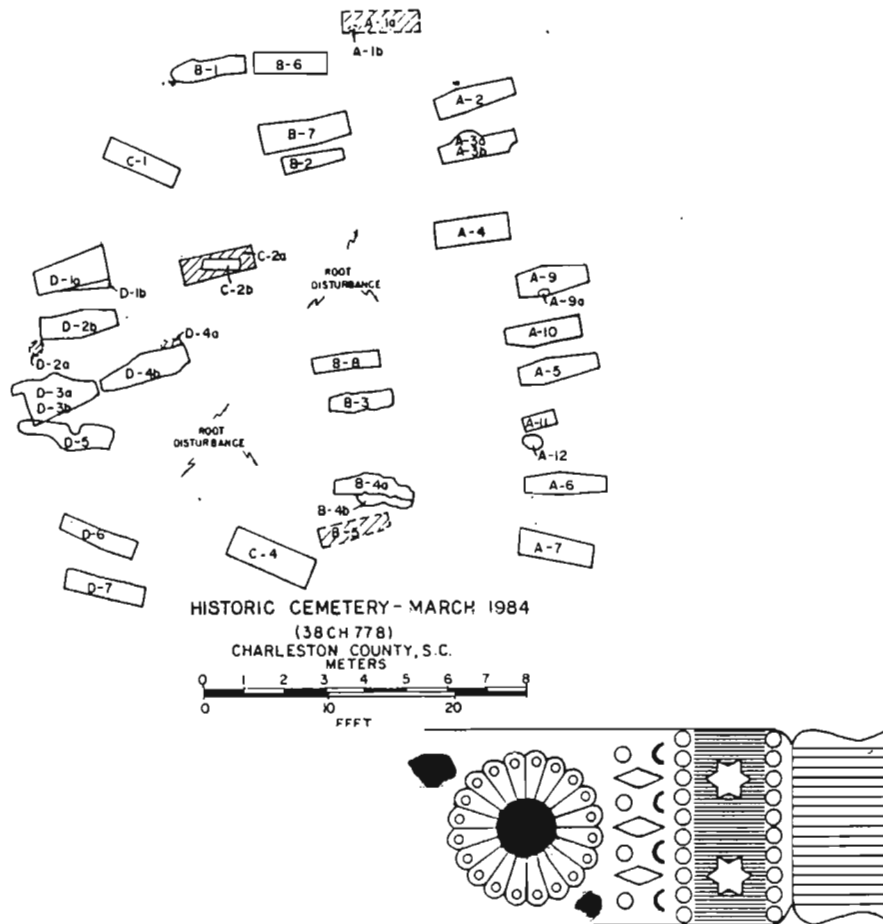


ANALYSIS OF COFFIN HARDWARE FROM 38CH778, CHARLESTON COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA



ANALYSIS OF COFFIN HARDWARE FROM 38CH778,
CHARLESTON COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

RESEARCH SERIES 3

Michael Trinkley

Debi Hacker-Norton

Chicora Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 8664
Columbia, South Carolina

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Men have been most phantasticall in the
singular contrivances of their corporall
dissolution . . .

--Sir Thomas Browne

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The map of site 38CH778 was prepared and drawn by Mr. Ron Anthony of Carolina Archaeological Services, Columbia, South Carolina. The photographs were printed through the assistance of The Charleston Museum, Charleston, South Carolina. These groups are thanked for their interest and spirit of cooperation.

INTRODUCTION

In February 1984 grading operations associated with a proposed subdivision north of the U.S. 17/701 By-Pass in Mount Pleasant uncovered what eventually was identified as a small cemetery. There had been no above ground indications or legal documentation to indicate the presence of these burials. This work removed several feet of soil from the area and exposed coffin stains, human skeletal remains, and coffin hardware. Construction work was halted and the developer contacted Dr. Ted Rathbun, physical anthropologist at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, South Carolina. After completion of the legal notifications required by South Carolina law, the developer contracted for the removal and forensic study of the individuals by Rathbun, prior to their reburial in the spring of 1985. As part of Rathbun's study of this cemetery, we conducted a detailed analysis of the coffin hardware recovered from the site. The significance of this study is increased by the requirement to rebury the hardware with the individuals.

The Mount Pleasant cemetery (38CH778), prior to its removal, was situated about 1000 feet west of the U.S. 17/701 By-Pass and Mathis Ferry Road intersection (Figure 1). The 1971 Charleston U.S.G.S. 7.5' topographic map shows this area as the Remley Point Airport, while the 1958 U.S.G.S. topographic map identifies it as the Pinckney Airfield. The 1943 Corps of Engineers Charleston topographic map does not indicate an airfield in the area, but does show it as open, probably planted in crops. A similar view is presented by the 1919 Charleston U.S.G.S. topographic map, although a dirt road (in the vicinity of present day Mathis Ferry Road) is shown east of the cemetery location. The J.T. Kollock 1932-1934 "Property Map of Charleston County" shows the cemetery area as part of the Bayview Plantation tract.

The 1899 U.S. Coast and Geodetic Chart 154 shows a significant plantation development at the end of this road (today at the edge of a spoil area northwest of Mathis Ferry Road and U.S. 17/701 Business), including the main house, three outbuildings, and two rows of probable antebellum slave cabins. The Mount Pleasant cemetery would be located adjacent to this road, just beyond the cleared fields shown on the chart. This area is shown on Johnson's 1863 "A Map of Charleston and Its Defenses" as "Matthews Ferry" and the plantation owner is identified as Hunt. These equivocal data suggest that the cemetery was associated with the Hunt plantation during the antebellum and postbellum periods. Rathbun (personal communication 1984) has identified the burials to be Black individuals and suggests a date range of 1840 to 1870. One individual was found buried with a legible coffin plate which gave his name, date of death, and age at death. This individual is not identified in the Register of Free Blacks.

