

**Archaeology and History  
at the  
Johannes Kolb Site—38DA75**



**By  
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**For  
South Carolina Department of Natural Resources  
Heritage Trust Program  
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# The South Carolina Heritage Trust Program

The South Carolina Heritage Trust Program, within the Wildlife Diversity Section of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources was started in 1976. South Carolina was the first state to develop a program to inventory and protect the unique cultural and natural elements, sites and features that otherwise might be lost as the state grew through time. Currently 60 preserves totaling 76,000 acres are protected statewide via a system of heritage preserves. Twelve of these sites were acquired to protect cultural resources like 12,000 year old Indian campsites, coastal shell rings from 4500-3000 years ago, Civil War Forts and early 19th century pottery kilns. Often when we protect a natural element on a preserve we also protect cultural sites at the same time or visa versa. The Great Pee Dee Heritage Preserve is a good example of this.

The Great Pee Dee River Heritage Preserve is a 2725 acre preserve in Darlington County. The preserve protects an extensive bottom land hardwood swamp, an area identified by ornithologists as a priority large area protection project. Open daily from dawn to dusk for passive recreational pursuits, the preserve also has scheduled hunting seasons and is operated as a DNR-Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The preserve includes more than seven miles of river frontage and provides habitats for four threatened avian (bird) species.

An important aspect of each of the preserves is a strong local stewardship committee. The local stewards watch over and protect a preserve. Stewardship committees help foster pride and respect for our collective American Heritage. The archaeological work being conducted on the Great Pee Dee Heritage Preserve would never had happened if it were not for the generosity of a particular stewardship committee member. To join a stewardship committee contact the Heritage Trust Program's Cultural Preserve Manager -Jon Rood at 803-734-3916 or by E-mail- [Jonr@scdnr.state.sc.us](mailto:Jonr@scdnr.state.sc.us), or by writing PO Box 167, Columbia, SC 29202.

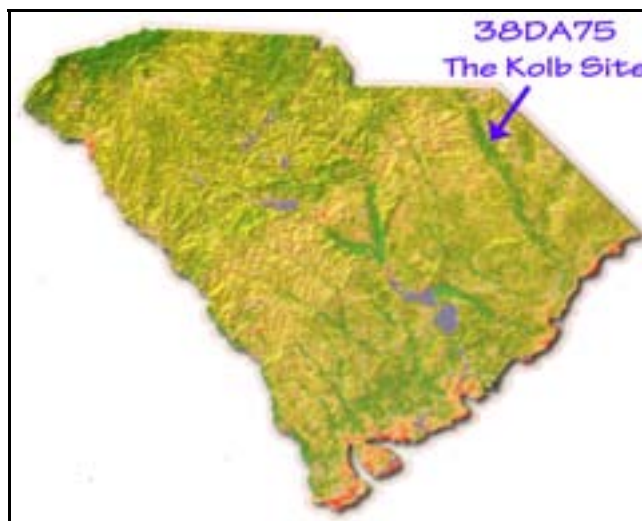
Even with strong stewardship committees, vandalism still occurs. Vandalism on a state heritage preserve is punishable by a fine of up to \$5,000, or up to six months in prison, or both, for each offense, depending on the vandalism's monetary damage. Anyone with information on these cases or any other vandalism on the Great Pee Dee Heritage Preserve or any S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) property is asked to call 1- 800-922-5431. The number is monitored 24 hours seven days a week. A reward is offered, and you do not have to reveal your identity. Enjoy the preserve and support Heritage Trust in it's mission to expand the system of heritage preserves statewide.

*The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, race, religion, or age.*

*Cover: Feature 99-12, a historic pit filled with domestic refuse.*

## Introduction

Archaeological investigations at the Johannes Kolb site (Figure 1) began when a local high school student visited the site in the 1970s and registered it with the State Archaeologist's Site Files. This underscores the importance of recording archaeological sites, as those that are unrecorded will remain unexamined. The site number, 38DA75 represents the state (38) county (Darlington) and individual site number (23). This system was developed by the Smithsonian Institution in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to keep track of sites throughout the nation. Today over 21,000 sites have been recorded in South Carolina.



**Figure 1:** Location

Years later the site was obtained by the State Department of Natural Resources' Heritage Trust Program. Heritage Trust Archaeologist Chris Judge, Preserve Manager Johnny Stowe, and the student, Dr. Ernest L. "Chip" Helms III met and visited the site, along with several others that had been recorded at the same time. Chip brought along his carefully catalogued and curated artifacts from the sites, and Chris Judge was especially interested in the materials from 38DA75—the Kolb Site. Chip had studied the historic record in detail, and brought along a map (Figure 2) that showed clearly that 38DA75 was the site of "Old Mr. Kolb's."

The artifacts he collected in the 1970s included material from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as well as artifacts clearly associated with Johannes Kolb's time period of 1737–1761 (Figure 3). Equally exciting though were the large sherds of Thoms Creek type pottery (Figure 3), and stone tools.

Chris and Chip agreed that test excavations at the site were in order, and invited me to take part. There are many ways of investigating a site. Since this site was not in danger of being destroyed by development or otherwise harmed we chose a very careful approach. We must always remember that archaeology is, in itself, a destructive process—we destroy the "context" of the artifacts no matter how carefully we excavate them. Thus the approach taken can be massively destructive—removing soil with heavy equipment—or minimally destructive—hand excavation. Visitors always remark upon the patience it must take to work as slowly and carefully as we do. Little do they realize that the whole time we are worried that we are going TOO fast, and losing too much.

We chose a conservative approach—close interval sampling—that will take years to complete. We began by excavating units 50cm on a side at 30 meter intervals to determine the

