

# SCSL Digital Collections

## The Kelly Family Cemetery

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## CHICORA FOUNDATION, INC.

PRESERVING THE PAST FOR THE FUTURE

P.O. BOX 8664  
861 ARBUTUS DRIVE  
COLUMBIA, S.C. 29202  
803-787-6910

November 29, 2000

Mr. Mark Lynn  
25 Blake Drive  
Arden, NC 28704

1600 Long Creek Dr.  
216-0159

Dear Mr. Lynn,

This is a brief letter report explaining what we have done at the Kelly Family Cemetery and our findings. We began our work late on the afternoon of Monday, November 27 and concluded the work about noon on Wednesday, November 29.

As you are aware, we used a hand penetrometer to measure soil compaction in pounds per square inch (psi). Areas of posited graves have lower psi readings than those where there has been no digging. The penetrometer is used at set intervals along lines established perpendicular to the suspected grave orientations. The readings are used to establish probable grave locations. The principle involved here is that once a hole is dug it is very difficult to ever re-compact the soil to its original condition.

At the Kelly Family Cemetery we found that known graves (i.e., graves which were marked) had compaction of less than 50 psi, regardless of age. In areas where it was unlikely there would be graves (i.e., in nearby yard areas with similar soil) we found compaction levels of about 200 psi — a very clear and significant difference.

We examined a series of different areas, most to the right as you enter through the gate off Kathwood Drive. You have pointed this out as the oldest section of the cemetery. We also examined several areas to the left as you enter the cemetery, toward the rear, sloping area. During the course of this work we identified 203 probable unmarked graves. Please understand that I say "probable" since the only way to *prove* that a grave exists is to conduct archaeological excavations. Nevertheless, we have found the penetrometer to be very accurate and I have great confidence that these 203 areas of low compaction are, in fact, graves. They were marked in the field using pin flags at the head and foot, with survey tape stretched between the two flags.

In addition, we found three areas in the cemetery where the compaction was exceedingly high, in excess of 400 psi in the upper 1.5 feet of soil. Below this heavily compacted layer the compaction declines to perhaps 100 psi. This is anomalous. There are any number of possible explanations for this, such as an old roadway or perhaps areas where construction materials were stockpiled. All involve some form of

Mr. Mark Lynn  
November 29, 2000  
page two

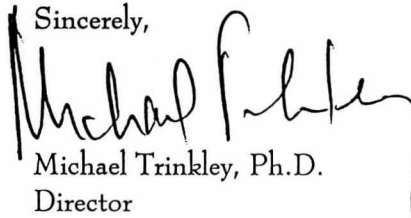
artificial compaction, far in excess of normal activities. Regardless of the cause, the compaction has masked the presence of any graves which may be present in these areas. In other words, while no graves can be positively identified in these areas, there is a good likelihood that they existed at one time. I would be reluctant to encourage any additional burials in these areas; if you nevertheless wish to proceed with burials, I would be particularly careful and carefully examine the work in progress, so that it might be quickly discontinued should grave fill, coffin remains, or human remains be encountered.

The number of unmarked graves, as we discussed, is not especially unexpected. We have found that family cemeteries often contain far more graves than their caretakers suspect. It seems likely that in some cases the sites served as much as small community cemeteries as "family" graveyards. I should also observe that we found burials immediately adjacent to the fence on the right side of the cemetery (as you enter through the gate). Since the fence was erected in the mid-twentieth century, after nearly a hundred years of cemetery use, it is possible that graves extend beyond the marked boundaries. This means that they might be found in adjacent yards. I would be particularly careful of any efforts to construct on the street, at the front of the cemetery. It is my professional recommendation that this lot be carefully examined, minimally using a penetrometer, before any land disturbing activities are undertaken. Visual inspections are *not* adequate in this area — there have been too many activities which might have masked the presence of burials.

I am enclosing copies of our sketch maps of the cemetery. These are not to be considered accurate, but rather representations of where additional graves were located. They may be of some assistance to you in the future.

I appreciate the opportunity to be of service and hope that we have managed to provide you with the information you needed. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact either Debi Hacker or me.

