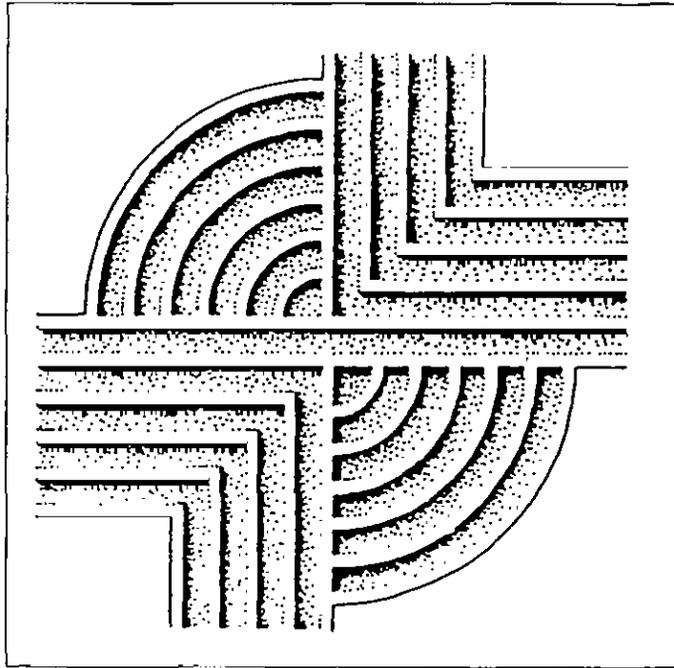


**MANAGEMENT SUMMARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
DATA RECOVERY AT THE WESTERN PORTION  
OF 38CH1257 AND AT 38CH1259**



**CHICORA RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION 249**

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**MANAGEMENT SUMMARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
DATA RECOVERY AT THE WESTERN PORTION  
OF 38CH1257 AND AT 38CH1259**

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## ABSTRACT

This report provides preliminary data on excavations at 38CH1257 and 38CH1259 on Seabrook Island, Charleston County, South Carolina. The investigations were conducted by Chicora Foundation in April 1997 in fulfillment of a Memorandum of Agreement between Kiawah Resort Associates, the S.C. State Historic Preservation Office, and the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resources Management.

Both sites were initially recorded and assessed by Brockington and Associates in 1991. Archaeological site 38CH1257 is a large multicomponent prehistoric shell midden site found in both woods and a plowed field. These data recovery excavations incorporated only the portion of the site within the plowed fields, west of a paved road leading to adjacent Kiawah Island. Site 38CH1259 is a Civil War picket post situated on a sandy ridge adjacent to the marsh on a wooded tract. Both sites were endangered by planned golf course development.

Investigations at 38CH1257 included the excavation of four 10-foot units in order to collect a sample of the artifacts from the site and also to examine the stratigraphy. This work revealed only two post holes and a relatively small collection of Woodland pottery badly fragmented and eroded by plowing. Each unit revealed about 0.9 to 1.1 foot plowed soil overlying subsoil heavily scarred by plowing. Afterwards a series of five mechanical cuts were excavated across the site area in order to expose any features.

These stripped areas cut across a low sand ridge that runs parallel to the marsh edge, about 300 feet inland. Along this sandy ridge the cuts revealed a number of post holes, including at least one structure, and features. The post holes were generally well defined and often contained pottery or other artifacts. The features included both shell steaming pits and also trash pits containing only very small quantities of shell. The materials

recovered indicate that while most of the features date from the Early to Middle Woodland Period and are characterized by Deptford remains, several (including the identified structure) date to the Mississippian. One feature, containing abundant peach pits, likely dates from the protohistoric period.

Investigations at this site document settlement away from the marsh edge during the Woodland and suggest that a range of features, beyond shellfish steaming pits, may be present. The work also documents one of the few Late Mississippian sites from this region of the South Carolina coast. The work suggests that the portion of the site east of the paved road, not currently owned by Kiawah Resort Associates may be of special significance and be worthy of very intensive research.

Site 38CH1259 was initially discovered through metal detecting conducted by Brockington and Associates which recovered a fairly large collection of Civil War artifacts. Although this metal detecting was used to define the site area, we discovered that not only had the artifacts from the survey not been curated, but none of the metal detector "hit" locations had been recorded. Consequently, it was impossible to determine if these Civil War artifacts were clustered in one area.

As a result, the archaeological studies at 38CH1259 began with a controlled metal detector survey of the site area. The site was divided into 20 foot grids and each grid was detected for both ferrous and non-ferrous remains. This initial phase of research, however, found only two artifacts likely dating from the 1860s. It appears that the earlier metal detecting by Brockington and Associates recovered virtually all of the metal artifacts present at the site.

The subsequent phase of research included

the excavation of two 10-foot units in the hopes of identifying non-metal artifacts associated with the picket post. Originally these units were to be located at concentrations of metal remains. Since no such concentrations were found, the units were excavated on the higher sandy ridges of the site, in areas that might have been favored both for their dry location and also for the vantage points they offered. Unfortunately, both units were completely devoid of any artifacts.

The data recovery efforts at 38CH1259 offer relatively little information concerning picket posts, although it certainly provides a strong caution that documentation of all phases of research is absolutely essential.

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# INTRODUCTION

## Background

In 1991 our colleagues at Brockington & Associates were retained to conduct an intensive archaeological survey of the Andell Tract for M.J. Properties of North America (Poplin et al. 1991). The survey tract, about 900 acres in extent, yielded 23 archaeological sites, 10 of which were recommended as potentially eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

Subsequent to the survey, East Seabrook Limited Partnership, then apparently the owner of record, initiated a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the S.C. State Historic Preservation Office, citing Coastal Council permit requirements. This MOA, dated March 5, 1992, covers a total of eight sites — two of which are listed as eligible and six listed as potentially eligible.

A comparison of the 1991 survey recommendations and 1992 MOA requirements is provided in Table 1. The process by which the eligibility evaluations were changed is not known, although clearly there were substantial modifications between the field investigations and the preparation of the MOA. Discussions with SHPO Archaeologist Dr. Chris Sherman indicated that there was no further documentation in the SHPO project files to reveal the process through which the eligibility determinations were made (Dr. Chris Sherman, personal communication 1998).

Recently, a portion of this survey tract (Figure 1) has been purchased by Kiawah Resort Associates (KRA), which intends to construct a golf course. The purchase also included rights to existing permits and obligations such as the MOA. Two of the MOA archaeological sites are included on the tract: the western half of 38CH1257 and all of 38CH1259. An addendum to the MOA, outlining KRA's responsibilities was approved by all of the signatory parties on March 30, 1998.

KRA has requested that Chicora prepare a technical and budgetary proposal for the data recovery at the portion of these two sites they now own. A third site, 38CH1258 is within the KRA purchase, but was not included in the data recovery proposal. The requested proposal was submitted February 27, 1998 and was approved March 9, 1998. The archaeological data recovery was conducted between April 7 and April 21, 1998.

## Identified Sites

Site 38CH1257 is described as "an extremely large Ceramic Late Archaic to Late Mississippian period" site covering an area of nearly 600 feet by 4,500 feet, or about 62 acres (Poplin et al. 1991:58-62). The authors of the original survey report that the site includes "intact shell deposits (midden) and cultural strata" primarily in the northern and eastern portions of the site. They observe that the western portion of

Table 1.  
Comparison of the 1991 survey recommendations  
and 1992 MOA requirements

Site	Survey Recommendation	MOA Requirement
38CH1246	PE	PE
38CH1247	PE	PE
38CH1248	PE	NI
38CH1249	PE	NI
38CH1250	PE	NI
38CH1255	PE	PE
38CH1257	PE	E
38CH1258	PE	PE
38CH1259	PE	E
38CH1261	NE	PE
38CH1268	PE	PE

NE = not eligible

PE = potentially eligible

E = eligible

NI = not included, not eligible

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY OF EXCAVATIONS AT 38CH1257 AND 38CH1259