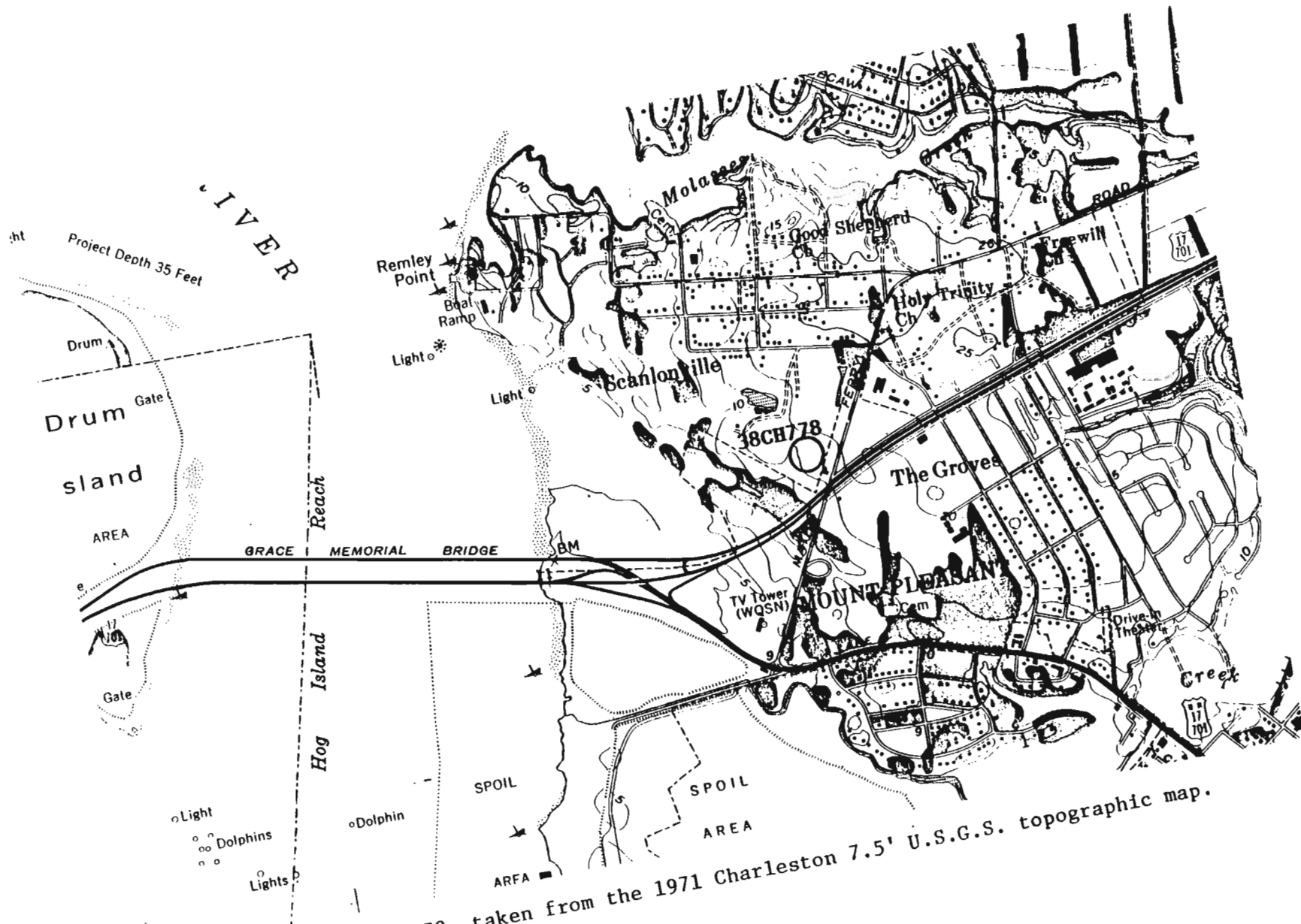
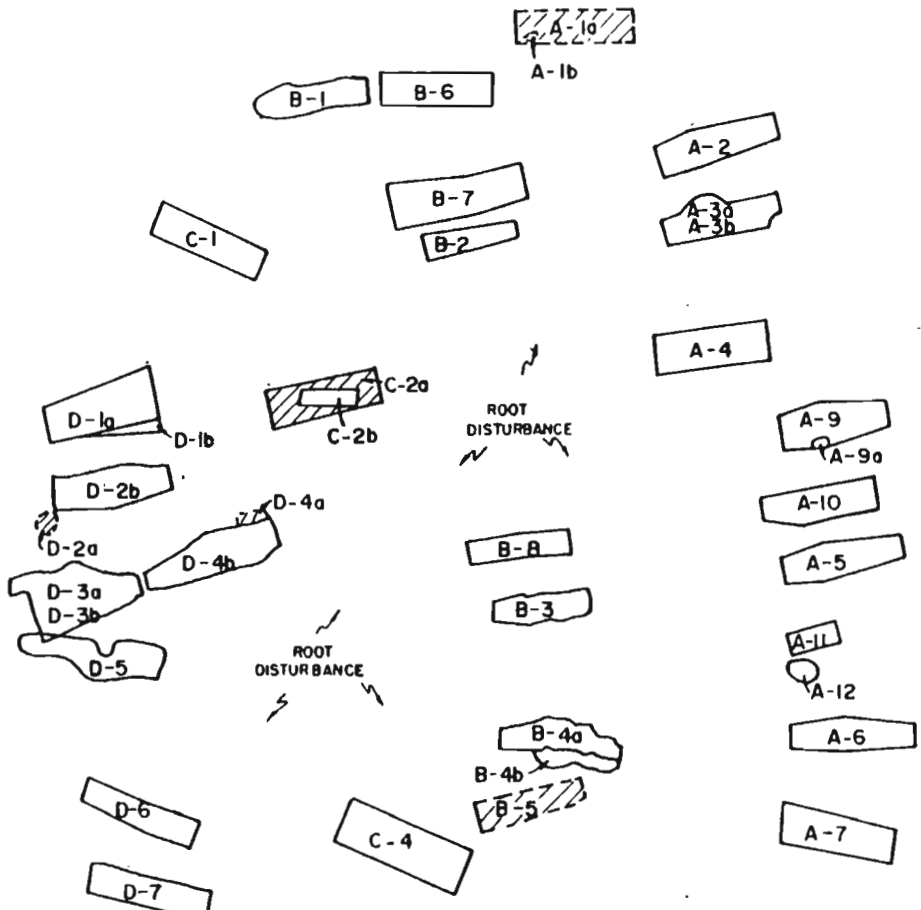


