hidden by clothing, hair, a pillow, or fabric. Since this casket had a viewing plate, we suspect they served this function.



Figure 13. One of three identical bottles found around the skull of Burial 8.

## Gravestones

During the trench excavation three gravestones were recovered, including two headstones and one footstone. All three were found in the depression associated with Burial 2.

Two of the stones – a headstone and footstone – are likely associated with Burial 2. The headstone measures 35½ x 12 x 2 inches and is carved, “JACK RYAN / BORN JULY 27, 1842 / DIED OCT. 5, 1909.” Associated with it is a footstone, measuring 24¼ x 6¼ x 2¼ inches with the initials, “J. R.”. This footstone was recovered in two pieces.

The third stone measures 36 x 12 x 2

inches and is carved, "LUCY B.C. / CAPERS / BORN DEC. 24, 1897 / DIED FEB. 14, 1928." This stone was also found broken in two fragments (Figure 14).



Figure 14. Capers gravestone found at 38CH1549.

Jack Ryan was one of fourteen freedmen who signed contracts with Solomon Legare in 1866. A brief review of census records identifies Jack Ryan in 1880 as a 32 year old African American married to Phillis Ryan. They had four children, Hannah (11), Lizzie (10), Cain (6), and Jack, Jr. (2 years old). He identified himself as a farmer, although the 1880 census provides no additional details. Fortunately, he is also found in the 1880 agricultural schedule. From that record we learn that he – like many others on Johns Island – had a fixed money rental, operating a 10 acre tract valued at \$110 and he owned \$100 in

livestock, including one cow and calf, three pigs, and 40 chickens. His farm produced \$200 in 1879. On 4 acres he raised 30 bushels of corn, while on another four acres he was able to produce 2 bales of cotton. A quarter of an acre produced 30 bushels of sweet potatoes. Presumably, the remaining 1¼ acres were in woods.

By 1900, Ryan is found in the census under Rion and was listed as 65 years old, with Phillis, to whom he had been married 35 years, now 60 years old. The census reports that Phillis had eight children, although only five were still living. The only child at home with the couple was their 19 year old son, Edward. By this time Ryan owned his own farm, free of a mortgage.

In 1920 Lucy Bell Capers, then reported as 21, was the wife of Rubin Capers on Johns Island. They had a two-year old son, Harrison Capers. Rubin owned his own farm and after the death of his wife in 1928, apparently remarried, continuing to farm on Mullet Hall Road according to the 1930 census.

It is no surprise that the two individuals with commercial stones were modestly successful farm owners. This likely provided their families with the disposable income to afford the purchase of memorials.

## Site Size and Location

Based on the identified graves, the 38CH1549 cemetery measures about 160 feet north-south by about 100 feet east-west, without the addition of a buffer typically required by the South Carolina Department of Archives and History (Figure 15). The UTM center point of the cemetery is 582712E 3610263N (NAD27).

The cemetery encompasses, but is much larger than, the original area marked by Schwacke in 1994. Only a small portion of the cemetery falls into the area defined by the Chicora survey of 2008 (Trinkley et al. 2008). About half of the cemetery extends south and west into the boundaries of archaeological site 38CH2244, a colonial settlement. In fact, all of the cuts produced at least