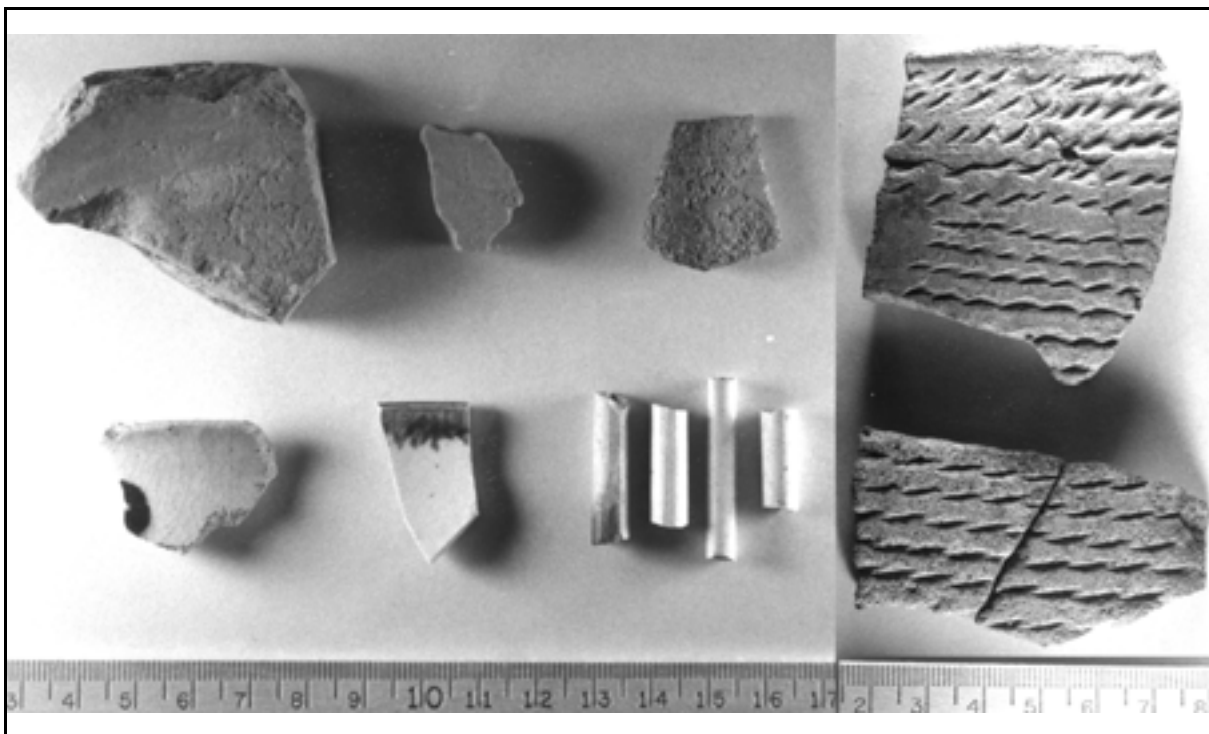


**Figure 2:** Plat reconstruction by T.E. Wilson, 1932

full extent of the site, and to give it a quick preliminary assessment. From the very first test unit it was clear that this was an

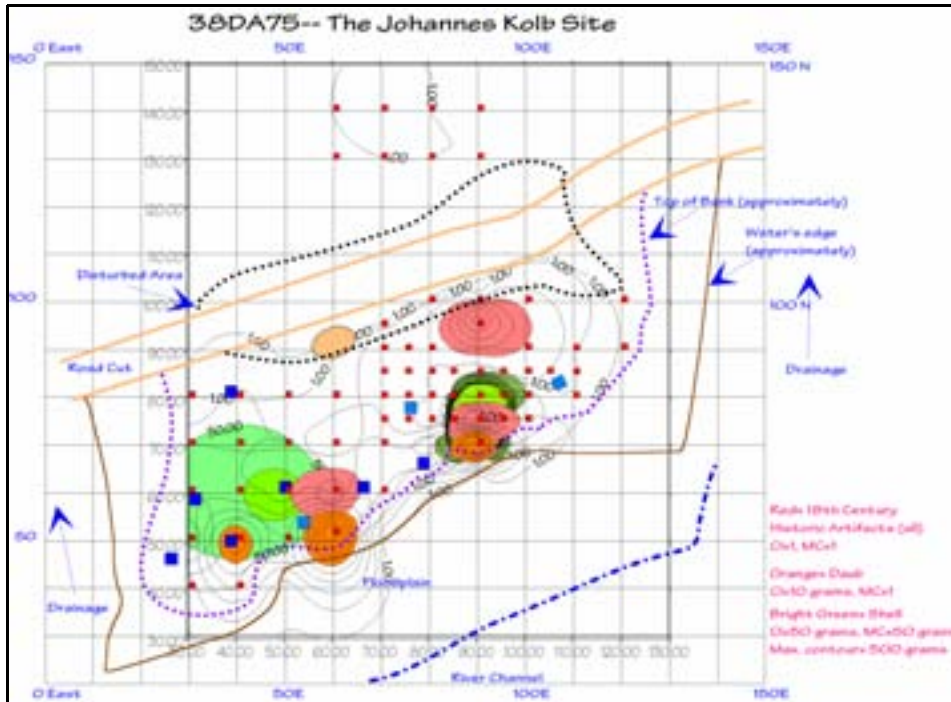
exceptional site. Then, within the densest and most promising parts of the site we excavated 50cm units every five meters. This allows us to broadly identify concentrations (Figure 4) of artifacts that might indicate the location of site features like houses,

or areas where specific types of activities took place—for instance, a place where a large piece of stone was whittled down to make an arrow point. Yet at this point the sample size is only 1%. To put it another way, 99% of the site remains untouched. Students of sampling and statistics tell us



**Figure 3:** Artifacts collected by Ernest Helms in the 1970s. Left, top row, prehistoric ceramics. Bottom row, L to R, lead glazed slipware (18<sup>th</sup> c), Edge decorated whiteware (19<sup>th</sup> c), and clay pipe stems. Right, Thoms Creek punctate sherds.





**Figure 4:** Artifact density map showing distribution of 18<sup>th</sup> century artifacts (pink), shell (green) and clay daub (orange).

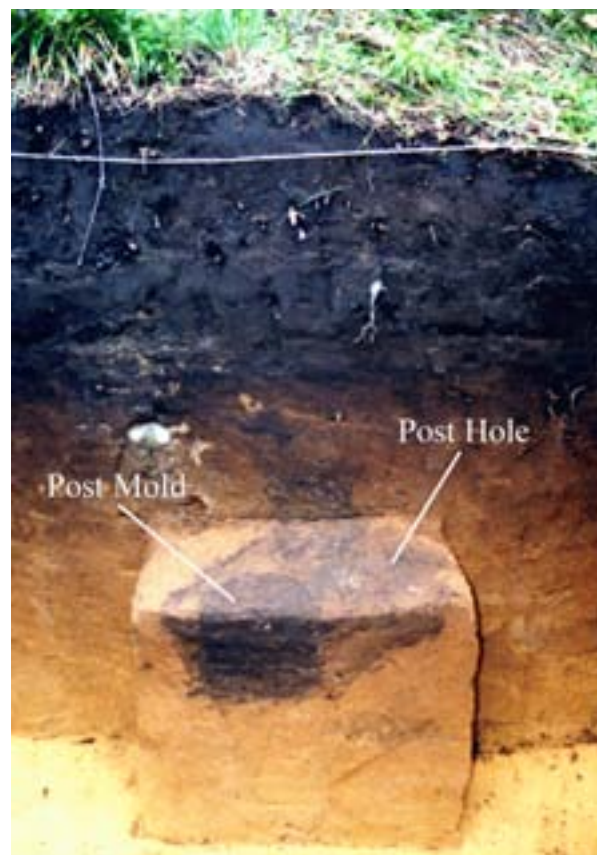
that a 1% sample is only roughly accurate. To make statements that are “definitive” a sample of about 7% is necessary. After that point most of the information that can be derived from sampling is exhausted.