Figure 1. Vicinity of 38CH778, taken from the 1971 Charleston 7.5' U.S.G.S. topographic map.



LEGEND

- +
- TRANSIT ONE STATION
- ▭
- BURIAL FEATURE
- ▭
- FEATURE SHAPE APPROX.
- ▨
- ORIENTATION OF FEATURE APPROX.

HISTORIC CEMETERY - MARCH 1984

(38CH 778)

CHARLESTON COUNTY, S.C.

METERS



FFFT

Figure 2. Site map, prepared by Ron Anthony, Carolina Archaeological Services, Columbia.

Excavations at the cemetery were conducted by Rathbun in March 1984 using both a professional crew and osteology class students. Because of the extensive disturbance to the site, the area was first shovel scraped to allow the burials to be plotted accurately. A series of 36 stains were initially recorded and found to be arranged in four rows, oriented approximately east-west. Four coffins appear to have a slightly different orientation, closer to northwest-southeast. During the course of excavations, one additional coffin stain was recorded and two were found to represent tree root stains. A total of 37 individuals were recovered from the 35 graves (two grave shafts included the coffins of both females and infants). The burials were identified by a row letter (A to D from east to west) and by a number within the row. In the case of intrusive burials (found in eight cases) an a/b designation was used (Figure 2).

The burials were excavated by hand, with color slides taken during the process. Burial fill was not uniformly screened. Many of the burials were within a few inches of the graded surface and none were deeper than about 2 feet. Eleven of the 35 graves were noted to have been significantly disturbed by construction activity. The coffin stains were uniformly octagonal in shape, characteristic of "toe-pincher" coffins. Wood was common (see Trinkley 1984) and skeletal preservation was generally good. Recovered artifacts included clothing and jewelry items, fabric, hair, feathers, and coffin hardware.

Skeletal analysis, presently being conducted by Rathbun, includes sexing and aging the remains, as well as studies of nutritional and health status. At present, only preliminary demographic data collected in the field are available.

Several biases in this analysis must be recognized. First, the cemetery had been extensively disturbed by grading and construction related activities. Both skeletal material and hardware items, in several cases, had been removed from primary context. Some items were apparently destroyed. Because the cemetery was left exposed for several weeks between its initial discovery and removal, it is possible that surface items were either removed or deteriorated upon exposure. Second, because the grave pit fill was not consistently screened, some small hardware items may have been overlooked in the field. Finally, the absence of firm historical data on the date and association of the cemetery makes the analysis less secure for comparative purposes. In spite of these problems, this is the first low country cemetery which has produced sufficient coffin hardware for a detailed analysis.

DESCRIPTION OF COLLECTION

This analysis uses the terms and definitions proposed for coffin hardware studies by Hacker-Norton and Trinkley (1984). All hardware recovered from the site was transferred to Chicora after cleaning by Rathbun. Because the items are to be reburied no conservation or reconstruction of the remains was undertaken. Detailed notes are on file at the Chicora Foundation and the photographs are curated at The Charleston Museum.

A total of 846 pieces of coffin hardware, consisting of handles, thumbscrews, escutchions, studs, white metal coffin screws and tacks, a nameplate, nails, and screws, were recovered from 38CH778 (Table 1). Only two types of handles were found, both two lug swing bails of cast white metal with a silver finish and an iron wire reinforcement within the bar. The lugs of the Type I handle (Figure 3a) are identified in the literature (Orser et al. 1982:461) as "Lincoln's drape," with the number "450" molded into the reverse face. The bar, with "1210" molded on the reverse (Figure 3c) is decorated with a simple floral design. The bar and lugs appear to be mismatched when compared to the Millwood specimen (Orser et al. 1982:455). Previous studies indicate that matched sets were usually designated by a single number. One complete handle is found in Burial D-3b and three are found in Burial A-3b. Handle Type II (Figure 3b) has a more complex floral motif and a diamond and dot background. This type is represented by six handles found in Burial A-7.