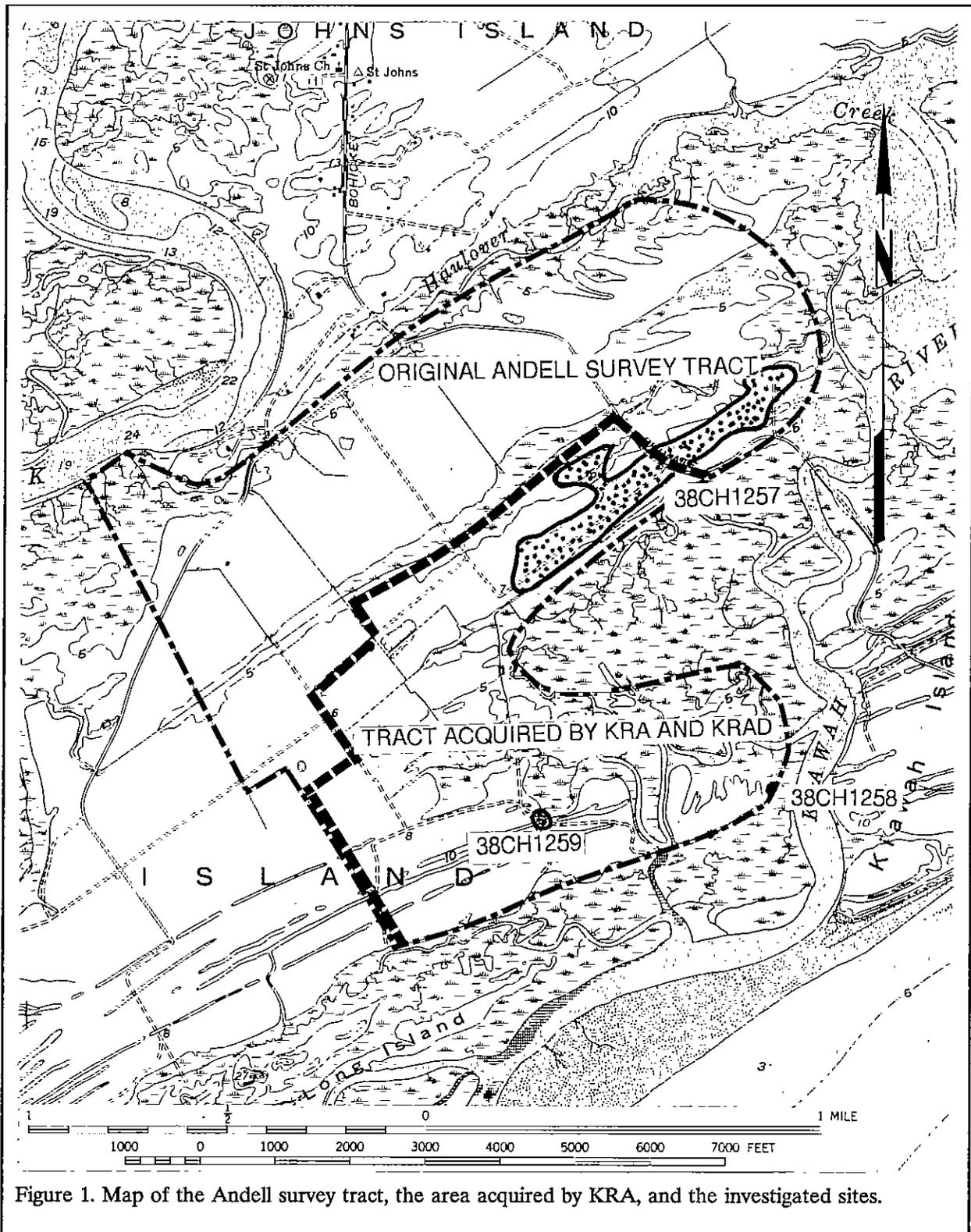


Figure 1. Map of the Andell survey tract, the area acquired by KRA, and the investigated sites.

## INTRODUCTION

the site (covered by the current investigations) is situated almost entirely in a plowed field and report finding only scattered shell and artifacts confined to the plowzone.

Their map of the western site area (Poplin 1991:Figure 19) reveals that only 21 of the 118 shovel tests (18%) yielded artifacts — the rest were negative. It also reveals what appears to be a cluster of surface finds at the northern edge of the field, in the vicinity of the paved road.

In contrast, the eastern portion of the site, which is not owned by KRA and therefore not covered by this data recovery plan, is primarily wooded and the authors report "dispersed shell heaps," some of which were apparently above grade (Poplin et al. 1991:60). In fact, their map of the eastern site area reveals that of the 50 shovel tests, 38 (or 76%) produced cultural materials. There seems to be little doubt that the best preserved portions of this site are situated east of the paved road — outside the KRA property and outside the consideration of the data recovery efforts.

The artifacts recovered include sherds identified in the catalog as Stallings, McClellanville, and Wilmington. Also present are descriptions of plain and simple stamped wares (38CH1257 catalogs on file, S.C. Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina, Columbia).<sup>1</sup>

In terms of assessment, the written report recommends that "a more intensive and detailed testing program" be conducted in order to verify integrity and refine boundaries. Nevertheless, at some juncture, the decision was made to dispense with additional testing and consider the site eligible.

The authors of the original survey suggested a program of controlled surface

collections, supplemented with additional shovel testing, and followed by block excavations, although it is difficult to determine whether this was intended to represent testing *and* data recovery, or only testing.

Site 38CH1259 is reported to represent "a Civil War (Federal) picket campsite," apparently based on the artifacts recovered during the survey. The site measures about 225 feet by 130 feet, based apparently on the dispersion of metal detector hits. Only four shovel tests, excavated as part of the survey transects, fell within the site boundaries and all were negative. No additional close interest shovel testing was conducted.

The site is situated adjacent to the marsh edge in an area that includes pine and mixed hardwoods. Reference to period maps reveals that the site, at the time of the Civil War, would have been on the edge of a large cultivated field — today evidenced by the second growth vegetation. It looks out to the northeast toward tributaries of the Kiawah River and troops stationed here were likely intended to spot any Confederate attempt to boat down the Kiawah River from Johns Island and up the smaller creeks to make landfall on the eastern end of Seabrook Island.

The metal detecting recovered 19 identifiable artifacts, along with "miscellaneous brass, lead, and iron objects" (Poplin et al. 1991:64). Although the catalog indicates "prov" numbers for the objects, no map has been identified which locates these different "hits" on the ground (Dr. Eric Poplin, personal communication 1998). Although these materials lack any meaningful provenience, they are listed in Table 2.

The authors recommended the site potentially eligible, noting that "additional testing . . . should include . . . an intensive controlled metal detector survey . . . followed by the excavation of one to two formal . . . units in areas where artifact concentrations were greatest" (Poplin et al. 1991:64-66).

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<sup>1</sup> The collections are still held by Brockington and Associates, although catalog sheets have been provided to the S.C. Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology along with the site forms.

Table 2.  
Artifacts Found by Brockington and Associates  
Metal Detecting 38CH1259

Provenience	Item
LLA 1	Federal minie ball, 3 ring, unfired
LLA 2	straight razor blade cover
LLA 3	Federal minie ball, 3 ring, unfired
LLA 4	pocket knife, bone outer plate
LLA 5	3 Federal minie balls, 3 ring, unfired
LLA 6	brass button, flat, no design
LLA 7	wedge
LLA 8	minie ball [no further description] melted lead unidentified metal
LLA 9	metal spike
LLA 10	brass object
LLA 11	brass number "7" insignia
LLA 12	4 nails
LLA 13	metal bracket with metal bolt

**Research Orientation**

**38CH1257**

Site 38CH1257 was recommended potentially eligible since it "has great potential to add to the substantive knowledge of prehistoric cultural evolution in the region, and to specifically address questions regarding the adaptive cultural changes on the island as compared with other sites in the region" (Poplin et al. 1991:60). We had no doubt that the eastern portion of the site, where good integrity is evidenced by intact midden deposits, has the potential to address a broad range of substantive research questions. In the western site area, where there has been extensive plowing and the previous researchers observe that materials seem confined to the plowzone, we wondered if these research questions were appropriate. Developing a clear research strategy was hindered by how little was actually known about the site.

As a result, we suggested that a more useful approach might be an exploratory research design, focusing on what appeared to be the densest portion of the site, at its northern edge, adjacent to the paved Kiawah road.

In this portion of the site, the research we proposed was intended to (1) determine if intact features are present below the plowzone, (2) explore the possibility that either features or post holes may help distinguish habitation or activity areas (contributing settlement data), and (3) explore the subsistence data available in the recovered features.

The abundance of materials in the plowzone, of course, suggests that at one time either middens or features were plowed out and dispersed. It may be that after nearly 200 years of plowing no intact deposits are left. This, however, is not clearly known at present and we suggested (as outlined in the following section) stripping a portion of the site to expose features.

At other Woodland sites, for example 38BU861, we have found evidence of post structures adjacent to midden areas and have also found clustering of different artifactual material (Trinkley and Adams 1994). Investigation of the densest area of 38CH1257 may contribute similar data. Although exploring only a small portion of the overall site, this investigation may help determine if there is an association between artifact density and habitation area.

Finally, features typically produce significant quantities of subsistence data, although these data are not always uniformly interpreted. Recent investigations at both 38BU861 and also at a shell midden on Kiawah (38CH1219; Trinkley et al. 1995) have revealed the amount of information that dietary studies can provide. Similar results may be expected from 38CH1257, assuming that features are recoverable.

**38CH1259**

Site 38CH1259 was recommended potentially eligible primarily because, "picket posts are rarely, if ever, intensively investigated" (Poplin et al. 1991:64). The authors go on to note that such sites, "hold the potential for yielding information that may contribute to the substantive knowledge of Civil War encampments through the examination of a poorly sampled component of the range of military sites" (Poplin et al. 1991:64).

It does seem true that picket posts are rarely studied by archaeologists -- either because they are given little value or perhaps because they are rarely encountered in traditional archaeological surveys. Regardless, there is a strong argument that such sites should not be discounted without at least some effort to determine the range of data sets which might be present. For example, we wondered if it may be possible to recover sufficient faunal remains to begin to evaluate the amount of hunting or trapping conducted by soldiers on sentry duty. The recovered remains might help determine how time was passed at this duty. And the remains may also help researchers evaluate whether the same posts were reused.

It was troubling, however, that the authors comment this site is also significant since it "appears to have been collected less intensively than the other similar sites identified within the tract" (Poplin et al. 1991:64). This suggests that some degree of looting has likely occurred and this may make any conclusions difficult since we won't know what has already been removed. Nevertheless, we concurred that some level of investigation is appropriate.

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY OF EXCAVATIONS AT 38CH1257 AND 38CH1259

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## EXCAVATIONS

### 38CH1257

#### Introduction

We did not believe that surface collections would provide data capable of addressing substantive questions. This was based on the low incidence of recovery from the initial survey and also past experience with very heavily plowed sites. Instead, we believed that the best approach at 38CH1257 was to strip several relatively large areas in order to search for features and post holes. This would provide an opportunity to address the research goals previously outlined in a cost-effective manner.

We did not take this position lightly, since we have frequently resisted efforts to strip sites as a simple solution to a complex problem. In this case, we believed that it was a prudent approach and it would allow access to the underlying subsoil to evaluate the potential for feature recovery. In order to evaluate the site stratigraphy (ensuring that stripping stops at the appropriate level) and to obtain at least a sample of the plowzone cultural materials, we also proposed very limited formal excavations. We recommended that these formal units be limited since the original shovel tests yielded a very low return.