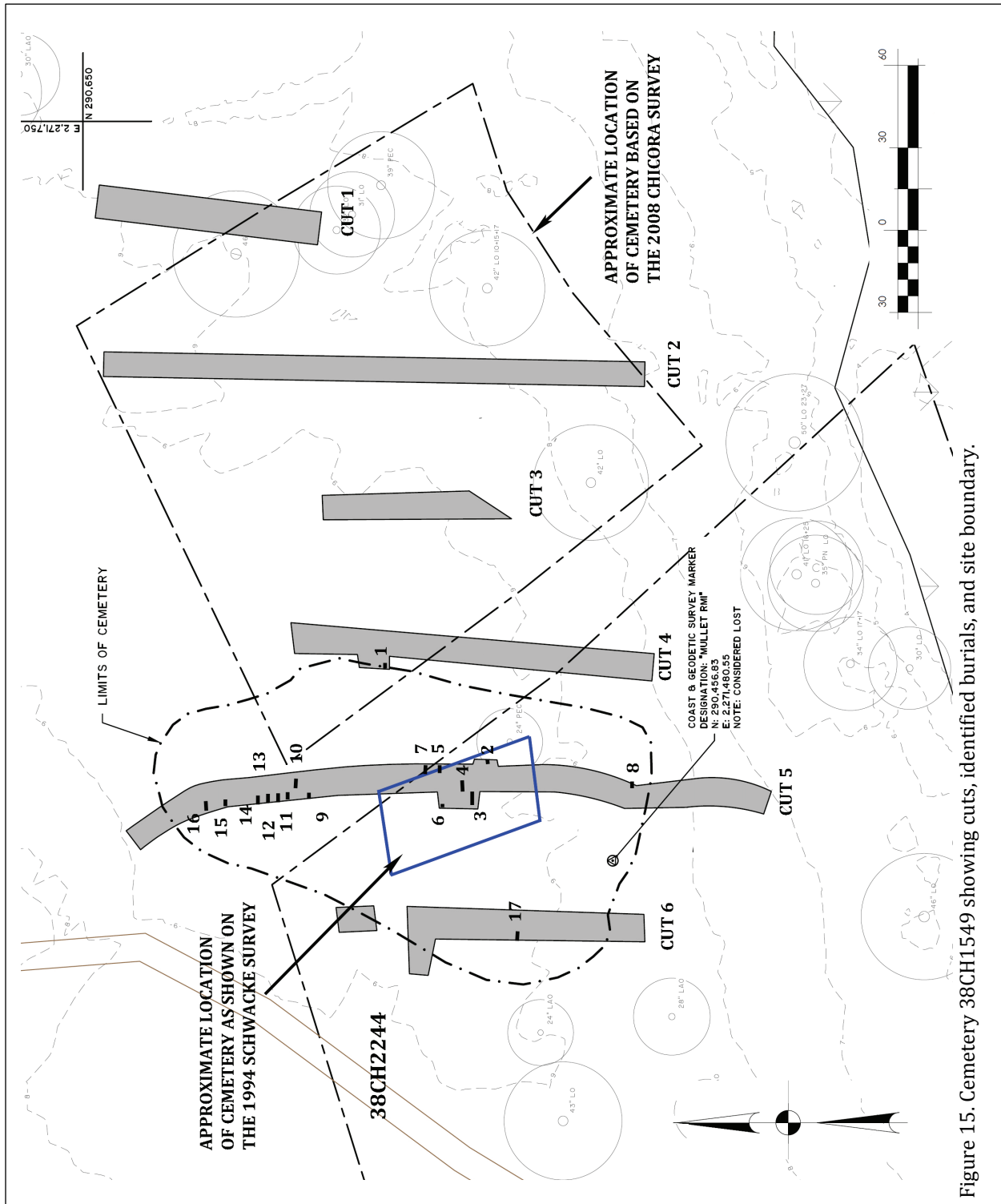


Figure 15. Cemetery 38CH1549 showing cuts, identified burials, and site boundary.



## FINDINGS

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some eighteenth century artifacts and several cuts identified eighteenth century features. It was the excavation of one such feature that lead to the discovery of Burial 8.

# Site Assessment

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## Data Sets

Site 38CH1549 has produced a variety of data sets, including grave goods, coffin hardware, human remains, coffin remains, and gravestones.

Many of the grave goods have been broken and dispersed, but the stripping of the site produced a broad range of materials, including bottles, plates, cups, glassware dishes, an oil lamp, and other items. All of these remains date from the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. Some have been found associated with specific graves, helping to document the placement of grave goods on specific graves.

Coffin hardware was found primarily with Burial 8, although an additional, random, fragment reveals that there are other burials with coffin hardware likely present. The hardware include handles, cap lifters, decorative tacks, and thumbscrews. The hardware dates primarily from the very late nineteenth century through the first third of the twentieth century. These remains can help establish status and perhaps wealth of the individuals buried in the cemetery.

The accidental discovery of Burial 8 during the excavation of an eighteenth century trash pit provides excellent information on the presence – and condition – of human remains at 38CH1549. The sandy soils, which allowed rapid water movement, likely promoted preservation. Human remains appear to be in excellent condition and can provide a variety of data sets, including both metric and nonmetric analysis, information on diet and disease, and genetic information. The latter can help establish the sex of infants and children, as well as establish familial relationships in the cemetery. Genetic testing can also help more

precisely define the original African homeland of the individuals. In addition, it can help document the presence and extent of European and American Indian admixture (e.g., Pollitzer 1958)

Coffin remains are also present with Burial 8 again providing fortuitous information on the manufacture of the coffin from heart pine, but also revealing the presence of a viewing plate.