We are taking this approach because of its scientific rigor, and because of its adaptability. Future researchers can plug our

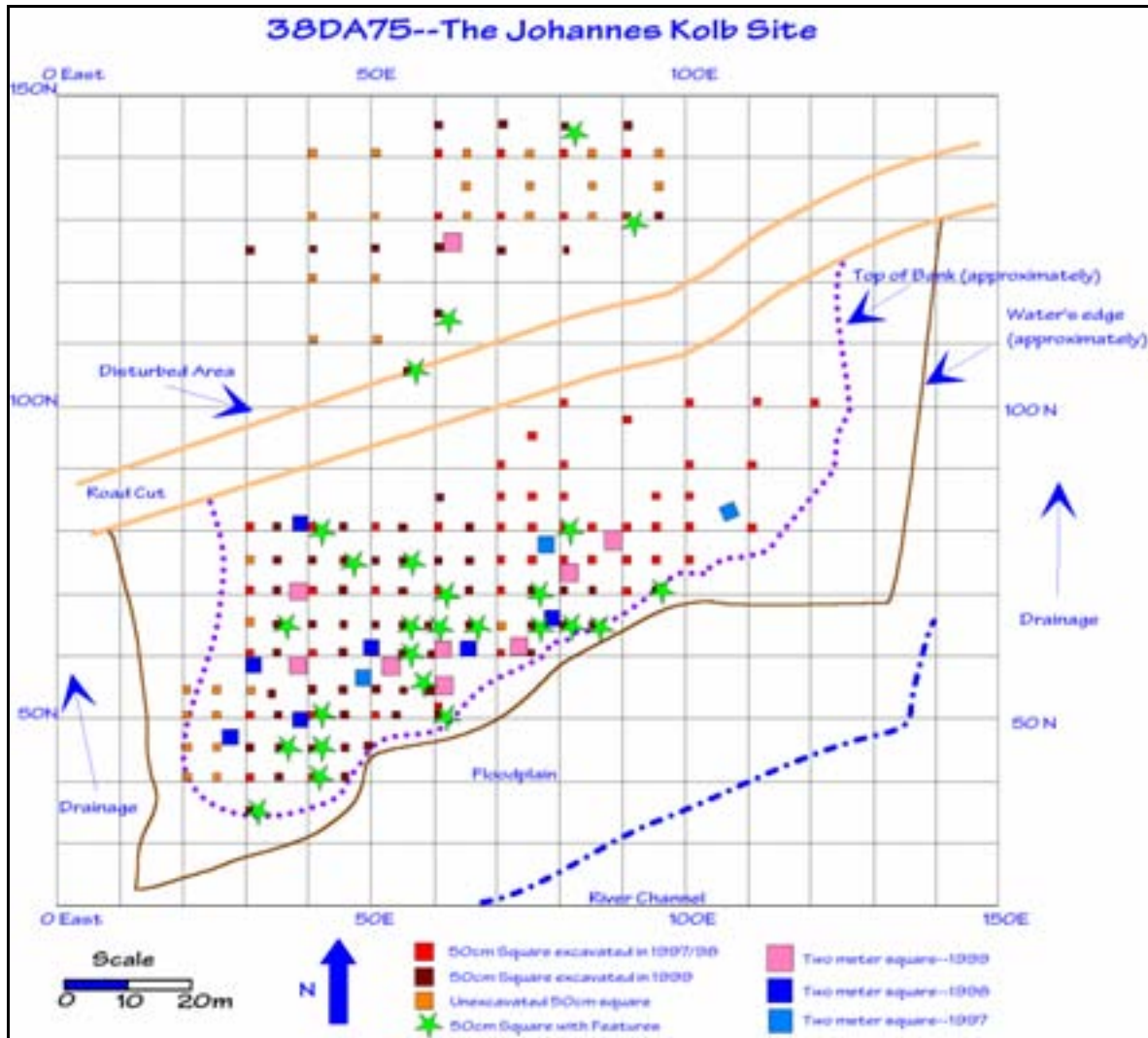
sample into their research designs. Other researchers working in the area can compare their results with ours confident in the replicability of the methods and the validity of the comparisons.

Of equal importance to the arrangement of artifacts like ceramic sherds and lithic flakes, is the arrangement and relationships between another type of artifact: archaeological “features.” “Features” are often described as non-portable evidence of human activity. They are, in a sense, artifacts, but they are not readily movable objects. Rather they are

complex, and may include many elements that, combined, are evidence of an activity. For example, post holes often contain clear impressions of the post itself, as well as the hole dug to seat it (Figure 5) yet they seldom contain recognizable wood fragments. They are discernible because the component soils usually



**Figure 5:** a post hole and post mold



**Figure 6:** Site Plan

differ in color or composition from the surrounding soils. Features can be made up of soil, charcoal, organic material, and soil chemicals as well as man-made objects.

The act of identifying and exploring a feature destroys the subtle arrangement of natural and cultural items that form it. When archaeologists excoriate people who dig aimlessly on sites it is for this reason: they are heedlessly disturbing the subtle context of the artifacts they seek. An artifact that is simply yanked from the ground without consideration of its context is useless as scientific evidence. As the reader of this and other archaeological reports will find, the archaeological record is far more complex than it appears at first glance.

Our sampling at the 1% level was effective in identifying features, but finding one out of a possible hundred post holes doesn't tell us very much. To maximize the return in our second level of sampling we switched over to larger excavation units two meters on a side. This allows us to view a larger "window" and intersect more features—hopefully allowing us to relate features to one another and better understand the layout of the site.

In the three years we have worked at the Kolb site (Figure 6) we have excavated a total of 129 50cm test units—107 south of the road and 22 north of the road—and nineteen two meter squares. South of the road we have completed about 80% of our 1% sample and about a third of our secondary sample. North of the road we have only excavated about a quarter of the 1% sample and a single 2m excavation unit. At the rate we are going it will be several years before we obtain a definitive sample but we believe that it would be irresponsible of us, and not in the best interest of the site to move any less carefully. This site, clearly of the utmost significance, is not threatened by development or destructive land use like logging, and is under the long term protection of the state.

## **Archaeology of the Kolb Site**

Now that we have introduced the project and our approach we can turn to the good stuff—what we are learning. The first thing we learned was that Johannes Kolb and his family were among a multitude of people who lived at the site. Artifacts used by Native Americans throughout the prehistoric period have been found. In fact, a bowl made by a Catawba Indian in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is evidence that a Native American presence continued.

During the historic period the Johannes Kolb occupation of 1737–1761 is clear, but overwhelmed somewhat by a dense 19<sup>th</sup> century occupation. The archaeological evidence suggests that this inhabitant may have been an African American—a slave or, less likely, a free Black. It is also possible, however, that a white owner or overseer was present. Evidence of logging activity from late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century marks the first clearing of the ancient forests along South Carolina's major river systems. The second cut, in the 1970s is also evident. Finally, beer cans, shotgun shells, and fishing tackle mark the continued use of this landform by area residents.

So what's so great about this particular spot? Why should people come here year after year for as long as humans have been in South Carolina? First, we should remember that up until about the 1950s most people in South Carolina gained sustenance from the local environment. That is, they earned their living by farming and/or gathering food from the wild. The Kolb site is well situated for both pursuits. It is located on a ridge of high sandy ground in the midst of a vast river swamp. The highest point is a bluff overlooking the river. The evidence from both personal experience, when the river was far above flood stage in 1998, and in the soils of the excavation units indicate that this landform is consistently dry. There is no evidence of the silt and clay lensing that we might expect in an active floodplain has been dry for the past 11,000 years..

The slightly drier conditions allow a variety of plants and trees to grow, producing an ecological diversity that would draw both game and people. It is safe to say—because we have solid archaeological evidence—that the same things that drew the earliest humans to this site drew the latest: good hunting, good fishing, abundant plant foods, a dry place to sit around a campfire and swap stories.

Beyond those basic elements the stories of the humans living in this spot are likely to diverge. The first people to visit the site lived in an environment that was a little colder, on





**Figure 7:** Hardaway Point. Each grid block=5mm.

average, than today but which was warming quickly to near modern conditions. The Hardaway point<sup>1</sup> found in the 30E 58N EU is our earliest artifact (Figure 7). This type is a precursor to the Palmer, Kirk and Taylor type points (Figure 8) that are found in great numbers at the site.