#### Field Methods

At the time of the survey most of the field was fallow, although vegetation was very low and sparse, allowing upwards of 80% surface visibility. The portion closest to the Kiawah road had been planted in grass. In this area visibility was reduced to about 50% at the beginning of the field investigations (but had been reduced to perhaps 10 or 15% by the end of the field work).

An initial pedestrian survey of the field revealed only a small collection of pottery, with almost all of the sherds being well under 1-inch in

diameter. Shell was visible throughout the field, but largely fragmented, typically being about ½-inch in size. The shell density also appeared to increase toward the northern edge of the field. This walkover also revealed a very low ridge, about 0.5 to 1.0 foot higher than the surrounding field, running southwest-northeast about 300 feet inland from the marsh edge. While just barely perceptible, this ridge was to be an important topographic feature.

Initially the research design called for the excavation of three to five 5-foot units, concentrated in areas suggested as densest by the original Brockington and Associates survey. This initial survey, however, provided relatively little guidance and the pedestrian survey revealed extensive plowing. We decided to focus on the ridge area, not so much because more materials were found in this area (they weren't), but rather because it seemed like this would have been a prime occupation area based on experience at other sites. The slightly higher topography would have improved soil drainage — which was decidedly poor elsewhere in the field during the period of our fieldwork.

In addition, we decided that 5-foot units were not likely to reveal features or post holes, if they were present, and so decided to increase the unit size to 10-foot squares. A total of four units were laid out.

Unit 1 was situated northwest of the sandy ridge in an area which produced a number of surface finds and which also seemed to relate to a core area of the original Brockington and Associates survey.

Unit 2 was placed on the sand ridge toward the southwestern edge of the portion of the site being explored in this study. The unit was at the interface of the fallow field and grassed area, where a relatively large quantity of shell was

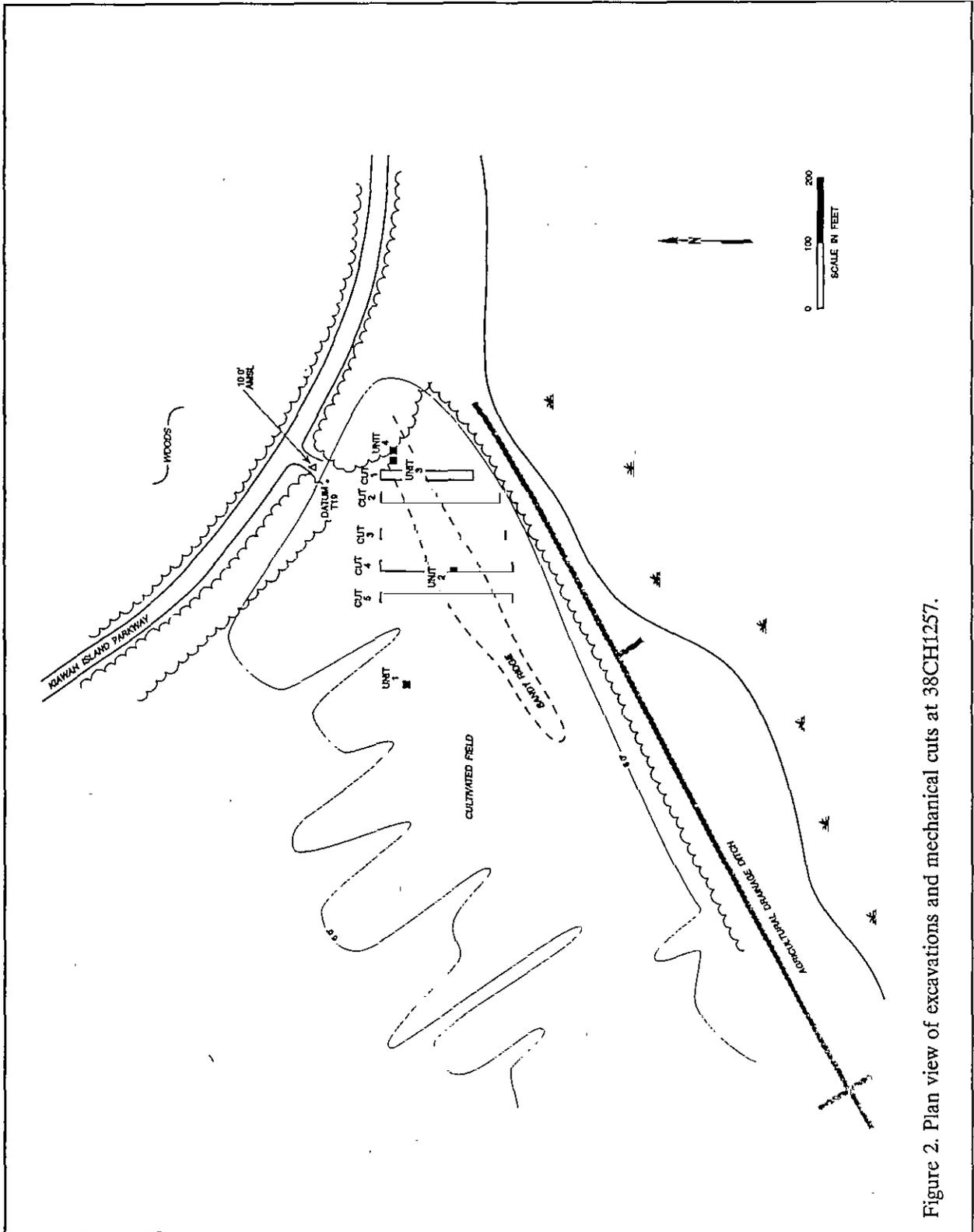


Figure 2. Plan view of excavations and mechanical cuts at 38CH1257.

## EXCAVATIONS

observed on the surface.

Units 3 and 4 were both on the sand ridge at the north edge of the field, close to the woods line, in an area which we hoped would exhibit significantly shallower plowing. This was another area which appeared to have relatively dense quantities of shell on the surface.

These units were oriented north-south and tied to a permanent point — identified as T19 on the development maps. Vertical control was maintained by reference to a known mean sea level datum at the edge of the Kiawah Island Parkway pavement (Figure 2).

Each unit was excavated in one zone — the plowzone — which we found laying over subsoil. Throughout the plowzone varied from a very dark gray (7.5YR3/1) to a dark brown (7.5YR3/2) loamy sand, while the subsoil was a consistently strong brown (7.5YR5/6) sand or sandy clay. All fill was screened through ¼-inch mesh, with the units cleaned, photographed, and drawn at the base of the plowzone.

After the completion of the formal excavations, we established a series of five cuts approximately 200 feet in length for mechanical stripping. A bulldozer with an 8-foot blade was used to remove the plowzone, which was intermittently piled to one edge or the ends of the cuts. As the dozer stripped the plowzone, archaeologists walked behind the equipment to identify features and post holes. Based on previous work in sandy soils during the summer, we knew that it would be virtually impossible to keep the cuts watered. Consequently, it was essential that features be marked immediately, and cleaned up later.

Cut 1 began in very close proximity to Units 3 and 4 in the northeastern corner of the site. Because of its placement, this cut was only about 170 feet in length and about 8 feet in width. It, like the others, run north-south. Each successive cut was about 50 feet distant from the last. Cuts 2 through 5, however, were each 16-feet in width and run 190 to 200 feet in length.

We had noticed during the hand excavation that the field east of the sand ridge, toward the marsh edge, was considerably lower in elevation, with the result that storm water ponded in the field. At the time the mechanical cuts were made the field had almost dried, but the night afterwards a storm caused the southern ends of the cuts to flood. Throughout the work we had trouble with the water table, which was very high, frequently being exposed by post hole or feature excavation.

Each marked feature was intended to be cleaned, photographed, and plotted on the site base map — an activity which was carried out without modification (see Figures 3-7). Since we did not have sufficient information to speculate on the density of features prior to beginning the data recovery, our research plan noted that sampling of features might be required. The sampling would be based on feature type (i.e., shell filled pit, organic stained pit, etc.) and, where possible, on temporal period. An effort would be made to obtain a sample of all different types of features present at the site.

Features were to be bisected, with one half being excavated by natural zones. All fill would be dry screened through ⅛-inch. A sample of at least 10 gallons will be collected from features with dark, organic fill for mechanically assisted water flotation. Also routinely collected would be known volumes of shell from the fill, to assist in quantifying the different shellfish present. Soil samples were also to be collected for both pollen and phytolith studies.

As it turned out, features were present in numbers greater than we anticipated, but not so great that it was not possible to explore all but one. The one feature which was not investigated was first flooded and then was infested by fire ants. After several failed attempts to clean the feature, it was abandoned. Ultimately nine features (eight prehistoric) were explored).