Three types of thumbscrews are found, all of hand cast white metal with a silver finish. Two examples of Type I (Figure 4a), a drape motif, are found in Burial A-7. Six examples of Type II thumbscrews (Figure 4b), a geometric design, are found in Burial D-3b. Four of the thumbscrews are intact and two are fragmented. Three examples of the Type III thumbscrew (Figure 4c), a stylized floral motif, are found in Burial C-4. Two examples are intact and one is fragmented. Only Burial A-7 contains escutchions. The escutchions, of stamped tin, are a complex design and although no complete example is present, a reconstruction of the motif, based on five fragments, was possible (Figure 5).

Two styles of decorative studs are found in the collection, both manufactured from stamped tin. Type I, a six pointed, four stepped star with a central sunburst, is found in Burial C-4. This sample consists of five intact specimens and nine fragments. Type II, a six pointed star with a smaller, raised six pointed star resting on a raised central circle, is found in four burials: A-3b, A-7, A-10, and D-3b.

White metal coffin screws are gimlet types with cast white metal slotted heads, which are knob shaped and either plain or with a filigree

	Handle Type I	Handle Type II	Thumbscrew Type I	Thumbscrew Type II	Thumbscrew Type III	Escutcheon Type I	Stud Type I	Stud Type II	Tack Type I	Tack Type II	Tack Type III	Tack Type IV	Screw Type V	Tack Type VI	Screws	Machine Cut Nails	UID Nails	Coffin Plates
A-1b											29		2				26	1
A-2																	9	
A-3a											1						9	1
A-3b	3						3										4	1
A-4										10							19	
A-5																	23	
A-7, surface							2											
A-7	6	2		5			7								5		63	
A-9																	18	
A-10							1										37	
B-3																	23	
B-4a																	30	
B-4b																1	25	
B-5																	12	
B-6																	37	
B-7																	32	
B-8																	49	
C-1															60		19	1
C-2a											33		3				16	1
C-2b											2							
C-4			3			14										1	23	1
D-1a																	36	
D-1b									6				5				38	
D-2a										1							3	
D-2b										1				6			16	1
D-3a																	15	
D-3b	1		6				8	2			2						6	
D-4b															5		10	1
D-5																	5	
D-6																	6	

Table 1. Coffin hardware parts from 38CH778.

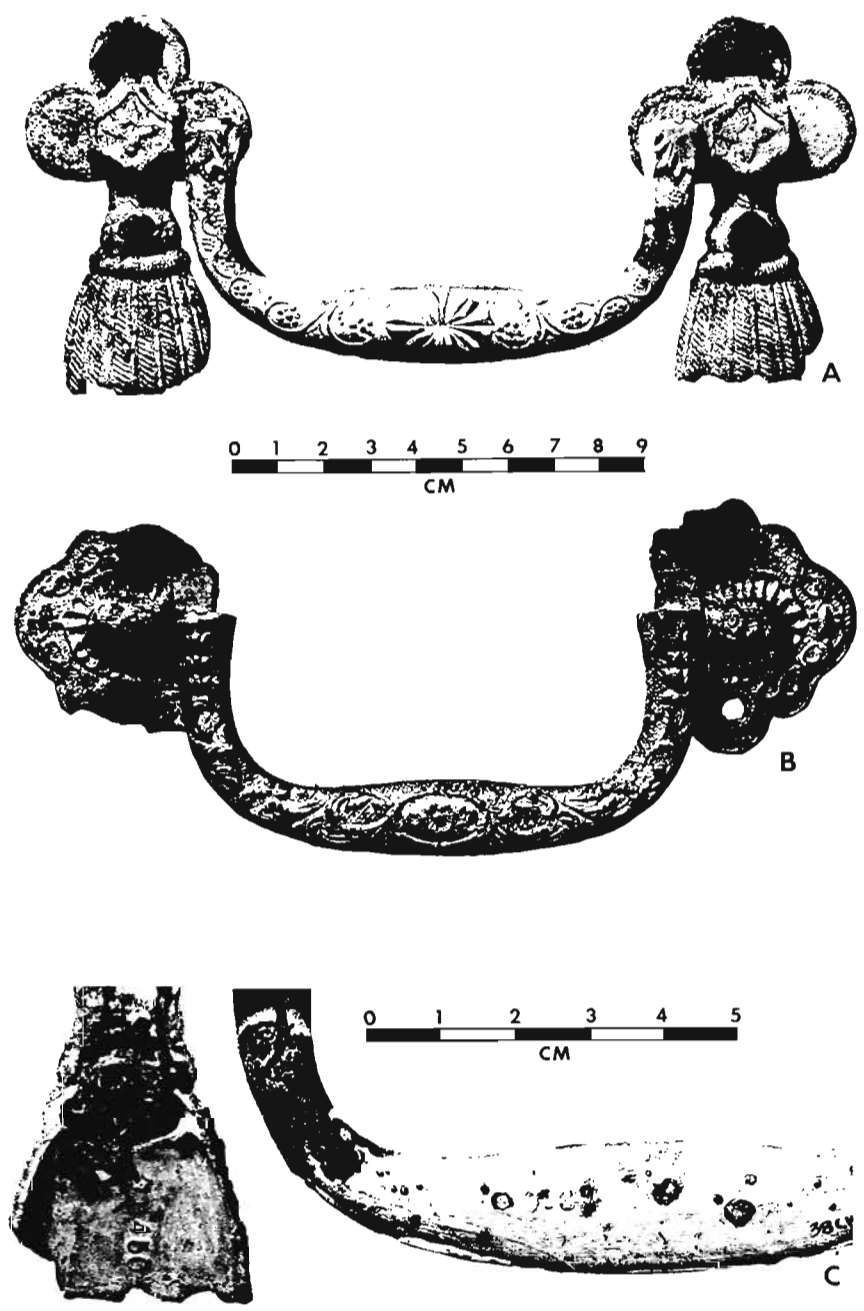


Figure 3. Coffin handles. A, Type I handle, commonly called "Lincoln's drape;" B, Type II handle; C, reverse of the Type I handle, showing the molded catalog numbers.