Many researchers see the Hardaway as a transitional artifact, marking the change from Paleoindian to Early Archaic lifeways<sup>2</sup>. The difference between the two is thought to lie in the nature of their subsistence. Paleoindian people are generally thought to have pursued large herd animals that became extinct as the modern climate developed. About 10,000 years ago it appears that smaller animals, especially deer, became more common. With the warming temperatures more rain fell, and vegetation grew more lush. For the next six thousand years people traveled freely about the state hunting, fishing, and gathering plant foods.

Beginning around 8,000 years ago people began to encourage the growth of useful plants like gourds, berries and seed bearing grasses. The roots of gardening and agriculture are in this process. Soon this passive encouragement turned to active sowing. Likewise, the killing of competing plants—"weeds"--turned to preparing and later plowing fields. Fundamental changes in human culture result from such basic shifts.<sup>3</sup> The population seems to have grown steadily during this entire period. By the Late Archaic period it



**Figure 8:** Early Archaic Points, L to R: Kirk, Palmer, LeCroy/St Albans bifurcate. Each grid block=5mm.





**Figure 9:** Stallings Fiber Tempered pottery.

appears that regional groups were forming and that territories of competing groups were being recognized. The increasing complexity of culture reflects the need for managing threats and risk.

This is not to say that these territories were as circumscribed or closely guarded as the borders of modern political entities like towns, counties, and nations. Indeed, there is ample evidence of the movement of ideas and people across the landscape. The Stallings and Thoms Creek pottery (Figure 2, 9) found at the site, for instance, are evidence of this. The earliest dates for pottery in North America have been found in the Savannah River valley<sup>4</sup>. Fiber tempered Stallings pottery was first made there about 4,500 years ago and continued to be made for about 700 years.

Potters discovered within a hundred or so years that sand tempering would allow vessels to be fired at higher temperatures, and thus be made more durable. The earliest of these sand tempered wares are the Thoms Creek type. Within a thousand years pottery making, marked at the earliest stages by Stallings-like fiber tempered and Thoms Creek-like sand tempered wares, is found from the Gulf of Mexico to the Chesapeake<sup>5</sup>. Unlike potters across the Atlantic, Native Americans did not use the potters' wheel or kilns, even as late as the time of European contact. Their pottery was made by hand-molding and coiling the vessels—and fired in the open air. These techniques are still used by Native American potters in South Carolina today, making it our oldest continuously practiced indigenous craft.

Though the populations grew steadily, there was probably never a lack of unoccupied land. Several factors converged somewhere around 700AD. The number of people had continued to grow. People were increasing the size of their gardens and becoming more tied to the land as their investment of time and energy grew. The ranges covered by individual groups became smaller. As kinship groups increased in size, people found more reasons to join together and the rules for acceptable behaviors became more complex. This is not to say that earlier societies did not have well developed social institutions, but that they had less need for rules governing living among neighbors in a community. Conflict was more easily avoided when there were fewer people.

Corn agriculture and the bow and arrow made their appearance after about 500AD. The importance of these innovations is undeniable. The increased efficiency in hunting made a much wider variety of animals available on a regular basis. Corn agriculture allowed a basic staple of subsistence to be raised and stored, insuring the constant availability of food. Combined the bow and arrow and agriculture made living easier and more reliable. This fueled population growth

which resulted in the establishment of continuously occupied villages and more elaborate political organization.

As early as about 4,000 BC a religion marked by elaborate carvings and temple mounds began to develop in the Mississippi valley. While earlier groups took part in some aspects of Mississippian culture, and its antecedent Hopewellian culture, it was not until about 900AD that the full expression of Mississippian culture came to South Carolina. The Pee Dee drainage marks the furthest north and east that the full Mississippian complex is found<sup>6</sup>.

Mississippian culture is noted for elaborate, well organized political groups led by hereditary kings and queens<sup>7</sup>. The rulers represented the Gods of their religion in human form. Residents of outlying villages and farmsteads supported a ruling class of royalty, bureaucrats, and priests. Craftsmen made pottery, cloth, and religious items while merchants bought and sold produce and goods. The groups came together to build earthen mounds<sup>8</sup> for religious ceremonies. The mound centers were supplied and supported by outlying villages.

When Europeans first arrived in North America in the early 1500s the Native American population was thriving, and developing normally within its own trajectory of diachronic change. They were an isolated population, however, and did not have the advantages allowed European, African and Asian populations. There, in the "Old World," groups from thousands of miles apart learned from one another. Agriculture, metallurgy, pottery making and a multitude of ideas were shared. In North America good ideas spread just as quickly, but they were all internally derived, and thus there were fewer sources for innovation. So when Europeans came to the Americas they found people living without metal, without writing, and, compared to the Europeans, in relatively small, autonomous groups.

Disease preceded the Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto through the Southeast in the 1520s and spread outward from his path<sup>9</sup>. While the Native American people were not free of their own diseases, and Europeans, including de Soto himself, suffered grievously from them, the Natives had no defense at all against the plagues and fevers that had passed through generations of European, African and Asian people and refined themselves to a deadly potency. Thousands of people died, including kings, and commoners. The thriving societies fell in on themselves as whole villages were destroyed.

But the Spanish were never entirely committed to colonizing the East coast of North America, and the first real European invasion didn't come until the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In 1666 a colony of Puritans attempted to settle along the Cape Fear River in North Carolina. Their colony failed, but in 1670 a second, better prepared group arrived at Charleston<sup>10</sup>. This colony consisted of Barbadian and English settlers. The Barbadians brought with them African and Afro-Caribbean slaves.

Events in France led to the persecution of Protestants in the 1680s, causing an exodus of up to 300,000 people, according to some sources.<sup>11</sup> Five groups came to America. One settled in the SC Lowcountry around Charleston. During the 1680s it was discovered that rice was well suited to the swampy uplands. Both French and British planters copied the Barbadians and

bought Indian and African slaves to clear fields and work the rice. In 1708 Africans and African-Americans made up over half of the population. Indian slaves made up another 15%<sup>12</sup>.

Between disease, warfare encouraged by British traders, and the threat of enslavement, all but a few isolated groups of Indians had left the Lowcountry, and indeed, most of the coastal plain north of the Edisto by the 1710s. The Yemassee, a group invited to move to the area around Beaufort by the colony's government, went to war against the colonists in 1714<sup>13</sup>. The frontier was temporarily pushed back almost to Charleston, but the Indians were quickly dispatched and the border was pushed even further inland.

After its introduction rice became the force that drove the colony's economy, and shaped the way it was settled. That is, labor was almost fully devoted to rice agriculture. The production of naval stores and chandlery, along with the Indian trade took up the remainder. Industry did not develop. Nor did traditional towns with stores, shops and craftsmen: trading posts and ferry landings took their place.