Sincerely,



Michael Trinkley, Ph.D.  
Director

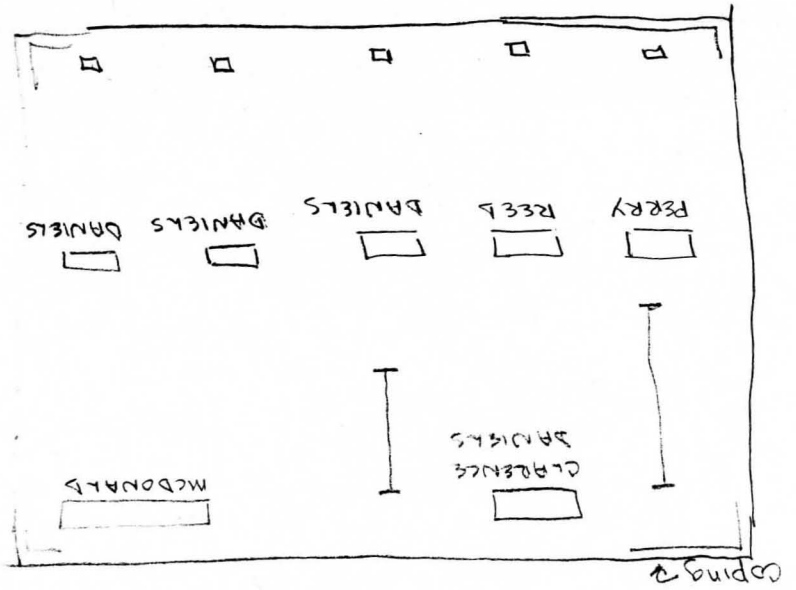
Enclosures

#1

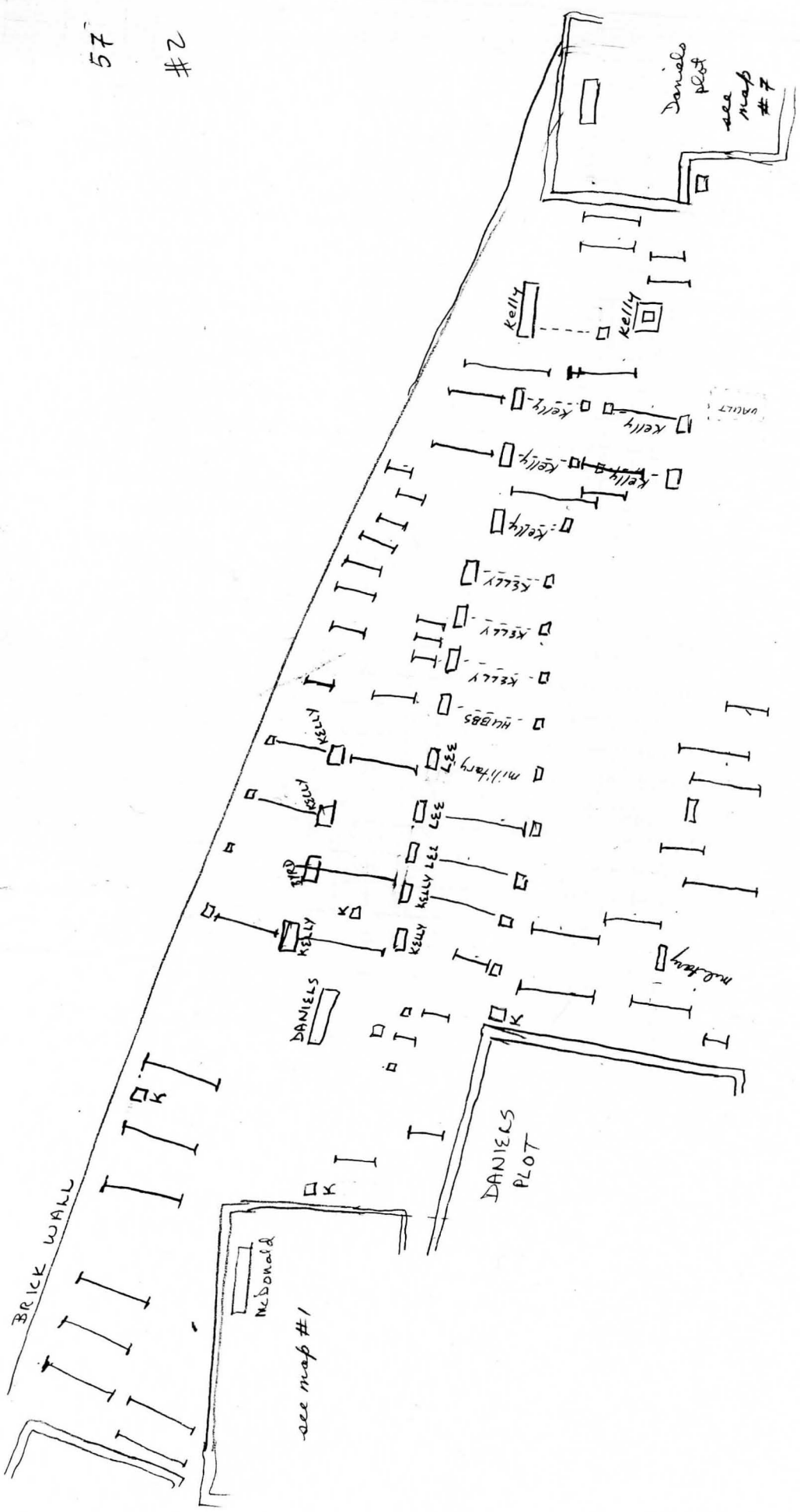