We stipulated that post holes would typically not be excavated, unless it appeared that some formed a distinct pattern, in which case those

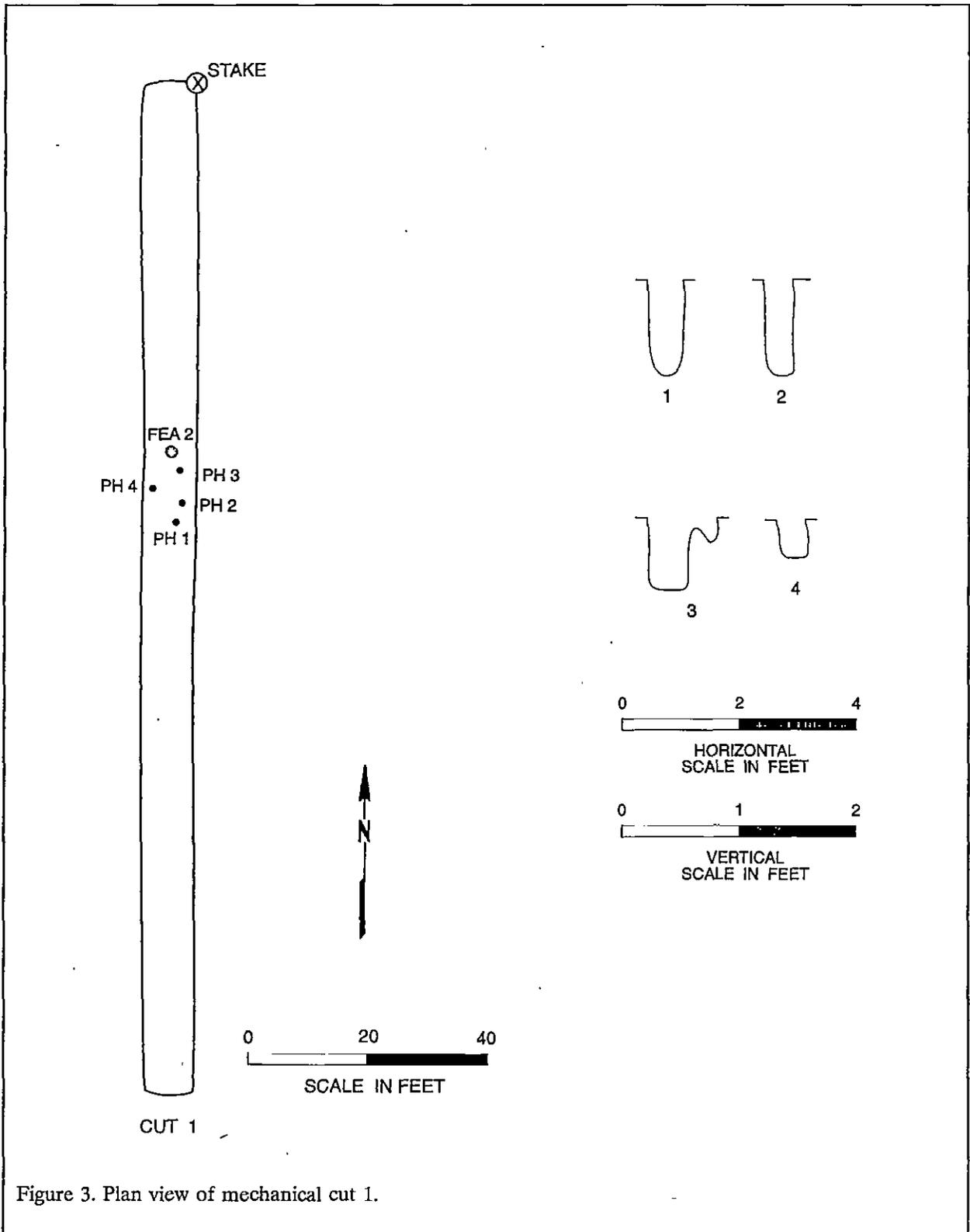


Figure 3. Plan view of mechanical cut 1.

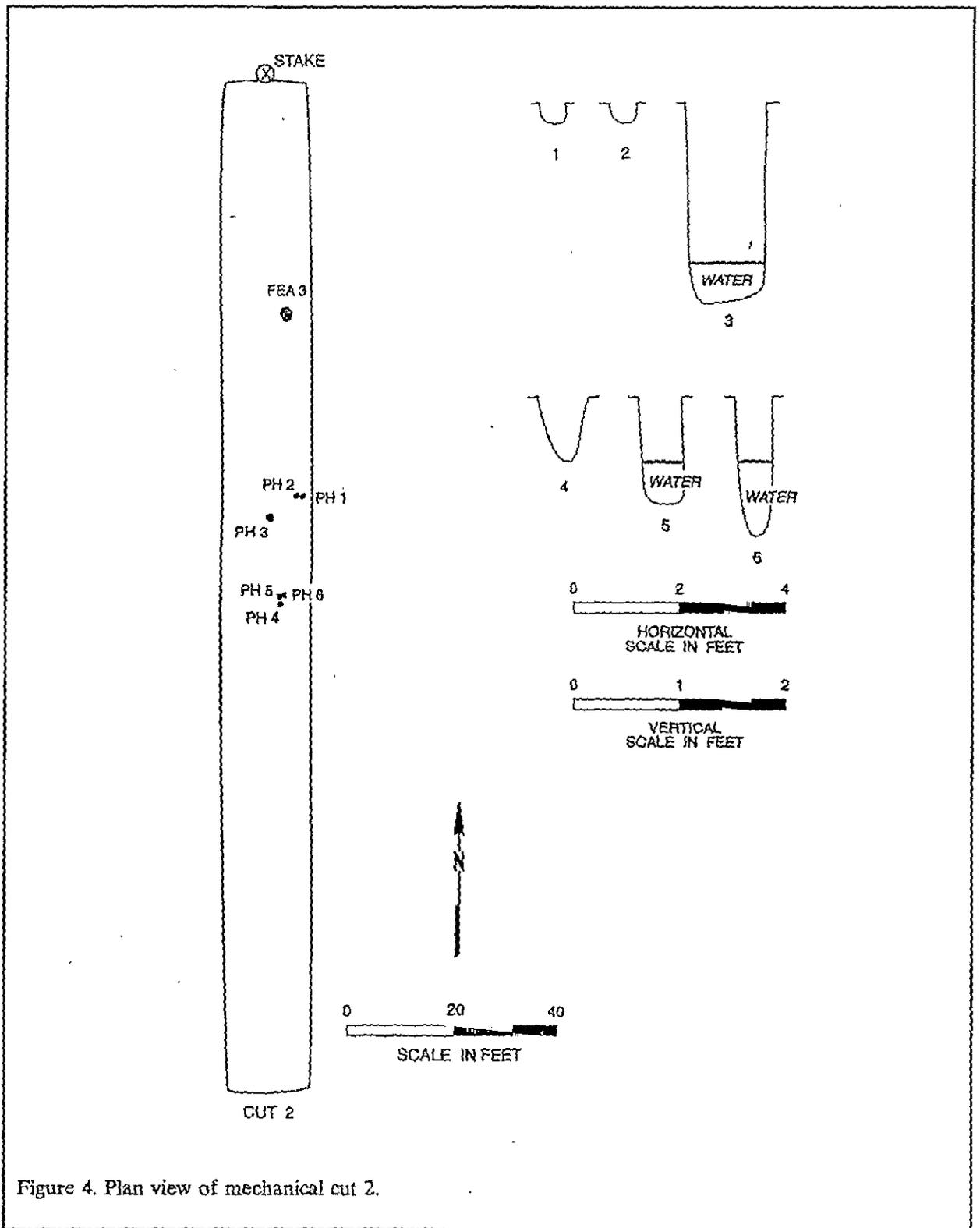


Figure 4. Plan view of mechanical cut 2.

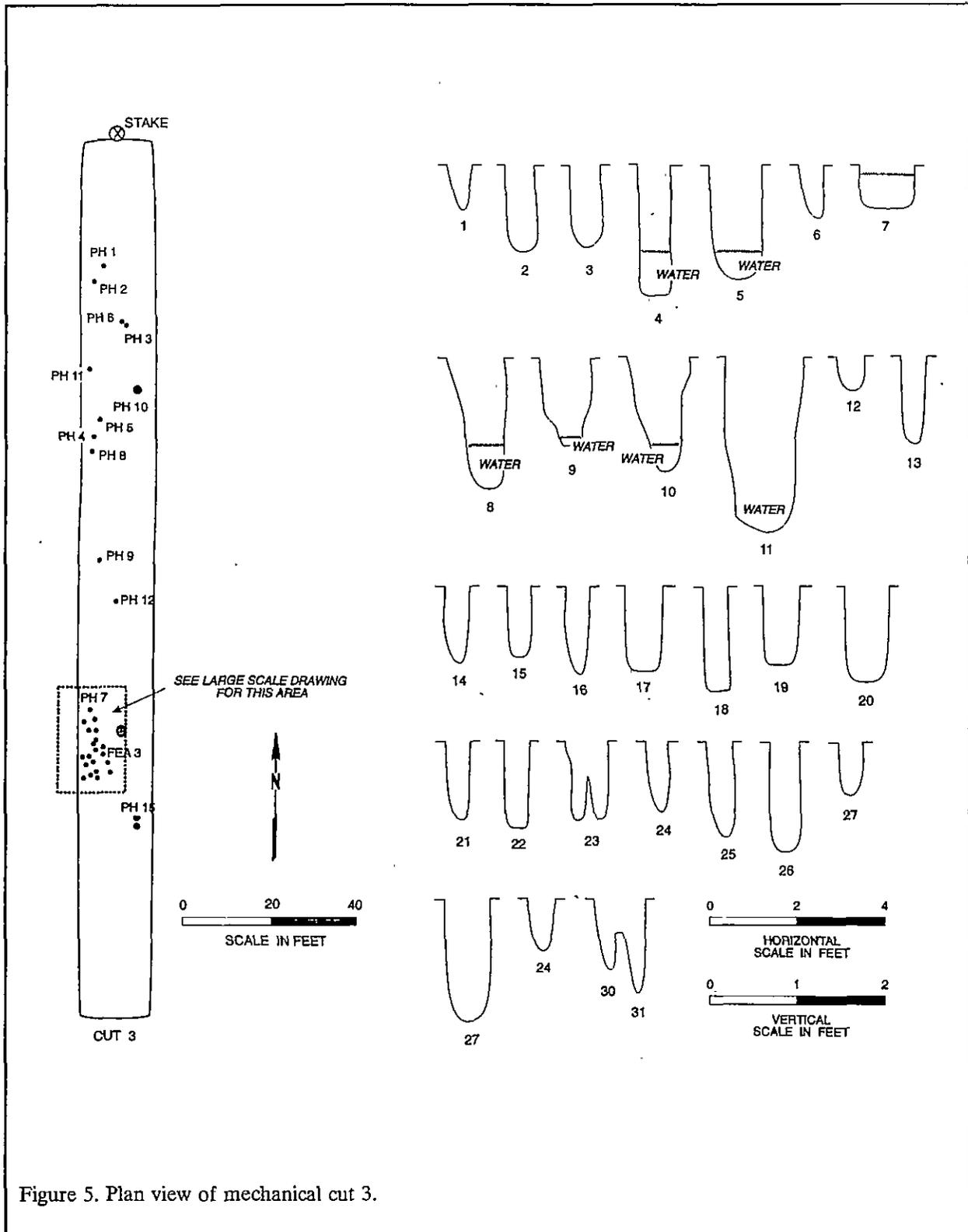


Figure 5. Plan view of mechanical cut 3.