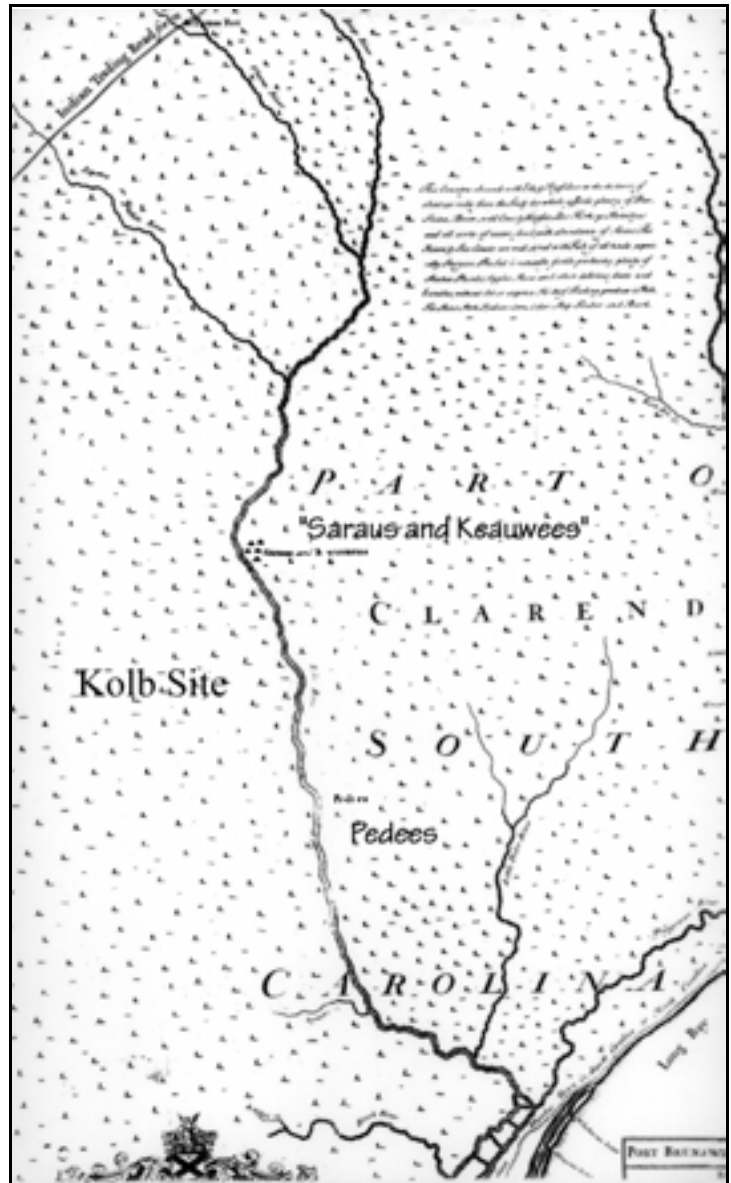
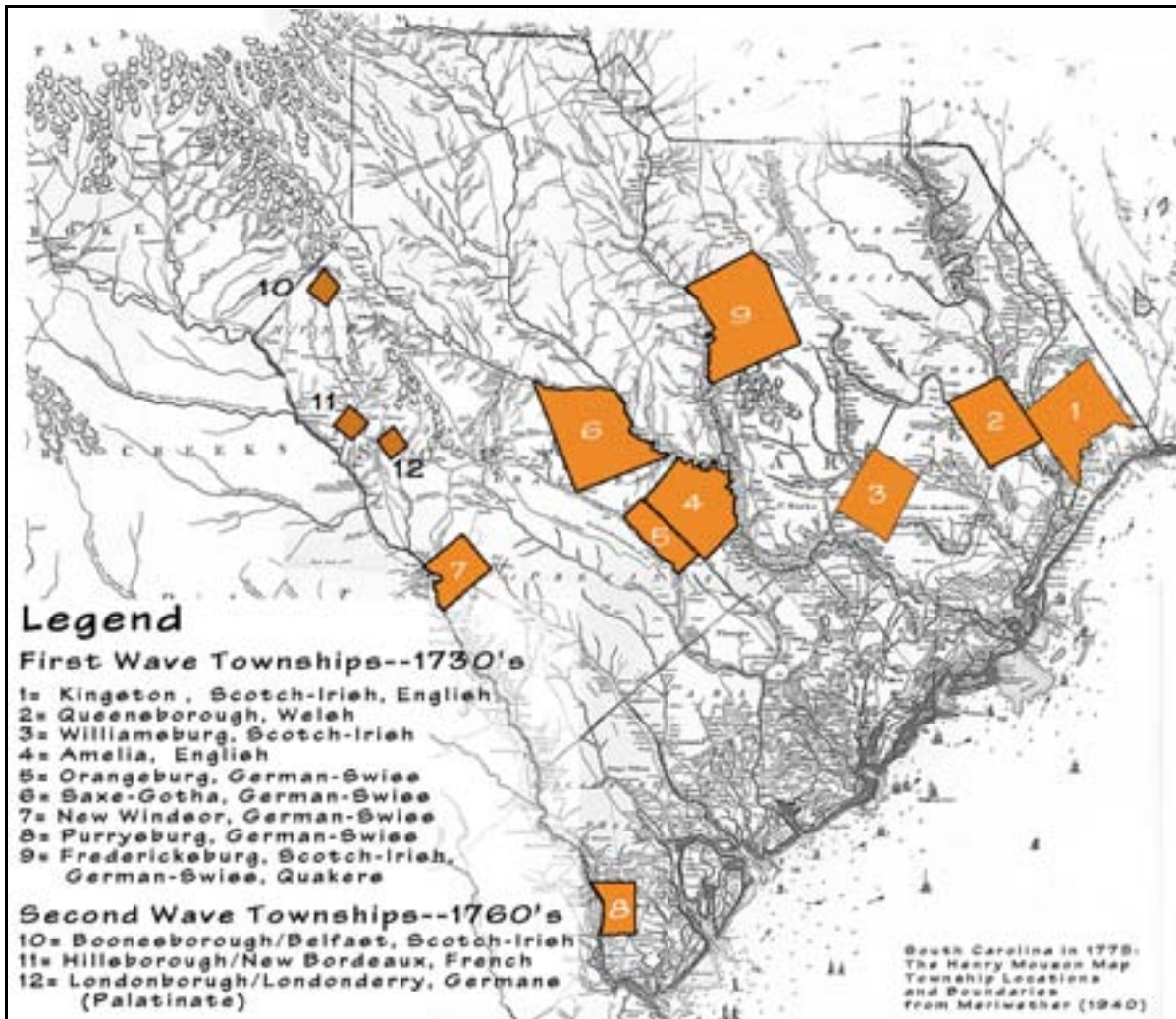


Figure 10: Mosely, 1733

Between the 1710s and the early 1730s settlement was focused around Charleston (Figure 10: Moseley 1733). Smaller enclaves were found in Beaufort and Georgetown. It is the latter that concerns us here. The earliest colonial landowners along the Pee Dee were traders like George Pawley and William Waties<sup>14</sup>. Both established large plantations and trading posts along the lower Pee Dee in the 1710s and 1720s. By 1728 Malachi Murphy had claimed land above Mars Bluff, and others were buying land along the river as far north as Thompson's Creek—modern day Cheraw.