The Donald plot also seen on

map #2

#6



57  
#2

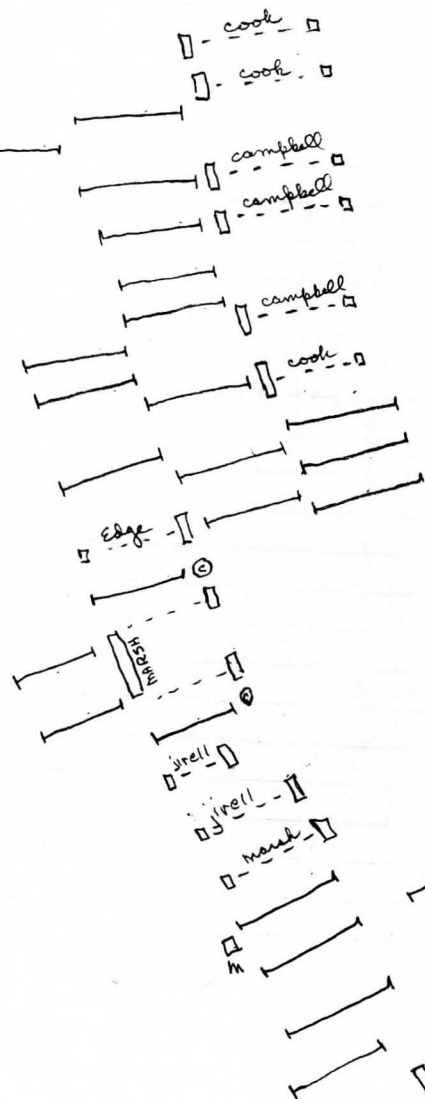
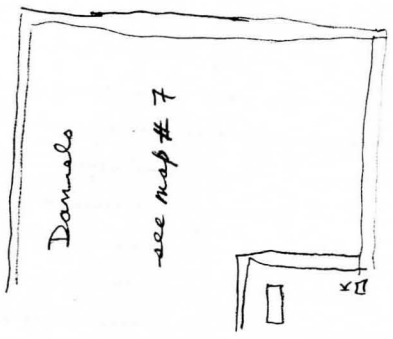