EXCAVATIONS

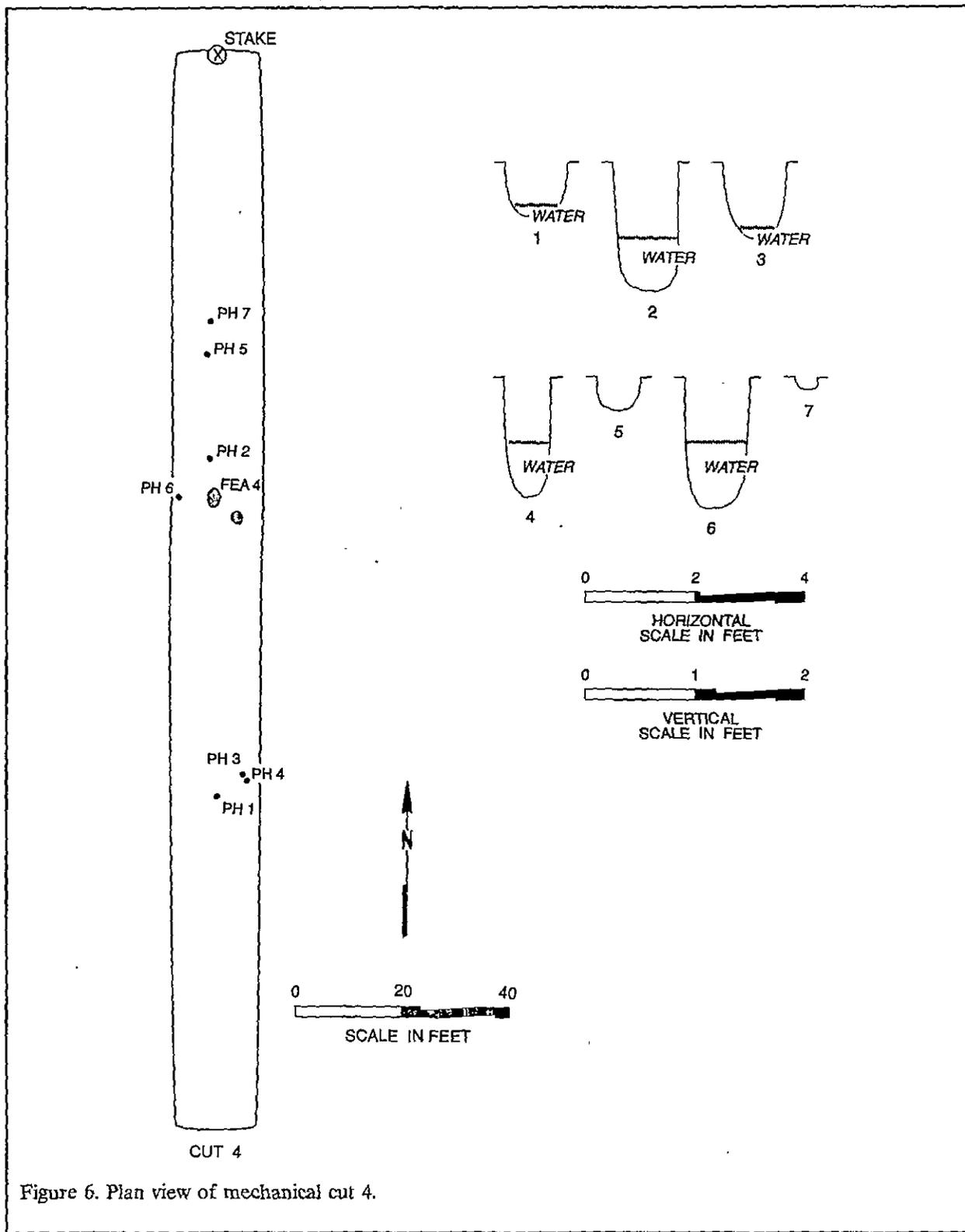


Figure 6. Plan view of mechanical cut 4.

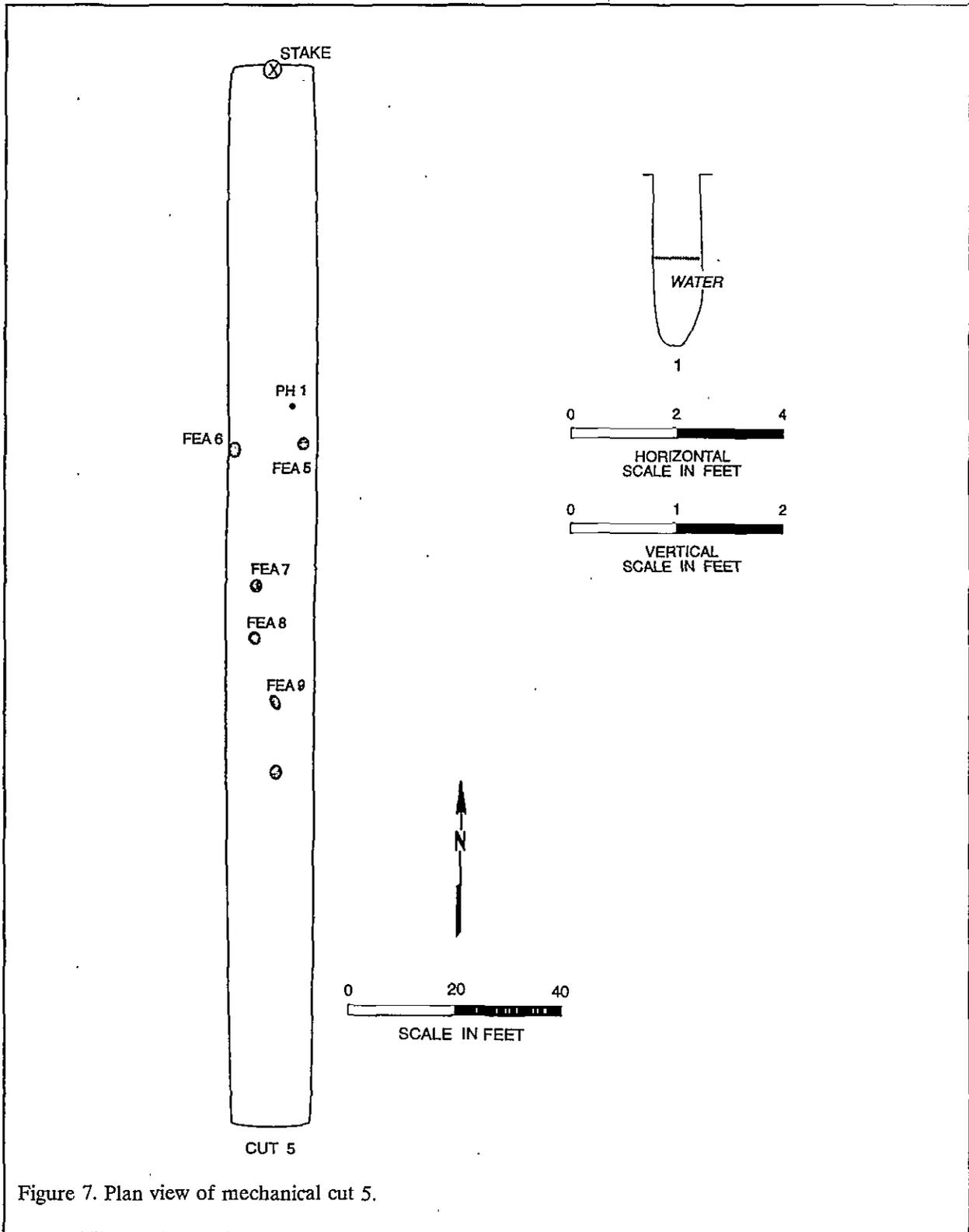


Figure 7. Plan view of mechanical cut 5.

would be excavated so their profiles and contents might be compared. As the work progressed, a decision was made to excavate as many of these post holes as possible in order to better understand the temporal period they represented. As a result 49 post holes were excavated in the five cuts (plus two post holes in Unit 1).

### Results of Excavations

The four 10-foot units failed to reveal any prehistoric features, although Unit 1 did produce two post holes (Figure 8). Both were about 0.8 foot in diameter and from 0.6 to 0.7 foot in depth. Shell density increased dramatically as the units were moved onto the sandy ridge and toward the north (Table 3), but otherwise the units were generally unproductive. Artifacts density was low in

Table 3.  
Shell Weights (in lbs.)  
of Test Units

Unit	Shell Weight
1	6
2	46
3	150
4	121

all four and the majority of the sherds recovered were consistently under 1-inch in diameter — sherds which offer only minimal potential for analysis.

The only unit which yielded a feature was Unit 3.