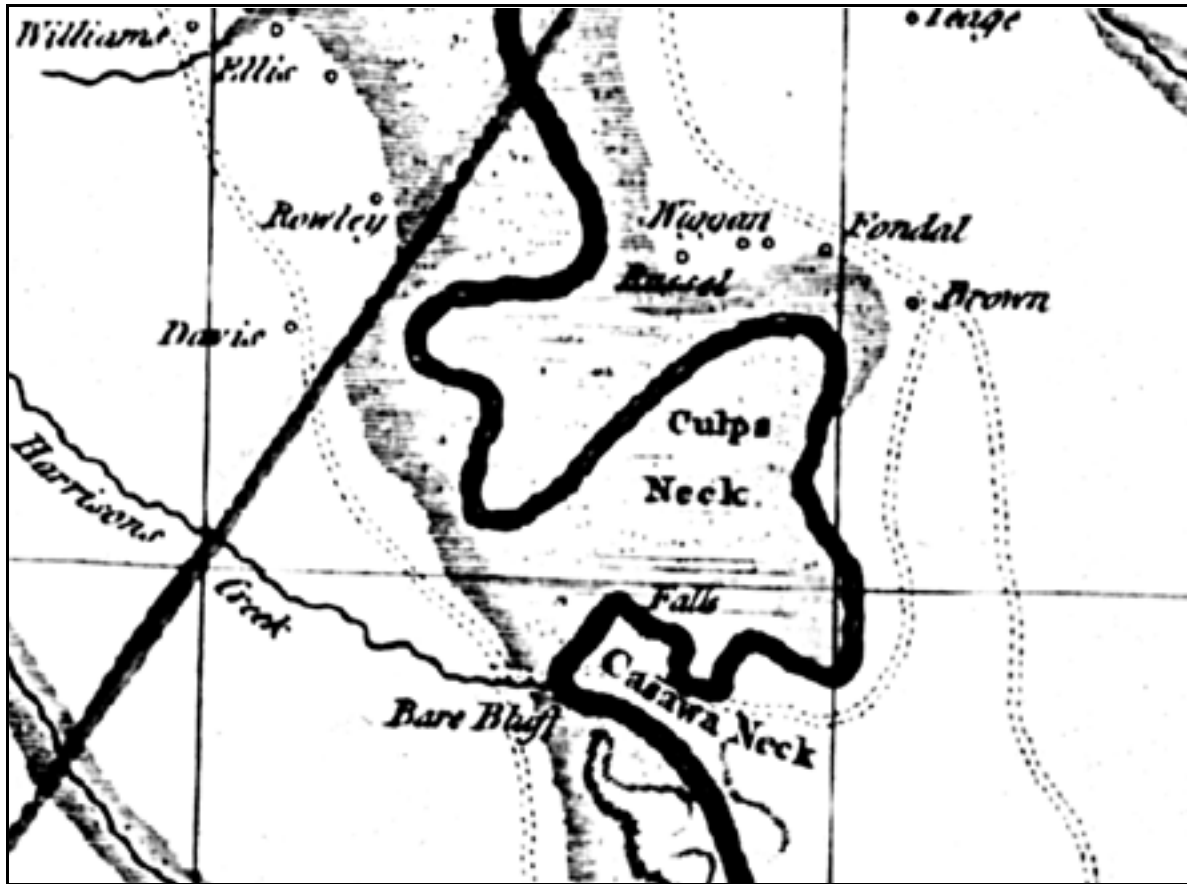


**Figure 11: Townships**

1737 was the break point for the Indians of the Pee Dee. That year the remaining Pee Dee and Sara Indians gave up their homes, sold all of their “Old Fields” to trader John Thompson and moved away. Both groups joined the Catawba, but some of the Pee Dee retained a degree of sovereignty, settling on the upper Edisto River, near Four Hole Swamp. Others moved back into the Pee Dee region during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and a good number now live in Marlboro, Marion, and Dillon Counties<sup>15</sup>. But in 1737 they abandoned their ancestral homes and moved away in the face of a flood of Euro-American immigrants.

This invasion was the result of another factor. The slave population in the Lowcountry grew quickly, and by 1730 there were twice as many slaves as free people. Recognizing the possibility of slave revolts, while at the same time fearing attack by Indians from the interior (Indians associated with the Spanish and French) Governor Robert Johnson proposed the establishment of nine Townships in the interior of the state (Figure 11). Lower class whites from Europe and Britain were to be encouraged to settle these townships by the promise of free land, and other inducements. The additional population would be used to fill out the militia and defend





**Figure 12:** the 1770 Stuart-Faden Map, detail of “Culp’s Neck.” “Casawa Neck” became Byrd’s Island in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

the rich whites of the Lowcountry against both Indians and Blacks<sup>16</sup>. This conscious use of lower class whites against people of color is a fundamental theme in South Carolina history.

The two Townships in the general area of the Kolb site, Kingston and Queensborough, were complete failures. They were ill situated, and most of the best land was claimed by speculators. The Indians had left the area, so there was no threat from them. Up the river better land was available by the time settlers began to arrive, and they took advantage of it.

Around the same time a group of Welsh Baptists from the part of Pennsylvania that is now Southern Delaware petitioned the Governor for land along the Great Pee Dee<sup>17</sup>. They received the right to settle a strip roughly eight miles wide along the Pee Dee from Queensborough to Little River—about 70 miles. This land was not all granted to them, but they received inducements more generous than those given to other settlers: reduced quitrents, larger grants, and so on. Only a few hundred Welsh Baptists came to the Pee Dee, but they were joined by British, French, German and American born settlers from the north.

One of these was Johannes Kolb. Johannes and his brother Dielmann Kolb came to the colonies in the 1707, settling in Pennsylvania near Perkiomen<sup>18</sup>. They were among the first of what became a steady stream of immigrants moving down the former trading path known as the “Great Wagon Road.” Much of South Carolina’s Backcountry Frontier was settled, not by immigrants coming through Charleston, but by families and small groups moving down the Great Road<sup>19</sup>.

In Pennsylvania the Kolb’s were identified as weavers<sup>20</sup>. Many Germans in that area produced linen made from flax, and also wove wool. Their father and four brothers were ministers in the Mennonite Church, a communal Protestant sect from Germany similar to the Moravians and Amish. Johannes Kolb may have left the sect, as he is not identified as a Mennonite in South Carolina. When he came to the Pee Dee he joined the Baptists and was eventually associated with the Cashua Neck Church. Whether this is the result of religious differences with his family, or lack of opportunity we may never know, but it is not uncommon for frontier settlers to adapt their religious beliefs to local standards. Recent research on French Huguenots in the western part of the state demonstrates this clearly<sup>21</sup>. Instead of building their own church, the Huguenots of New Bordeaux joined their Presbyterian neighbors, not simply in worship, but serving as deacons and ministers within a generation.

The Middle Pee Dee was not densely settled when Johannes Kolb lived here. Isolated farmsteads supported families who raised most of their own subsistence and a little for market. There were sufficient people however, for two Welsh Baptist churches and a number of other denominations to establish churches in the area<sup>22</sup>. The Cashua Neck Church, about two miles from the Kolb site, is one of the earliest in the Backcountry (Figure 12).

The Indian Frontier was pushed back steadily during Johannes Kolb’s lifetime. 1748 and 1761 saw treaties which pressed the Cherokee into the northwest corner of the state<sup>23</sup>. The main fear of Indian attack came from the Indians associated with the French, like the Shawnee and Iroquois, rather than from local Indians. In fact the Catawba and Cherokee suffered even worse from the French Indians than the settlers, and tempered their doubts regarding the Europeans with the hope of protection from attacks from inland tribes<sup>24</sup>. The Catawba, a friendly group, remained in the area around Rock Hill, but white settlers began to fill in around them, and press them into a smaller and smaller area. This did not occur in isolation: all along the east coast Indians were pushed back to the Appalachians and beyond except for a few isolated groups that managed to live among the whites.

This allowed increasingly free movement for white settlers, and also allowed intercolonial trade to develop. Cattle and horse ranching soon resulted in cattle drives from the South to Virginia and Pennsylvania.