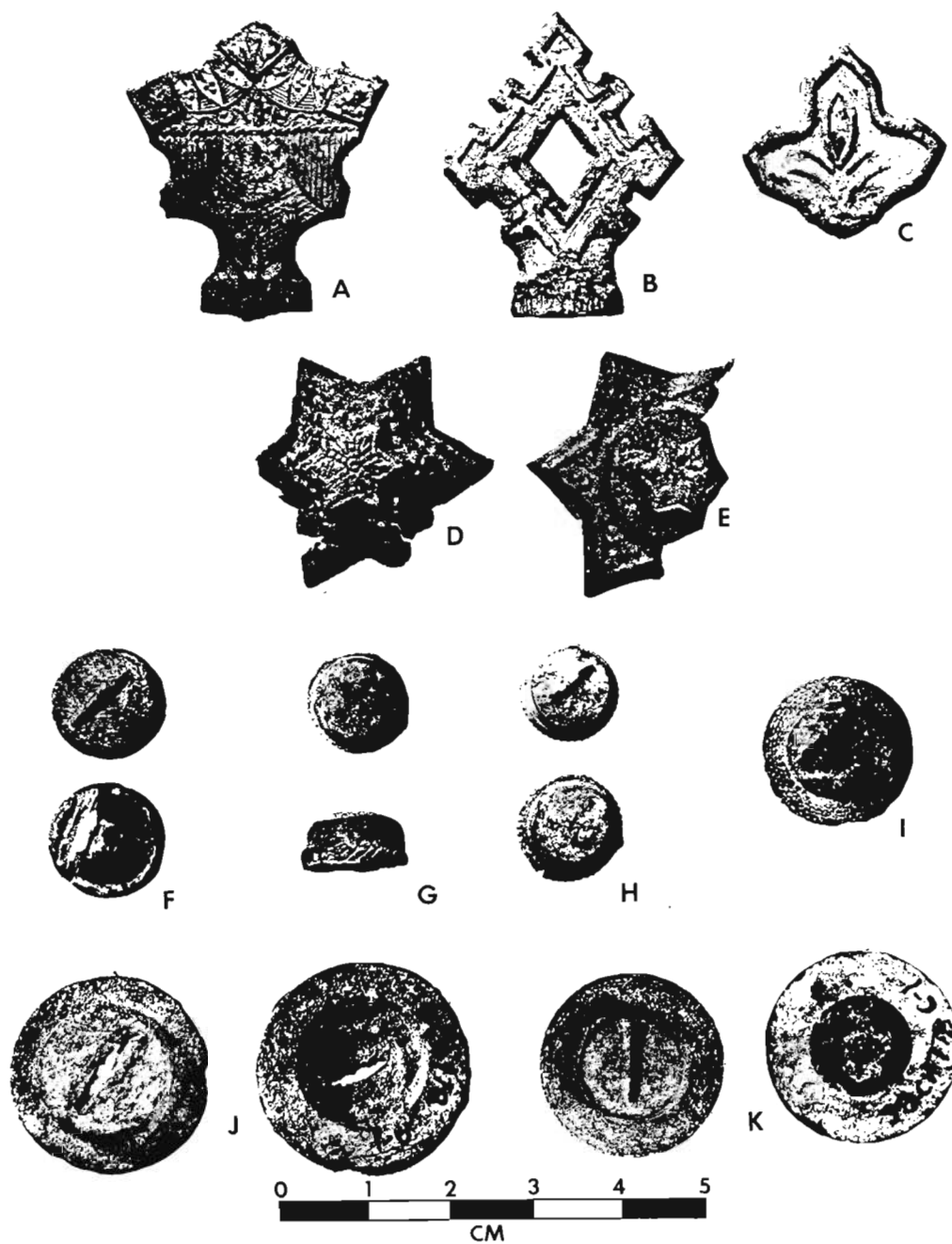


Figure 4. Thumbscrews, studs, coffin tacks and screws. A, Type I thumb-screw; B, Type II thumbscrew; C, Type III thumbscrew; D, Type I stud; E, Type II stud; F, Type I tack; G, Type II tack; H, Type III tack; I, Type IV tack; J, Type V screw; K, Type VI tack.

decoration. A common variety has a basal flange which may also be either plain or have a filigree decoration. White metal coffin tacks have heads identical to the screws with a tack soldered to the underside. At the Mount Pleasant site, six types are found (Table 1). Type I, a plain tack head, 1.3 mm in diameter, is found in Burials D-1b and D-3b (Figure 4f). Type II (Figure 4g), an unslotted tack head 1.1 mm in diameter with a narrow band of rope-like filigree along the base, is found in Burials A-4, D-2a, and D-2b. Type III (Figure 4h), a tack head with a linear filigree along the base, is present in Burials A-1, A-3b, C-2a, C-2b, and D-3b. Its head diameter ranges from 1.1 to 1.2 mm. The larger size is the result of the head being smashed during insertion of the tack into the wood. This may be due to a flaw in manufacture, or due to the method or force of application. Type IV (Figure 4i), also a tack head, has an extended collar with a dotted filigree design and a diameter of 1.8 mm. This style is found in Burial D-1b. Type V (Figure 4j), a screw rather than a tack, has an extended plain collar which measures 2.3 mm in diameter and is found in Burials A-1, C-2a, and D-2b. Type VI (Figure 4k), a tack head with an extended dotted filigree collar, which measures 2.2 mm in diameter, is found in only Burial C-1.