At the base of the plowzone a black (10YR2/1) silty sand ditch was found stretching northwest-southeast through the unit. Upon being sampled this was found to represent a probable agricultural ditch running parallel to the woodline and draining southward into the marsh. Similar ditches are still common in the field and have been consistently maintained. For whatever reason, this ditch was at some time quickly filled (the profile reveals no evidence of lensing or gradual filling).

Unit 3 was also unusual in that it revealed about 0.5 foot of fill — a grayish brown (10YR5/2) fine sand with abundant small shells — had been brought in to this area. Similar fill is found across the tract as road fill and likely represents a beach sand used to raise the farm roads for drainage. It

appears that Unit 3 was in an area where this fill was temporarily stored at some time.

Unfortunately, Units 3 and 4 failed to meet our expectation that they might exhibit less plow damage. Plow scars were still numerous and quite distinct at the base of both units and the artifacts continued to be small and eroded. It appears that the entire field has been subjected to uniform, and constant, agricultural activity since at least the 1850s (when the site area is shown as cultivated on period maps).

### Post Holes and Features

Virtually all of the post holes and features were situated on the sandy rise. Reference to Figures 3 through 8 reveals how these remains are confined to a swath varying from 20 to 80 feet in width. The 49 post holes recovered during the excavations are profiled in these figures, revealing that most were deep, about 0.8 foot in diameter, with either rounded or pointed bottoms. Artifacts were present, but not common. Charcoal, likewise, was found in several post holes, but was not common.

The features included one agricultural trench, previously discussed, and eight prehistoric pits, which are briefly discussed here.

Feature 2 was identified in the central portion of Cut 1 and was recognized as a circular black loamy sand stain with only minor amounts of shell. Upon excavation the pit was found to measure about 1.9 by 2.0 feet in diameter and to have a depth of 0.7 foot. The feature had a flat bottom and produced only 4 pounds of shell, including 2 pounds of oyster and 2 pounds of clam, all largely confined to the two concentrations initially observed. The feature consisted of a homogenous black loamy fill.

Feature 3 was found at the north end of Cut 2 and was recognized as an oval of black loamy sand at the base of the stripped Ap soil. Upon excavation the pit was found to measure about 5.2 by 4.1 feet and to have a depth of 1.27 feet. The feature consisted of a homogenous black loamy fill and the pit is basin-shaped with a

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY OF EXCAVATIONS AT 38CH1257 AND 38CH1259

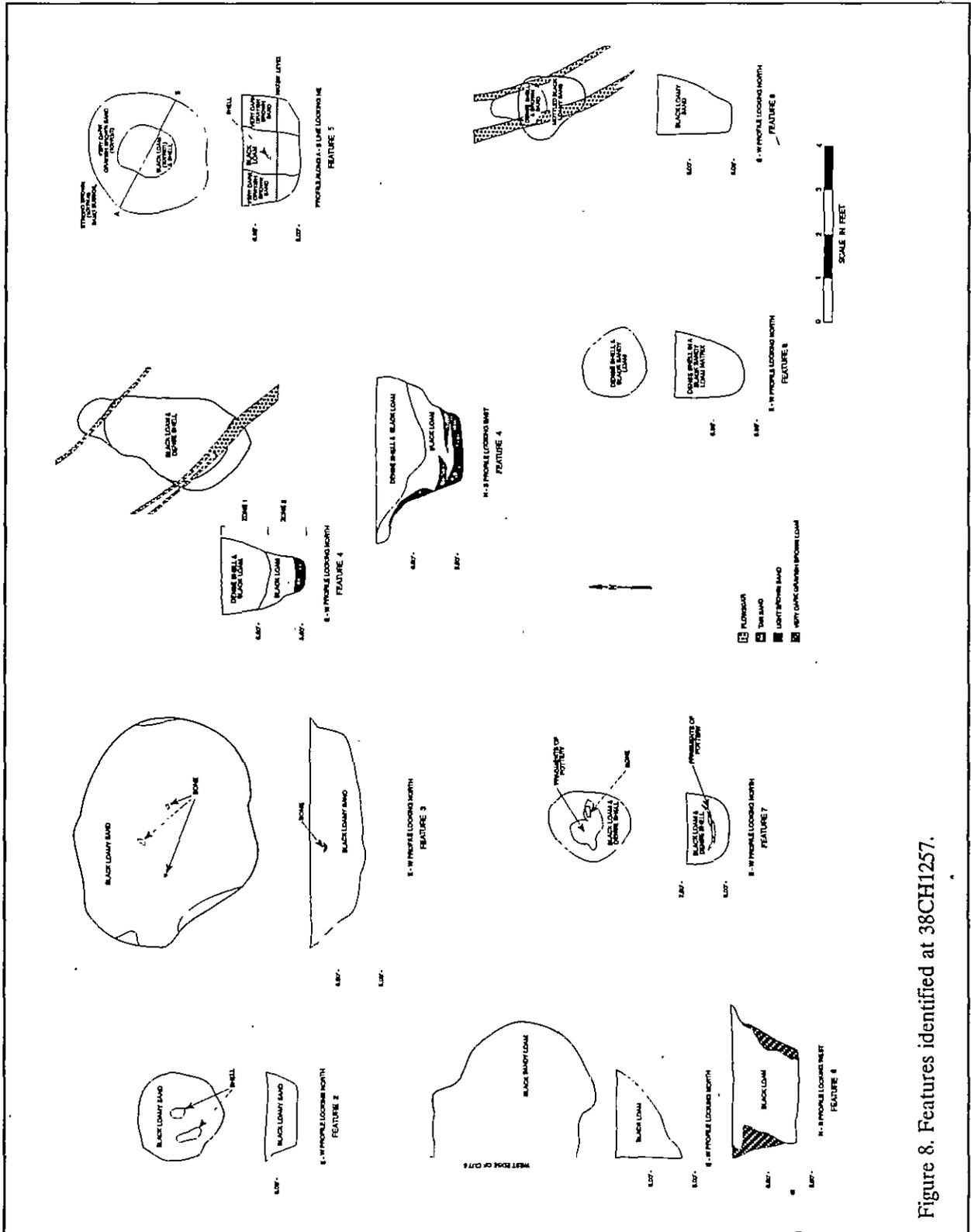


Figure 8. Features identified at 38CH1257.

relatively broad, flat base. No shell was recovered from the feature, although small quantities of bone (primarily large mammal) were recovered. Excavation also revealed a large number of peach pits. Peach is a highly popular cultigen and are found only in historic contexts — since the Indians received the peach from early European settlers or explores, most likely the Spanish. They ripen from June to July. Since they have a minimum fruit bearing age of 4 to 6 years, several researchers have argued that recovery of peach remains are an excellent indicator of highly settled village life (see, for example, Wilson 1977:83). A quick examination of the pottery associated with this feature reveals the presence of what appears to be Ashley wares — complicated stamped pottery thought to be associated with the coastal Muskhogian tribes present in the Charleston area during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and early eighteenth centuries.

Feature 4 was identified in the central portion of Cut 3, recognized by a concentration of oyster shell in the black loamy sand matrix. The west half was removed first, revealing lensed dense shell and black loam, followed by lenses of tan to light brown sand, probably representing mixing at the base of the pit. The west half of the feature produced 30 pounds of shell, including 24 pounds of oyster, 4 pounds of clam, and one pound each of periwinkle, whelk, and cockle. The eastern half was excavated in two zone. Zone 1 included the dense shell lens, which produced 98 pounds of shell. Again oyster was most abundant, yielding 73 pounds. Clam followed, producing 20 pounds. Whelk contributed 2.5 pounds. The remainder consisted of periwinkle, cockle, and stout tagelus. Zone 2 was the underlying sand, which included 4 pounds of oyster, 2 pounds of clam, and a trace of whelk and periwinkle. The feature measured about 4 by 2 feet and was 1.93 feet in depth. Like many shellfish steaming pits, its sides gradually slope down to the base, which is relatively flat.

Feature 5 was found at the north end of Cut 5 and was recognized by the black loam core and a ring of dense shell around the edges. Upon excavation the feature measured about 2.5 by 2.9 feet and was 1.3 feet in depth. The concentrations of shell were largely superficial, yielding only 13

pounds of shell, including 8 pounds of oyster, 5 pounds of whelk, and a trace of clam. The feature had straight sides and a flat bottom. The profile revealed that the central core was much darker than the sides.

Feature 6 was found at the north end of Cut 5 and was identified based on the fill — a black loamy sand. This feature extended westward into the side of the cut, so that only 2.5 feet of the width was exposed, although the total length was 3.5 feet. Only the eastern half of the feature was excavated, revealing a depth of 1.48 feet and suggesting that the pit may been relatively broad and shallow. The fill consisted of a homogenous black loam and no shell was recovered.

Feature 7 was found in the central portion of Cut 5 and was recognized as a smear of shell and black loam which, when cleaned up, consisted of a small pit measuring about 1.85 by 1.5 feet in diameter. A total of 6.5 pounds of shell was recovered from the pit, including 2 pounds of whelk, 1.5 pounds of oyster, 1.5 pounds of clam, and 1.5 pounds of stout tagelus. Also present was a small quantity of animal bone. During the excavation this feature produced a partial vessel, broken and collapsed inward. The feature was bowl shaped, with relatively straight sides and a rounded bottom.

Feature 8, also found in the central portion of Cut 5, is almost identical to Feature 7. It was recognized as a smear of black loam, which upon excavation, produced a pit measuring about 1.5 feet in diameter, with a depth of 1.58 feet. The profile was similar to Feature 7, although the pit was deeper. The only appreciable difference is that Feature 8 yielded a larger quantity of shell. The south half produced 18.5 pounds, including 16 pounds of oyster, 2 pounds of clam, and 0.5 pound of periwinkles. The north half yielded 11 pounds of oyster, one pound of clam, one pound of periwinkles, and a trace of stout tagelus.