The Frontier of South Carolina was much like that of the stereotypical Old West. Many people came to the Frontier to attain more personal freedom, another tendency deeply ingrained in Southern culture. Some wanted to farm, and raise families, others, to trade with the Indians, or hunt and trap for a living.

For others the Frontier was a place where a person's opportunities were less limited. For example, Gideon Gibson was a free black man from Virginia. He moved to Mars Bluff with his wife and family in the 1730s. Gibson raised a large family and became a leading citizen, owning land and a store<sup>25</sup>. He apparently had the respect of his white neighbors in a way that could not have been attained elsewhere. During the Regulator movement, discussed below, Gibson actually led over 600 men in an attack on colonial militia troops with the full support of the most influential white residents of the region.

Among the enclaves of Welsh Baptists and other religious and family oriented groups a darker element was present. They made their living by robbing houses and stealing horses and cattle. Gangs of criminals raided local farms and took the booty to Virginia and North Carolina. Robbers from South Carolina went in the other direction.

This problem was compounded because the Backcountry was developing independently from the Lowcountry, which was the seat of political power in the Colony. This tendency was true in North Carolina and Virginia as well, where the power and money was concentrated in the tidewater regions and the port towns.

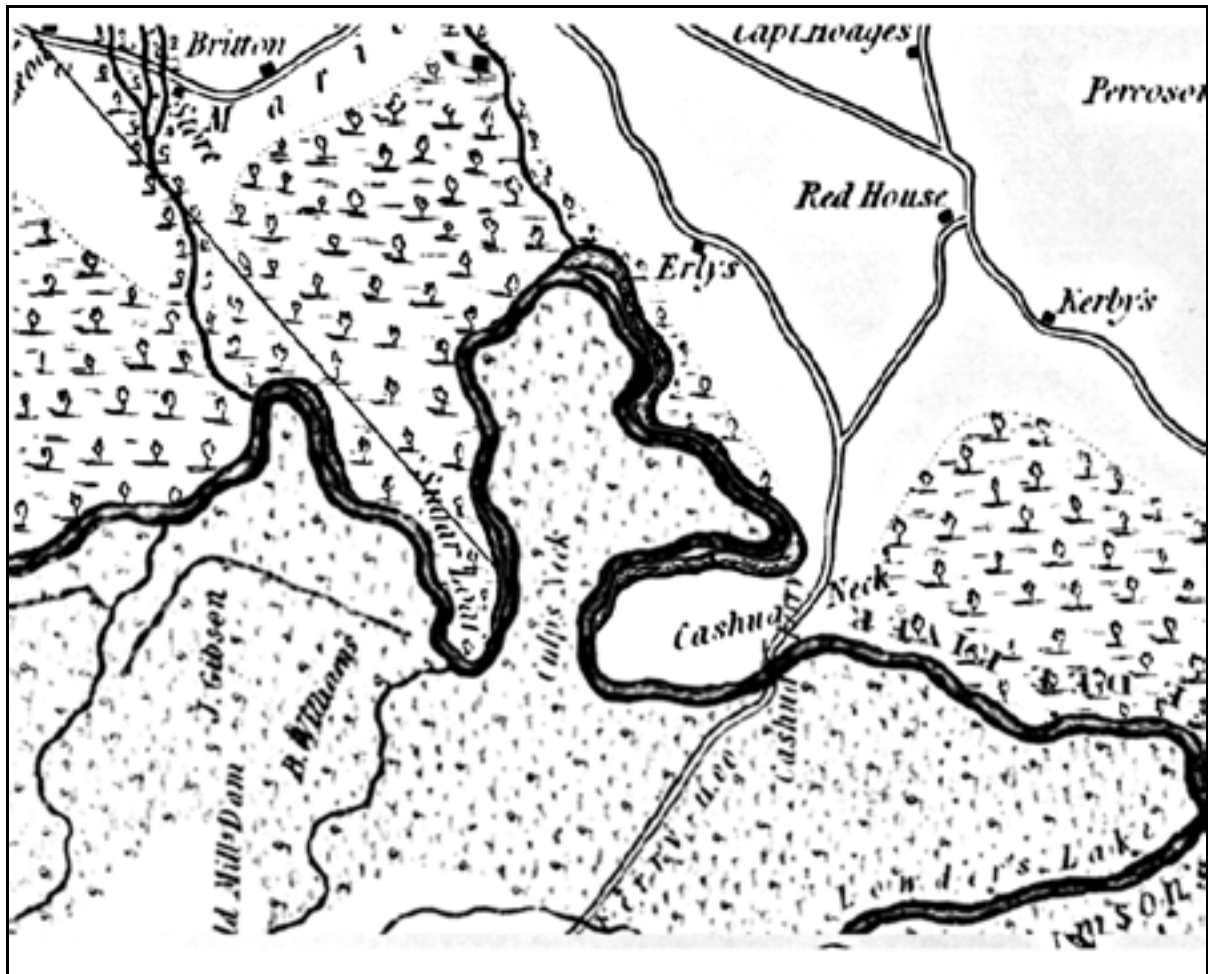


Figure 13: Mills Atlas, 1826. Detail of Project Area

Early in the 18<sup>th</sup> century the parishes of the Anglican Church were made into political divisions, more or less like counties. These extended from the coast, into the interior. As a result, the political representative of the Welsh of the Pee Dee was elected by the rice planters in the “county seat” of Georgetown. Then as now the politicians were spurred by self interest, and the interests of their friends, business partners, and families—their “constituency.” So they resisted raising taxes to fund governing the Backcountry.

For a long time—about 30 years—the frontier was basically lawless, or rather, ruled from within. The only official law enforcement in the area was the local constable, who could only arrest criminals accused of misdemeanors. More serious crimes were referred to the Sheriff in Charleston. And this extended to other areas of government as well. If a person needed to record a deed or marriage license, sue an encroaching neighbor, or conduct any other official business he had to travel to Charleston.

The population began to grow more quickly in the 1750s, and settlers were found as far west as the Savannah River around Abbeville. The increased population brought more good, and more bad people. Twice in the 1760s the citizens of the Backcountry requested that the legislature establish courts and other governing entities. The Lowcountry planters ignored them.



**Figure 14:** Historic Ceramics. Top Row; 19<sup>th</sup> Century, sponge decorated, blue and green “shell edge” decorated. Bottom, 18<sup>th</sup> century. Lead glazed combed slipware, hand painted delftware



**Figure 15:** Pierced button, and coin



Finally the citizens of Backcountry South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia rose up and formed a vigilante movement called the Regulators. No matter how well intentioned, mob justice is seldom just. Many criminals were caught and punished. Many also proclaimed their innocence and in some cases charged that the criminal gangs were calling themselves Regulators and using that as a guise for looting and taking revenge on their enemies. After a civil war threatened to erupt between the Lowcountry and Backcountry in 1768 the legislature finally acted, establishing local courts and sheriffs, and giving the Backcountry natives an increased voice in their governance<sup>26</sup>.

The roots of the American Revolution are also found in the abuses of the governing elite on the coast and in Britain. The French and Indian War, which ended in 1763, followed by the Regulator movement were catalyzing factors for many Backcountrymen, as it was apparent that neither the British government nor the colony's leaders at the coast could be relied upon for help.