The recovery of two headstones and a footstone provide critical genealogical and historical data. Both individuals have been identified in census records and one can even be traced back to Freedmen's Bureau records immediately after the Civil War. The presence of commercial markers also contributes to an understanding of social status and wealth among the African Americans buried in this cemetery.

Damage to the cemetery over its history have affected landscape features and plantings. Relatively few landscape features such as depressions were found. We were unable to identify any intentional plantings in the cemetery. The sparsity or absence of these data sets, however, does not affect the wide variety of other research topics the cemetery can address.

## Historic Context

We have previously outlined a historic context for African American cemeteries (pp. 3-7), emphasizing features such as loosely defined kin-based groupings, east-west orientations, absence of permanent markings, presence of grave goods, and lack of strict maintenance. Even the limited stripping reveals that graves, while roughly linear, exhibit considerable variation that suggests association with other, pre-existing burials. Burial goods are clearly documented. The aerial

photographs document the recognition of place, but absence of careful, Euro-American style maintenance. In all respects, 38CH1549 appears consistent with what is known of African American burial traditions.

## Research Questions

Based on the data sets and historic context, the 38CH1549 cemetery can address a broad range of bioanthropological questions regarding health and nutrition of late nineteenth and early twentieth century African Americans. Critical analysis would include morphological characteristics, such as cranial and postcranial measurements, discrete traits of the skull and postcranial skeleton, dental features, and pathological conditions. A comprehensive battery of postcranial discrete traits such as those proposed by Finnegan (1978) can maximize possibilities of subsequent genetic distancing. Examination of the neonatal death rate may help document population stress. Research may be able to further establish the link between weaning diarrhea and an early death rate.

During this period the absence of health care, reliance on proprietary medicines, and poor nutrition caused a variety of problems in the African American, not the least of which was a death rate higher than for white. Analysis of the remains can address such questions by exploring evidence of anemia and identifying Harris lines (also known as growth arrest lines), which document episodes of poor nutrition. Evidence of trauma and work-related stress can document lifeways and everyday activities among both males and females. Even evaluation of stature can document variation from norms, many of which may be the result of nutrition. Destructive analysis of bones can further refine micronutrient levels. A variety of demographic details can be collected if sufficient time is allotted in analysis.

Analysis of mortuary goods, including grave goods, coffin hardware, and personal items, would help to document oral history, folklore, social status markers, and temporal frameworks. Such analysis is of special importance when it involves a relatively large population and could

dramatically improve our understanding of rural Johns Island.

## Integrity

The stripping revealed no indication of damage or burial loss resulting from agriculture or silvacultural activities (i.e., clean-up after Hurricane Hugo). Burial 8 and the stones preserved in the depression associated with Burial 2 suggest that the cemetery is in excellent condition.

The condition of bone and coffin hardware from Burial 8 reveals that these remains are easily able to address the research questions briefly outlined for the cemetery.

## Buffer

In July 2006 the SC SHPO specified that a minimum “construction buffer” of 25-feet “should be used for cemeteries that are . . . eligible for the National Register under Criterion D (Anonymous 2006:1). While not shown on Figure 15, we recommend that this 25-foot buffer be added per the SHPO guidance.

## Summary

Over 30 years ago Dr. Ted Rathbun commented on Rose’s examination of an Arkansas African American cemetery, remarking.

It is especially heartening to see a cemetery treated as an important historical resource. . . . this report should illustrate that cemetery data are extremely important above and beyond the usual categories associated with distinctive persons, design features, and associations with historic events. This narrow definition of historic importance fails to recognize that human remains provide data of considerable historic importance. Not only are many segments of the population omitted from

typical historical sources, but the skeletal remains provide empirical evidence directly relevant to broad historical issues in health, nutrition and social customs. The biological history of our nation has received insufficient attention to date, especially during the time spanned by the Cedar Grove cemetery [which is similar to 38CH1549] (Rathbun 1978:208).

The cemetery at 38CH1549 is recommended eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion D, information potential. We believe this potential has been fully documented by these investigations. Placement on the National Register will help ensure that, should removal and relocation be needed in the future, these remains will be spared from low bid, unskilled labor, and receive the professional archaeological and bioanthropological attention it so richly deserves.





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