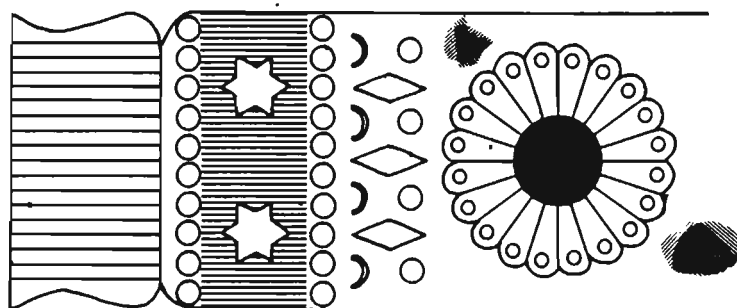


Figure 5. Reconstructed escutcheon, view of the left two-thirds. Cross hatching is present throughout central area.

Only two burials, A-7 and D-4b, included plain screws (excluding the screws used to attach the coffin handles in Burials A-3b, A-7, and D-3b). Only two of the nails could be positively identified as machine cut specimens, one each in Burials B-4b and C-4. The remaining 609 unidentifiable nails are distributed in all burials except C-2b.

A single nameplate of tin plated copper is associated with Burial D-4b. "J— W———/Died May 10th 1863/Aged 48 yrs 10 mos" is lightly painted on the plate. A badly decomposed metal, identified as brass, is associated with Burials A-1, A-3a, A-3b, C-1, C-2, C-4, and D-2b and probably represents very simple stamped plates.

Some information on the placement of coffin hardware is available from Rathbun's fieldnotes and excavation photographs. Burial A-7 was placed in a coffin approximately 5 feet 10 inches in length. The three handles to a side began about 8 inches from the foot and were centered about 1 foot 10 inches apart. Similar information is available for Burial A-3b. The coffin is 6 feet 4 inches in length with the three handles to a side beginning 8 inches from the foot and centered about 2 feet 3 inches apart. Burial C-1 was placed in a coffin measuring 5 feet 10 inches. White metal coffin tacks were placed along the outside edges at approximately 4 to 5 inch intervals on the sides and at 3 inch intervals on the head and probably the foot. We estimate that 78 tacks originally would have decorated this coffin, of which 60 (77%) were recovered. The intact nameplate recovered from Burial D-4b measured 8.3 by 6.9 cm (3-1/4 by 2-3/4 inches). Burial C-1 yielded the remains of a nameplate, measured in situ as 8.3 by 5.6 cm (3-1/4 by 2-1/4 inches). In all cases where metal plates were recorded as either intact (D-4b) or as stains (Burials A-1, A-3a, A-3b, C-1, C-2, C-4, and D-2b) they were centered in the area of the innominate or the central coffin area.

DATING THE COLLECTION

Preliminary historical data suggest that the Mount Pleasant cemetery may date from 1840 through 1870 (Ted Rathbun, personal communication 1984). These dates were accepted as an initial baseline for this analysis, although we will offer some modifications. The five hardware categories which are variously amenable to dating include handles, thumbscrews and escutcheons, decorative studs, coffin screws and tacks, and screws and nails.

Both handle styles are two lug swing bails which are common prior to 1880, but which are found into the twentieth century (Hacker-Norton and Trinkley 1984). The Type I handle, the lugs of which are identified as "Lincoln's drape," are reported by Randolph Richardson (in Orser et al. 1982:461) to have been used on Lincoln's coffin and to have become popular after 1865 (sic). This interpretation appears to be erroneous. Several detailed photographs of Lincoln's coffin which are readily available (Kunhardt and Kunhardt 1965:149, 162-163, 166-167; Lorant 1952:229) show four massive silver handles bearing no resemblance to the style identified as "Lincoln's drape." The style used on Lincoln's coffin is quite similar to that illustrated by the Russell and Erwin Manufacturing Company (1980:334) in 1865 as #36 and described as "Very Large and Rich." The "Lincoln's drape" motif identified at Mount Pleasant is based on a tassel, which became a popular clothing and hardware decoration during the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901). Tassels similar to "Lincoln's drape" are observed on clothing as early as the 1840s (Judy Heberling, personal communication 1984) and it is probable that the motif made its appearance during this time. Tassels were not observed in the 1864 Russell and Erwin Manufacturing Company (1980) catalog, although two designs are illustrated in Markham and Strong's (1865) catalog and one style is found in the 1871 Sargent and Company catalog. The Millwood Cemetery, where identical style lugs were recovered, dates from about 1860 through 1920 (Orser et al. 1982:Figure 92E, 460). We place this item in a time frame from 1840 to no later than 1900. The Type I handle has a bar identical to that identified in the A.L. Calhoun, Jr. collection (Hacker-Norton and Trinkley 1984:Figure 10E). This collection has been dated from 1896 to 1926, with the recognition that the hardware may represent styles with popularity going back to the 1870s. The combination of these two elements suggests a mean date range of 1870 to 1900.