The autonomy that developed in the Backcountry is best illustrated by the miscalculation made by the British when they occupied Charleston early in 1781. They believed that with the fall of Charleston, the colony was theirs and planned accordingly, sending garrison troops to several locations. They thought that the Loyalists of the Backcountry would come out of hiding, and hold the countryside for them.

Indeed, the Loyalists did declare themselves, and the surrender of the entire American Army of 12,000 men, including most of the South Carolina militia, put a damper on the spirits of the Americans. Yet within the month militia groups were reforming, and harassing British troops. One by one the British posts in the interior fell, and their troops were driven back to the Lowcountry. By November of 1781 the interior of the state was under the control of the Americans again. The British left the state entirely in 1782.

In recognition of the new awareness of political strength significant changes in the organization of the state government took place after the American Revolution. The state capital was moved to Columbia. Local governments and courts were established. All areas were represented in the legislature.

The Pee Dee region did not suffer greatly in the American Revolution, and afterwards the introduction of cotton agriculture led to steady growth (Figure 13). Before the revolution the population of the region was mixed, but more white than black. Afterwards the demographic pattern associated with plantation slavery became more prevalent, and the number of African Americans increased.

Johannes Kolb is believed to have died in 1761. There is no record of his death, no will, and no discussion of the disposition of his property. The county records, incomplete to begin with, have faced destruction on several occasions. The archaeological evidence suggests that the site was abandoned until after the Revolution.

Around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century artifacts indicative of every day life were again being discarded on a regular basis (Figure 14). Subsurface features like posts, trenches, and a possible cellar mark the building of a farm complex during that period. As we know that the Pee Dee

swamp faced many attempted “improvements” during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century we assume that the people who lived here were associated with farming the low lands.

Yet we still cannot say with any certainty exactly who may have lived there. Deed searches have been fruitless. There are strong clues in the archaeological record, but until our sampling is more nearly complete, definitive statements are not really possible. This may have been the home of a single family, or it may have been the site of several houses.

Two important artifacts for determining who may have lived here are a pierced coin and a pierced button (Figure 15). These were pierced to allow them to be suspended on a necklace or bracelet. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century researchers in the rural South found a thriving tradition among African Americans of using suspended metal objects, silver coins in particular, to bring good luck and protection from evil<sup>27</sup>. So we can argue that these objects mark a practice with a particular ethnic origin, and that their presence here in all likelihood marks their use and subsequent loss by members of that ethnic group.

Archaeological evidence is considerably less demonstrative than a smoking gun, however. For instance, we do not know that rural white people never used metal objects in the same way<sup>28</sup>. Many other cultural practices are shared in the South<sup>29</sup>, so why not this one? Likewise their presence at a site doesn't mean, by itself, that the people who used them lived here. A coin can always be traded for food or drink, for instance. Also, laborers who camped at the site during the 1890s and early 1900s were, in all likelihood, African Americans. They might have lost the good luck pieces.

So we don't—or rather, shouldn't—rely on one piece of evidence in building an interpretation. Many of our tools in determining the identities of the people under study lie in the artifact assemblage. For instance, in subsequent work at the site we will examine the types of ceramics used at different structures. The ceramics used during the period in question were mostly manufactured in English factories where a variety of wares were made over time at different price and quality levels. The industry was regulated by price fixing agreements, and price lists from the 1790s to the 1870s have been analyzed. Archaeologist George Miller<sup>30</sup> has developed a price index that can be used to determine the relative value of a ceramic assemblage. There are many steps between the initial observation and the conclusion, but to make a long story short: if the family in Structure A has an extremely valuable ceramic assemblage, while the family at Structure B spent only pennies on theirs, it is fairly safe to say—in this area, at that time—that Structure A was the home of the master, and Structure B of the slave. If the pierced coin came from Structure B, then both pieces of evidence reinforce each other.

Again, this reasoning pertains to this particular time and place, and is tied more to economics than ethnicity. During the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in this part of South Carolina it was much more common to be poor and black, than poor and white. A similar undocumented site in a place where few African Americans lived, like the mountains of North Carolina might show similar poverty. Thus while it is more likely here that the occupant of the site was Black, there the opposite would be true.

Other archaeologists have looked at diet as a marker of economic status—and thus of ethnicity as a corollary. This has been done both through ceramic vessel analysis<sup>31</sup> and through the physical remains of the foods eaten on sites<sup>32</sup>. In the first case, the types of vessels used are thought to reflect the types of foods consumed. At the master's house fancy tea pots indicate tea drinking, a formal activity at the time, while a flatware platter would indicate the serving of a big haunch of meat. The slaves might eat stews or soup and drink everything from coffee to rum to water from the same earthenware bowl. Archaeologically Structure A might yield evidence of a fancy matched set of the latest transfer printed white ware, while Structure B might yield a hodgepodge of pieces acquired at random.

In studying the ceramics from a site we look at things like:

- 1) the overall ware type—common types are creamware, pearlware, and whiteware
- 2) the decoration—hand painted, transfer printed, embossed, and annular decorations are common
- 3) the body element represented—rim, body, base, handle, spout
- 4) the type of vessel represented—plate, bowl, mug, tea pot
- 5) the size of the vessel
- 6) other identifying characteristics—kiln damage, glaze tint, unique decoration, wear marks

When we have sorted the sherds into individual vessels we can make an accurate assessment of the relative quality and value of assemblages, and thus identify economic status.

Archaeologists studying animal remains—zooarchaeologists—have studied things such as dietary preferences, amounts of wild foods, the cuts of meat from domestic animals (i.e.; low quality vs. high quality cuts), and even methods of butchering animals in an attempt to identify patterns of ethnicity and social status<sup>33</sup>. As copious amounts of domestic and wild animal bone have been recovered we hope to add zooarchaeological studies to our research tools at the site in future research.

38DA75 does not seem to have been occupied during the American Civil War or for any substantial period thereafter. If it was occupied by slaves before the war it was surely abandoned afterwards. Late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the lumber companies harvested almost all that remained of South Carolina's old growth forests. The river swamps were especially hard hit. The loggers would erect temporary camps and sawmills in the swamp, along with railways and canals. Both machinery from the mills, and plates, cups and bottles from the camps of the laborers have been found at the Kolb site.

In the whole of the Pee Dee Heritage Preserve there is thought to be only a single tract of uncut forest. Between the 1890s and the 1970s logging went on intermittently, but for the most part the forest was allowed to regenerate. In the 1970s it was harvested, and the Kolb site was again the home of loggers. During the early period little was done to replant the forest, but after the 1970s episode modern scientific silviculture practices were put to work.

The flattened and gouged landscape of the site visible today is the result. Bulldozers reshaped the land, destroying an old tobacco barn and pushing it over the side of the landform. Big borrow pits were dug to provide road fill. The site of a temporary sawmill was pushed into

piles at the north end of the site (about 40-50E 140-150N on Figure 6). Land moving was considerable. In the interior furrows were plowed, and trees planted in rows.

The archaeological record reflects all of these activities, from the first visit by hunter gatherers 11,000 years ago, to the most recent visit by a preserve visitor. Archaeological sites are not frozen in time. The things we do when we visit or excavate a site contribute to the whole, just like the things done in the past. That broken bottle, that little collection of artifacts from the road, the damage done to the edge of the site as we climb down the slope to water screen at the river all contribute. When you stand on this piece of land you are a link in an unbroken chain of humanity reaching far into the past.

## Endnotes

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