Feature 9, at the south end of Cut 5, measured about 1.6 by 1.3 feet and had a depth of 1.69 feet. The fill was primarily black loamy sand, although the north half yielded 4.25 pounds of shell, including 3 pounds of oyster, one pound of

clam, and 0.25 pound of periwinkles. No data is immediately available for the south half, since all of the fill was saved for water flotation. The feature has a profile very similar to Feature 8, with fairly straight sides and a slightly flattened base.

These features are dramatically different from those typically found at coastal shell middens, where shellfish steaming pits are the rule. Excavations at 38BU861, a Middle to Late Woodland shell midden on Hilton Head Island, produced pits that are uniformly characterized by shellfish, primarily oyster (Trinkley and Adams 1994:49-53). At 38CH1219, a Deptford shell midden on Kiawah, all of the recovered features consisted of shellfish steaming pits, dominated by oyster or whelk and consisting of broad, shallow basins (Trinkley et al. 1995:32-36). In fact, the features from 38CH1257 are much more representative of those found at more interior prehistoric and protohistoric villages (see, for example, Wilson's 1977 characterization of feature fills).

The black loam found in the features is suggestive of high levels of organic material, especially charcoal. This is generally confirmed by the preliminary floats and rough sorts. Nevertheless, there is no evidence that the fill is the result of fires being built in the pits and them being covered over. Instead, it appears that most represent "trash" pits — pits excavated for the purpose of disposing of debris from fires and food preparation.

Additional information concerning the pits can likely be obtained as the contents are more carefully examined. For example, the presence of large quantities of wood charcoal may suggest that the pits received the debris from fires used for smoking or perhaps for heat. The presence of animal bone and floral remains may assist in determining the season of use. None of the pits appear to have been left open for long periods — there is, for example, no evidence of water lensing as occurs when a pit is left open during heavy rains. The admixture of several types of pottery is likely the result of either excavating the pits through earlier levels or cleaning up surface debris

and picking up earlier materials in the trash.

### 38CH1259

#### **Introduction**

Poplin et al. recommended that data recovery at this site include an "intensive controlled metal detector survey . . . followed by the excavation of one to two formal . . . units in areas where artifact concentrations were greatest" (Poplin et al. 1991:64). Our research at this site closely follows those recommendations. Substantive changes included our decision to reduce the size the metal detector sampling blocks from up to 30 feet square to 25 by 25 feet. We felt that this would allow greater refinement and reduce operator fatigue. We did intend to limited the amount of formal excavation, since we had no clear information from the survey report that this would be productive (i.e., there are no positive shovel tests and no indication that the metal detector finds evidence any clustering since they were not plotted).

#### **Field Methods**

The first task at this site was to ensure easy access and allow the free operation of the metal detector. The site was situated in a wooded area with pine and mixed hardwood. Although there were no recorded above grade features, we still thought that the most sensitive clearing possible was the best approach and were able to arrange for the entire site area to be hand cleared. This resulted in virtually no damage to the surface layer, but completely opened the site.

Once the clearing was complete we established a series of approximately 51 25-foot square blocks for metal detecting. This grid was oriented north-south and horizontal control was maintained through the use of a rebar with an aluminum cap established in the access road. The grid was a modified Chicora system, with each point designed in relationship to a 0R0 point off the site area. Thus, 200R100 (where the site datum was established) is 200 feet north of the 0R0 point and 100 feet right (or east). Each grid square was designed by its southeast corner. Vertical control

## EXCAVATIONS

was maintained by use of an assumed elevation point, again the 200R100 datum, which was assigned the elevation of 10 feet.

We initially proposed to use a detector in both an all metal mode and a non-ferrous mode. The first survey would be for non-ferrous metals, such as lead and brass. Each "hit" would be flagged using plastic stake pin flags, allowing each of these potential artifacts to be mapped and then recovered. Afterwards, an all-metal mode survey would be conducted, although the individual "hits" would only be tabulated by grid designation and not flagged. We intended, however, to recover a sample of these remains to determine what they represented. We anticipated (based on prior experience at Civil War sites on both Kiawah and James Island) that the bulk would be nails or strap metal. While these may be excellent indicators of the site core, we did not believe that they needed special recovery.

Combined, the data from the metal detector survey would be used to guide the placement of at least two 10-foot units. These might be excavated as a block or may be dispersed. Either way the goal would be to obtain a more representative collection of artifacts, including any faunal remains that might be present. The formal excavation units would also provide an opportunity to determine if features are present.

We used a Tesoro Bandido II™ with an 8-inch concentric coil (electromagnetic type operating at 10KHz). The instrument has the capability to operate in either an all metal mode or discriminate mode (which eliminates ferrous metal response). The all metal mode is the industry standard VFL type which does not require motion of the search coil for proper operation. The discriminate mode is based on motion of the search coil, but allows control over the detector's response to ferrous metals.

An initial run over the entire site failed to produce any significant hits in the discriminate mode, which caused considerable concern. An effort was made to re-check the site location and it was during this effort that we discovered the original metal detector survey failed to record the

location of the artifacts excavated as hits. Based on the measurements from features such as roads, the UTM coordinates, and the sketch map, we were convinced that our work was in the same location as the original survey. We also identified several depressions, which appeared to represent old looting holes.

Based on the very low incidence of non-ferrous items, we decided to abandoned the initial metal detector survey and instead use an all-metals survey. Even this approach, however, produced the identification of only 19 "hits." Each of these was flagged, plotted, and excavated.

The bulk of these hits were relatively modern (although recent debris, such as aluminum cans, were not numbered) and included iron farm parts and unidentifiable metal fragments (which might or might not date to the site's use as picket post). No Civil War military artifacts were recovered. The only items which *may* date from the picket post are several fragments of a brass pocket knife (perhaps matching those previously recovered) and a glass stopper found in a hole with a metal fragment. This stopper is characteristic of those used on alcohol bottles of the mid-nineteenth century.

With almost no materials recovered that could, unequivocally, be associated with the picket post, two 10-foot units were placed on the highest elevation points, in areas of generally higher recovery rates. One was placed southwest of the road, at 165R110, while the other was to the northeast of the road, at 165R175.

These formal units were excavated by hand with the fill screened through ¼-inch mesh using a mechanical screen. We identified an A horizon of light brownish gray (10YR6/2) sand about 0.6 foot in depth over a pale yellow (2.5YR7/4) sand subsoil. There was no evidence of plowscars, so it is unlikely that this area has ever been cultivated.

At the base of the excavations the unit was trowelled, photographed in color slides and black and white, and drawn. No features were identified in either unit. In fact, neither unit produced any artifacts. It appears that all evidence of the picket

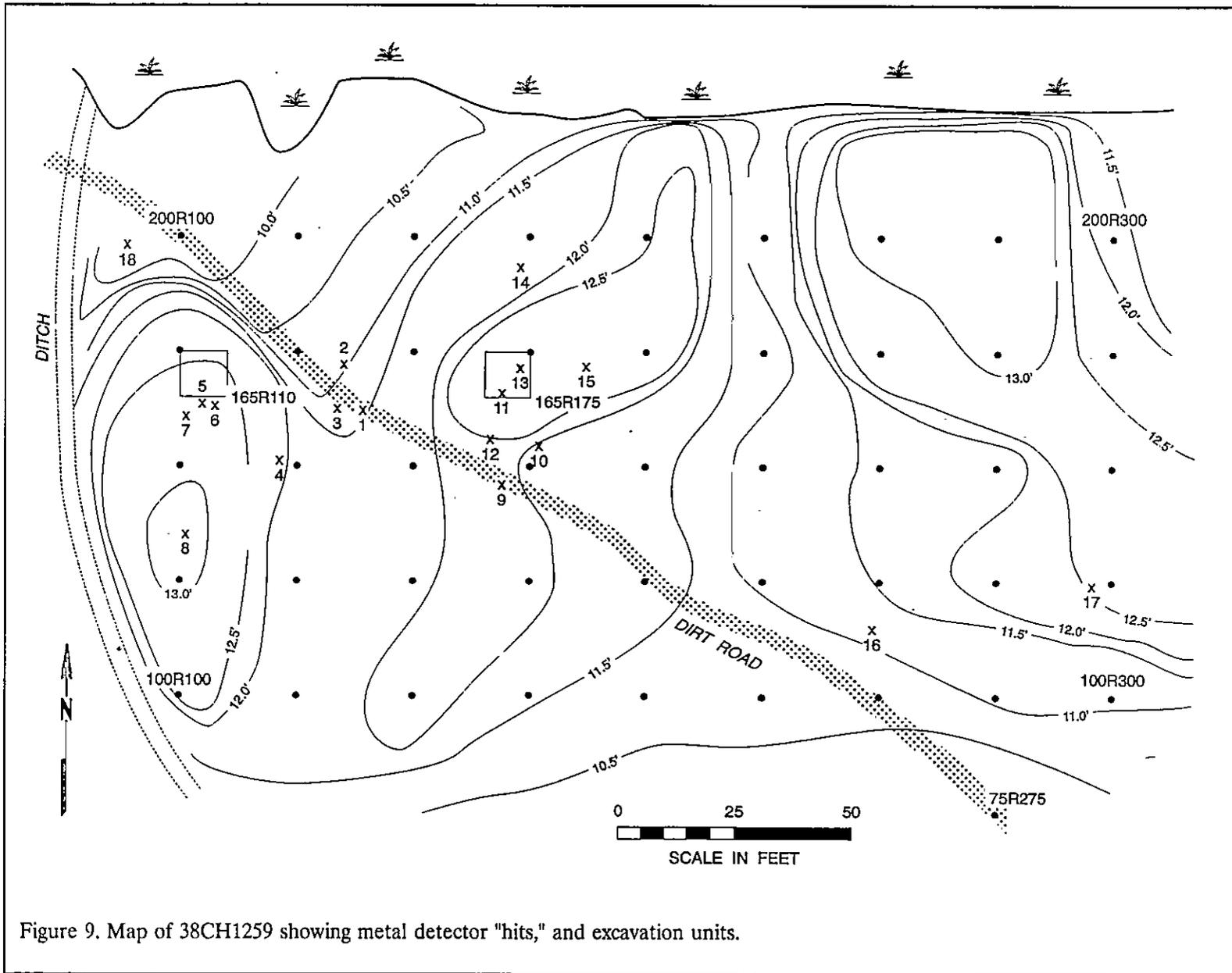


Figure 9. Map of 38CH1259 showing metal detector "hits," and excavation units.