The Type II handle is identical to one illustrated by Orser et al. (1982:Figure 88D) from the Millwood Cemetery. Its date is suggested to be about 1860 through 1920. A similar, although not identical style is illustrated in the 1865 Russell and Erwin Manufacturing Company (1980:335) catalog. The elaborate style and textured background support a pre-1900 date. Consequently, we place this handle style in the period

from 1860 through 1900.

The Type I thumbscrew contains a drape or tassel motif which suggests a temporal range of 1840 through 1900. This is also suggested by the intricate detail. Type II and III thumbscrews have simpler motifs with cleaner lines and styles. Both appear to post-date 1900. The Type II thumbscrew has been identified from the Sargent and Company (c. 1920:875) catalog as item number 713 Wht., which has a "white silver finish." The probable minimum date range for this item is 1907 to 1921, the inclusive patent dates for the illustrations in this catalog. The single escutcheon style found is stamped tin; this manufacturing technique dates at least to the mid-nineteenth century (Russell and Erwin Manufacturing Company 1980; Sargent and Company 1871) and its popularity had waned by 1900 (Hohenschuh c. 1900:40). The motif is intricate and incorporates the tassels common to the period from 1840 to 1900. This item, both on stylistic grounds and on its association with the Type I thumbscrew, appears to date from 1840 to 1900. This escutcheon, however, is very similar to one illustrated in the Sargent and Company (c. 1920:883) catalog as "Struck-Up Coffin Escutcheon No. 33," which evidences its long popularity, probably because of its inexpensive cost.

Two types of decorative studs are found in the collection. Neither are particularly useful for dating as struck-up studs or tacks are illustrated from 1865 (Russell and Erwin Manufacturing Company 1980:331) through at least 1925 (F.H. Hill Company c. 1925:122). Likewise, the six white metal coffin tacks and screws are useful for only general dating. These items are illustrated as early as the 1865 Russell and Erwin Manufacturing Company (1980:332) catalog and again appear in the following Sargent and Company (1871) catalog. They are absent from the c. 1920 Sargent and Company and c. 1925 F.H. Hill Company catalogs. Consequently, they probably date from the mid to late nineteenth century.

The screws and nails offer only a general dating guide. Gimlet screws date from the mid-nineteenth century, while "modern" machine cut nails date from the early nineteenth century. No firmer dating is possible for either artifact category.

Taken in its totality, the Mount Pleasant collection appears to date from the mid-nineteenth through early twentieth centuries. This study, therefore, extends the originally conceived terminal date of 1870 by a maximum of 50 years, or roughly two generations. Burial A-3b contains handle Type I and probably dates from 1870 to 1900. Burial A-7 contains handle Type II, thumbscrew Type I, and escutcheon Type I. This hardware has a common range of about 1860 through 1900. Burial D-3b contains handle Type I and thumbscrew Type II. These two hardware items have been given exclusive date ranges, 1870-1900 and 1900-1930 respectively. Without better dating for the hardware we can only suggest a very late nineteenth or early twentieth century date for the burial. Because the mismatched handle is identical to those found in Burial A-3b, we suggest that these two interments are roughly contemporaneous, perhaps 1890-1910. Burial C-4, based on the presence of thumbscrew Type III, probably post-dates 1900.

HARDWARE PRICING AND STATUS IMPLICATIONS

Of the 37 identifiable coffin burials, 14 (38%) were recovered with some type of coffin hardware, exclusive of nails (Table 1). Many had been disturbed by the grading operations to such an extent that some hardware had been removed and lost (such as Burial D-3b which evidences only one handle). It is unlikely that either differential preservation or collection methods would have had this severe a bias.

Only three of the coffins evidence handles (8% of the total population or 21% of those with hardware). These three coffins were apparently trimmed with both six (Burials A-3b and A-7) and possibly four (Burial D-3b) handles. Thumbscrews are found associated with only three burials and in each case only four or less specimens were recovered. Two coffins with thumbscrews also evidence handles (A-7 and D-3b), while one (Burial C-4) does not. There is no association between the presence of escutchions (found only with Burial A-7) and thumbscrews. Decorative studs are found with six burials (16% of the total population and 43% of the population with some hardware). In each case seven or fewer intact specimens were recovered, although the extent of the disturbance prevents any realistic reconstruction of the original number or their placement. White metal coffin screws and tacks are associated with 10 burials (27% of the total population and 71% of those with hardware). Between one and 60 specimens are found in the burials, with only Burials C-1 and C-2a sufficiently undisturbed to provide information on placement and probable total number. Three nails are found in Burial D-2a and 63 nails are found in Burial A-7. An average of 28 nails is found per unintruded, relatively intact burial (n=17).

Several of the burials are sufficiently intact and contain a sufficiently large collection of hardware to warrant more detailed comments. Burial A-7, an adult male, appears to be of relatively high status. The burial contains six silver plated white metal handles, two thumbscrews, five escutchions, and seven studs. Using 1871 data presented by Hacker-Norton and Trinkley (1984:Table 5) and increasing both thumbscrews and escutchions to six each and studs to a total of eight, the wholesale cost of this hardware is about \$2.61. The total retail cost might have been between \$5.20 and \$7.80. Burial D-3b, of a male, contains a single silver plated white metal handle, at least five thumbscrews, eight studs, and four white metal coffin tacks. Increasing the number of handles to four and the thumbscrews to six, this coffin hardware had a wholesale price of \$1.76, or a retail cost between \$3.50 and \$5.30. Burial A-3b is an unsexed individual with three silver plated white metal handles and three fragmented studs. All three handles were found on one side, which indicates that this individual originally had a coffin with six handles. The wholesale value of this hardware was \$2.37, or a retail cost