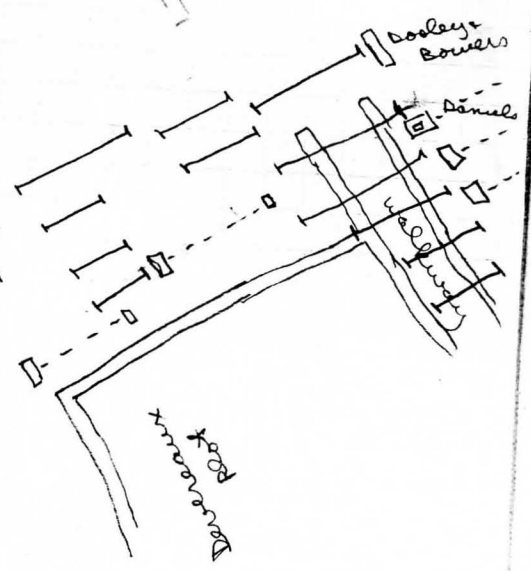
35

#3

gate



CMU wall

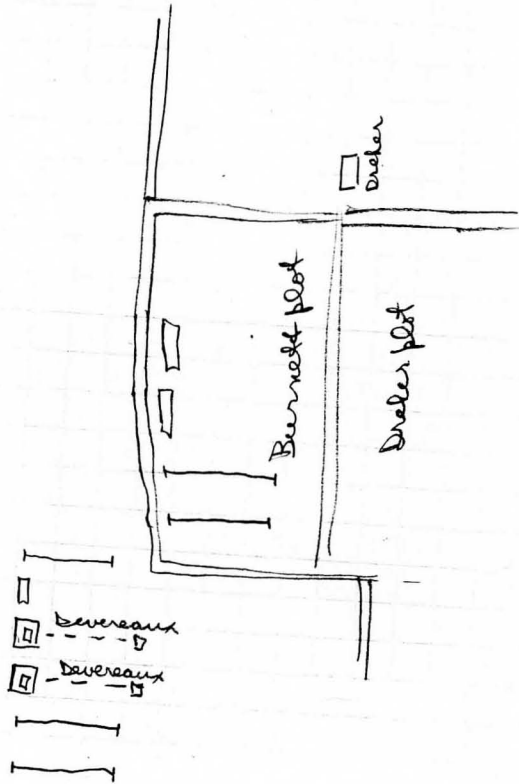
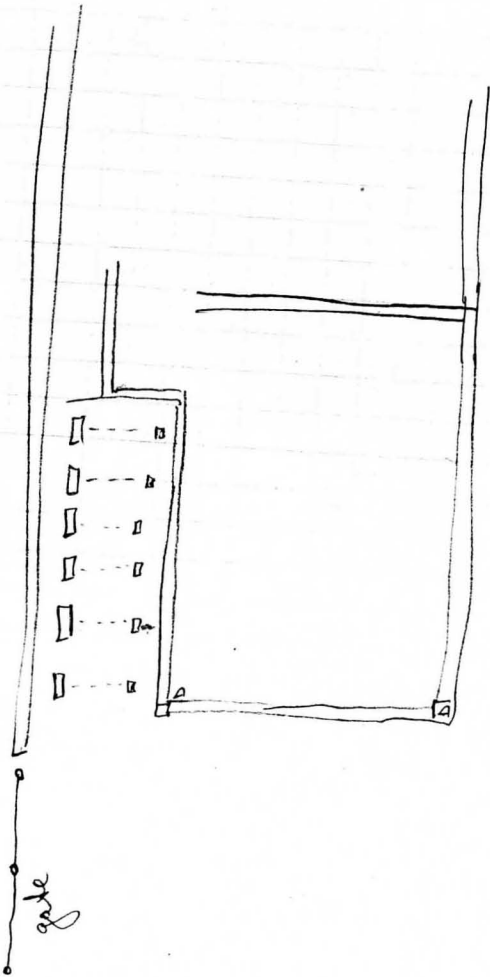