## EXCAVATIONS

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post was collected during the initial, undocumented, metal detector survey or during various collecting efforts by local relic hunters.



## CONCLUSIONS

### 38CH1257

Perhaps the most striking feature of 38CH1257 is that the site produced far more than anticipated, especially given the extent of plowing. Both features and post holes were recovered from the mechanical stripping, in spite of over 100 years of very heavily cultivation. The sparse, and small, surface remains were a poor indicator of what was present at the plow zone.

In addition, however, the remains themselves are somewhat unexpected. The initial survey report fails to provide any clue of a late occupation. Yet at least one feature has yielded peach pits — a clear indication of a post-sixteenth century site. Unfortunately, pottery is not common from this feature and other features at the site tend to produce greater numbers of Middle Woodland, especially Deptford, remains.

The features which are present are not, except for one example, shellfish steaming pits. Instead, they appear to represent trash pits — features which were excavated only for the disposal of village or hamlet trash. The shell which is found scattered across the surface appears to originate in not only the few shellfish steaming pits present, but also in the trash pits, where smaller quantities of shell appear to have been discarded. While we can't exclude the possibility of plowed middens, the pits themselves could probably have produced the shell seen on the surface today.

Furthermore, post holes are present in numbers far exceeding those found at typical coastal shell middens. In terms of numbers alone 38CH1257 seems to suggest multiple structures following the sandy ridge running parallel to the Kiawah River marsh front. In addition, a portion of one structure (Figure 10) was clearly recovered from cut 3. In this area the eastern third of a square structure measuring about 14 feet square was recovered. Probably wattle and daub based on

the size and placement of posts, portions of the structure were apparently replaced at least once, suggesting that the house was used for perhaps a decade. The pottery recovered from the post holes includes primarily Deptford wares, although the structure itself is far more reminiscent of Mississippian dwellings.

This site appears to be without parallels in the area south of Charleston. The Middle Woodland components may relate to a previously undefined settlement system, while those associated with the protohistoric to historic period may provide the first glimpse of the settlements typical of the small coastal tribes encountered by the English in the late seventeenth century.

Although the excavations leave unanswered a broad range of questions which might have been asked, had more been understood about the site, it also clearly documents the extraordinary importance of that portion still left intact on the east side of the Kiawah Island Parkway. As development begins to threaten the remainder of the site, the significant findings of this study should guide not only the research questions, but also the level of effort.

### 38CH1259

Research at this site was, to say the least, disappointing. Not only was no evidence of the Civil War picket post encountered, but it appears that the limited footprint of the site what was intact in the archaeological record was poorly managed during the initial survey efforts, being collected in an undocumented metal detecting effort.

Endeavors such as this seriously undermine efforts to have metal detecting taken seriously as a scholarly archaeological research tool. Collecting metal detector "hits" without recordation has the same result, whether done by

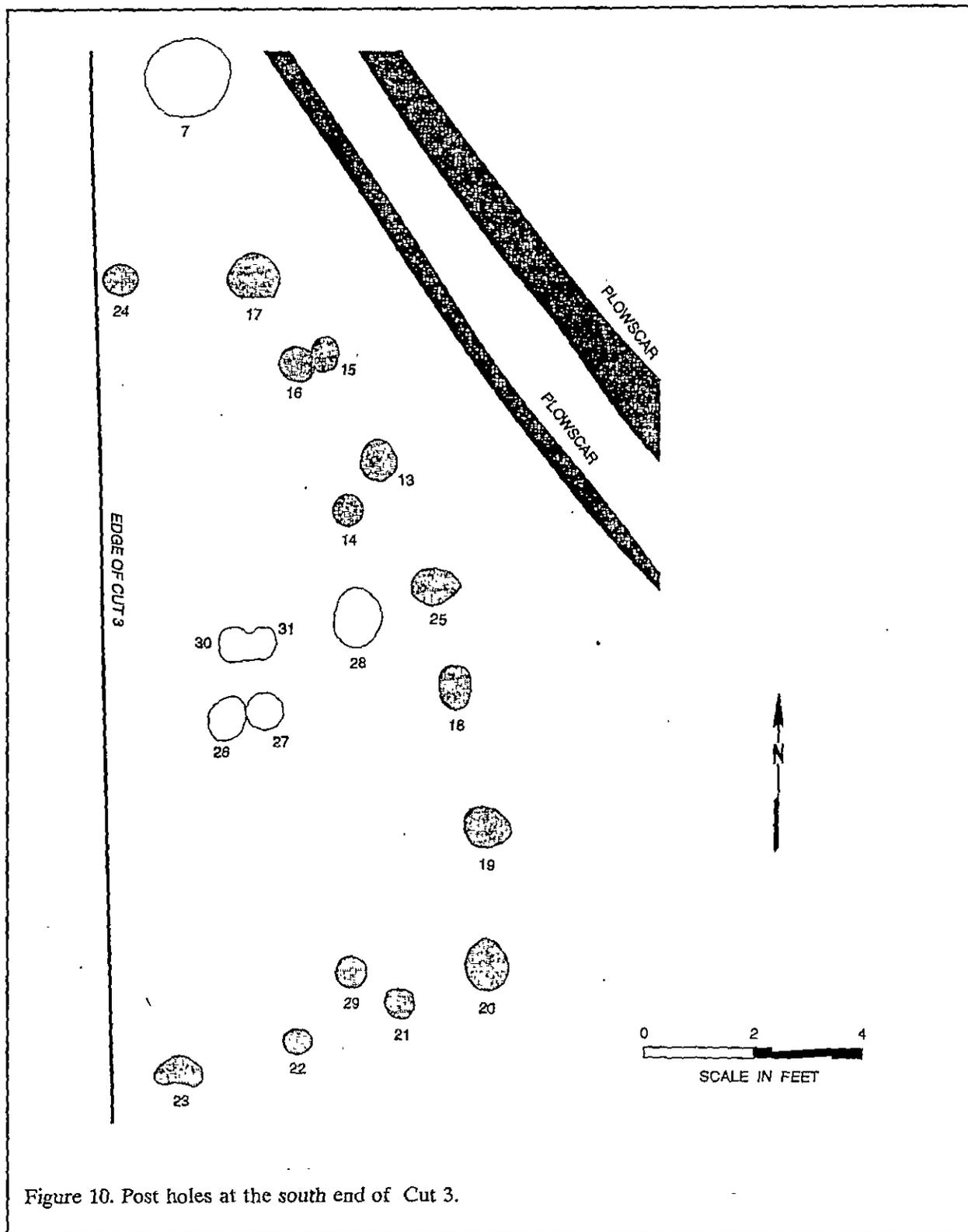


Figure 10. Post holes at the south end of Cut 3.

## CONCLUSIONS

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relic collectors or by trained scholars. Lacking information on where the original Civil War artifacts were recovered, there is little we can say about the spatial arrangement of the site. We can't, for example, speculate on whether the site was used once, or multiple times.

We can only consider the collection as a mass of specimens, presumably representative of the site as a whole. In such a case, it appears that picket posts have very sparse assemblages. Loss and discard at these sites is limited. In fact, the most common artifact appears to be bullets — perhaps dropped in haste in an effort to load a weapon or perhaps simply dropped while fumbling for other items and not considered important enough to pick up. It is likely that many dropped items would quickly disappear in the leaf litter and recovery would be difficult, especially if at dusk or at night.

The assemblage also suggests that while drinking may occasionally have taken place, very few other domestic activities were likely. In particular, there is no evidence of cooking or preparing captured wild animals.

Not surprisingly, the Seabrook picket post indicates that very few activities took place at such sites. Additional research from other sites may help refine this assessment, but it is important that future research also attempt to refine the questions appropriate for such sites — especially since the current work is unable to do so.

### Curation

We anticipate the curation of the artifacts recovered from 38CH1257 and 38CH1259 at the S.C. Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology. The collections have been washed and sorted, and are awaiting final analysis and cataloging. Pottery from the site is typically very small, especially from plowzone proveniences. While the materials from features is larger, the quantity is not great and we anticipate that relatively little can be contributed by any detailed study. An unusual artifact class is tobacco pipes, which two recovered from the cluster of post holes in the south end of Cut 3. It

may be that these, and the associated late ceramics, may be the most interesting artifact classes recovered from 38CH1257.

We anticipate at least one radiometric date will be obtained from Feature 3 at 38CH1257, dating the Ashley pottery found in association with the peach pits. We also anticipate submitting soil samples from this pit for both pollen and phytolith study, with the special interest in recovery of cultigen evidence. We have also identified several clam samples which will be sent to Dr. Cheryl Claassen for seasonality study. The faunal collection is likely too small to warrant detailed study, although it can provide comparative data for the shellfish biomass calculations.

All of the flotation samples from 38CH1257 have been water floated with the heavy fraction dried and refloated to maximize recovery. The analysis of these materials will be incorporated into the final study.

The materials from 38CH1259 are limited to metal items (and one glass item) recovered during metal detecting. These will be evaluated for conservation needs prior to their final curation.



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