of \$4.75 to \$7.10. Burial C-1, an old female, contained 60 white metal coffin tacks. Although appearing quite elaborate, this trimming had a wholesale cost of only \$.24 or \$.50 to \$.75 retail. The final burial to be considered is D-4b, that of an adult male which contained a single lettered nameplate. This is a small plate, measuring 8.3 by 6.9 cm (3-1/4 by 2-3/4 in) of tin plated copper. Its normal wholesale cost was probably not over \$.13 (compared to similar plates in Markham and Strong [1865:43] and Sargent and Company [1871]), although the lettering might have doubled its cost. What makes the item significant is not its cost, but rather its presence on the coffin of a Black slave during the Civil War. Charleston was effectively blockaded and we assume this plate would represent a luxury item, both difficult and costly to obtain. It may represent, in terms of status, a burial equivalent to A-7.

The burials with hardware appear to be clustered at the northwestern and northeastern edges of the cemetery, although this may be an illusion created by the extensive root disturbance in the central cemetery area. We have eliminated consideration of the disturbed burials, because the disturbance may have been sufficient to remove all trace of hardware items. Consequently, of the nine undisturbed burials in row A, six evidence hardware. Of the five undisturbed burials in row B, none has associated hardware. In row C all of the undisturbed burials (n=3) have hardware and in row D four of the seven undisturbed burials have hardware. Elaborate burials, defined by the presence of handles, are found in rows A and D. Of the 32 burials with an east-west orientation, 13 have hardware (40%). Of the five northwest-southeast oriented coffins, three have hardware (60%).

Of the 37 burials, 10 have been identified as males (27%), 12 as females (32%), and 15 are indeterminate (41%). Sixteen of these individuals (43%) are associated with coffin hardware, exclusive of nails. Of the 10 males, three (30%) have coffin hardware, seven of the 12 females (60%) are associated with hardware, and six of the 15 indeterminate burials contain hardware (40%). There appears to be a stronger tendency for females to be buried with at least some hardware than for males. In spite of this, two (A-7 and D-3b) of the three elaborate burials (defined on the presence of handles) are males. The third individual is of indeterminate sex. These data suggest a dual pattern of status as reflected in burial hardware. There appears to have been a system of ascribed status wherein most females were buried with at least minimal hardware. The low incidence of male burials with hardware coupled with the high incidence of elaborate hardware in a few male interments suggests that males participated in a system of achieved status. The female ascribed status may be related to the women being matriarchal figures, while the achieved status of a few males may be related to their economic worth as slaves during the antebellum period or their community stature during the postbellum period.

There is also a correlation between age and coffin hardware, although the cemetery population is heavily skewed toward adults. Children and youths are buried with either no or minimal (i.e., white metal screws or tacks) hardware, while adults are more likely to have trimmed coffins. Of the 11 individuals classified as either infants or youths, three are

buried with hardware (27%). Of the 25 adults, 12 are found with hardware (48%).

In general, this tendency is similar to that found at Cedar Grove (Rose 1982), where none of the infant burials evidenced coffin hardware, 56% of the child burials contained hardware, and all of the adolescent burials contained hardware. Consequently, 18% of the age group from Cedar Grove which would be classified as infants and children at Mount Pleasant possessed hardware. Of the 35 individuals from Cedar Grove that are classified as adults, 34 have some type of hardware and most (91%) have coffin handles. The Cedar Grove population appears to be wealthier than the Mount Pleasant group.

SUMMARY

The limited historical reconstruction suggests that the Mount Pleasant cemetery was used by both antebellum slaves and postbellum free Blacks. The rather peculiar demographic profile of the cemetery suggests that the interred individuals represent an unnatural cross-section of the population -- such as upper status house servants during the antebellum period (Ted Rathbun, personal communication 1984).

The coffin hardware recovered from 38CH778 confirms that both mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century burials are present. The earliest remains do not appear to predate the 1860s and it is unlikely that the latest remains postdate the 1920s. These dates are based on general stylistic trends, cross dating with other cemeteries, and the use of hardware catalogs. Only one burial contained a legible nameplate and that burial, unfortunately, contained no other hardware.

The recovered items include handles, thumbscrews and escutchions, studs, white metal coffin screws and tacks, and screws and nails. The most common items, either because of temporal association or inexpensive cost, were coffin screws and tacks (excluding the ubiquitous nails). More elaborate items, such as handles, were found on few coffins. Costs of the associated hardware ranged from under \$1 to about \$8. Significantly, these data suggest a dual system of status, where females were more frequently buried with a trimmed coffin than males, but where a few males were afforded relatively expensive burials. Data from the controlled excavations also permitted reconstructions of coffin hardware placement. This information has not been provided by previous studies where burial removal was conducted absent controlled archaeological techniques.

At least one item has been identified from the catalog of a major coffin hardware manufacturer -- Sargent and Company. Other hardware items from this Charleston County cemetery have been identified from a cemetery on the South Carolina piedmont Millwood Plantation and from an upper coastal plain general merchandising store in Clio, South Carolina. The presence of identical patterns over such a range suggests either that sellers of coffin hardware offered limited merchandise or that there was a strong conservative purchasing tendency.

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Chicora Foundation, Inc.
PO Box 8664 • 861 Arbutus Drive
Columbia, SC 29202-8664
Tel: 803-787-6910
Fax: 803-787-6910
www.chicora.org