Beverly

5

#4

Burnett  
plot tree  
in w/ of  
map #8

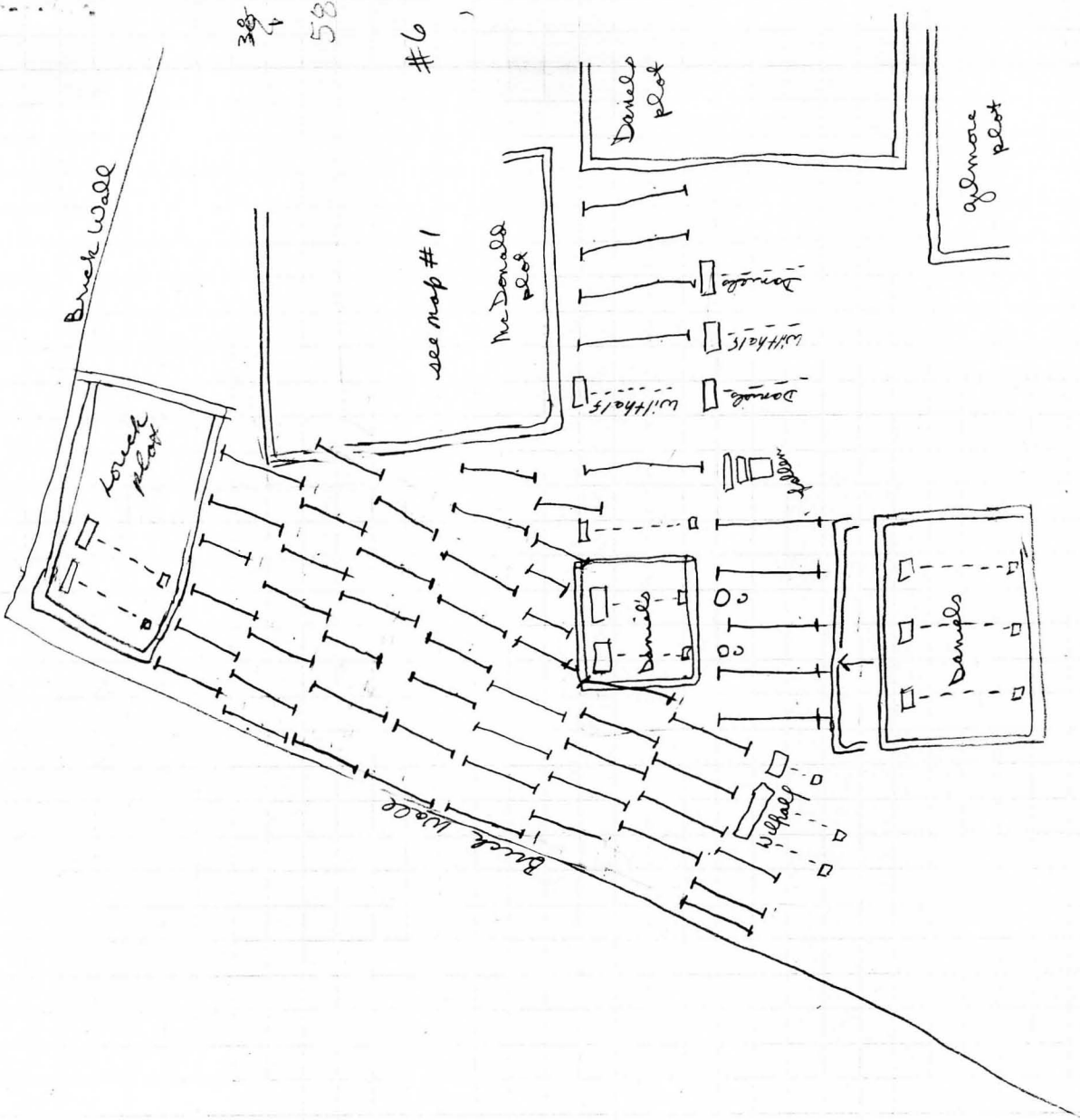




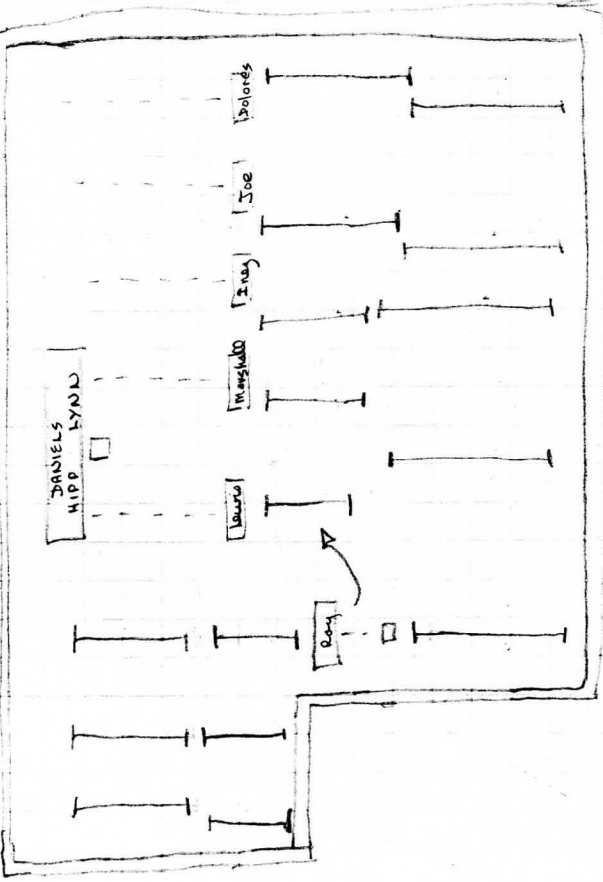


38  
4  
58

#6



Buck wall



Gate

(1 unmarked)

15 unmarked

#7

14

# 8

Bernhardt  
plot tree  
in w/ map  
# 4

