CROSSING THE RIVERS OF THE STATE: THE ROLE OF THE FERRY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTH CAROLINA, CIRCA 1680-1920s

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CROSSING THE RIVERS OF THE STATE: THE ROLE OF THE FERRY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTH CAROLINA, CIRCA 1680-1920s

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I am sure that there are other people I should have thanked, so I want to do a blanket thanks to everyone else.

Now that this is over, I am headed to the beach.

ABSTRACT

Often overlooked by historians and archaeologists, ferries played an important part in the transportation network that developed during the colonial period and continued to operate until the twentieth century. Ferries in South Carolina, for instance, were the local connection to the larger Atlantic world network within which South Carolina operated and developed. Without ferries, South Carolina would not have developed as an economic partner in the Atlantic world network. Ferries served as the connection between maritime and inland culture.

This dissertation provides a historical context for a better interpretation of ferries by historians, whether in academic publications, markers, museum exhibits, or other public history tools. It also provides a framework for future archaeological and historical studies, and the enhanced preservation and management of ferries in the Lowcountry.

In the Lowcountry, ferries were not merely a single-function transportation method; they represented a duality of adaption of ideas and technology, but at the same time, ferries stayed relatively unchanged during their history.

They were important economical centers that began as another moneymaking pursuit of the planter elite. Ferries changed from small canoes adapted from Native Americans to European-influenced flatboats to the steamboats operated by the Mount Pleasant Ferry Company. By the end of the nineteenth century, large corporations operated several important ferries as the railroads consolidated their control of the transportation network across the state.

Ferries played an important role in the development of South Carolina; however, until recently, preservationists have all but ignored ferries in the preparation of National Register nominations and state historic markers, two indicators of the perceived importance of a historical resource in South Carolina. Compared to those in neighboring states, South Carolina's preservation community has been slow to identify ferries and ferry-related resources in the state. Many important ferry sites in South Carolina do not have a historical marker to illustrate their importance. Many plantations that included ferries in their operations do not have the landings listed in their National Register nominations.

However, South Carolinians have remembered historic ferries and their contributions to the state's

transportation history in other ways, including the naming of roads and businesses after historic ferries.

PREFACE

There is a picture at the Webb Brothers' Gas Station in Reliance, Tennessee. This community is a rural, historic district along the Hiwassee River and the former home place of my maternal grandfather, Edward Higdon. The Webb Brothers' Gas Station is listed as a contributing element to the historic district, but that is not the important part of the story to me. When you walk in the front door, immediately turn to your right and you will see a picture from circa 1900 that shows my great-great-grandfather, Calvin Higdon, operating a ferry across the Hiwassee River. Based on the way the people are dressed in the picture, I assume that the picture was taken on a Sunday, probably as he took people from one side of the river to the First Baptist Church on the opposite bank. My great-grandfather, Noah Columbus Higdon, was a deacon and Sunday-school teacher at that Baptist church. Until the construction of the bridge in the 1930s, an improvement associated with the Progressive Era road-building program that happened across the South, the ferry served to link one side of the river with the other. My grandfather, Edward Carmack Higdon, told

me stories of driving cattle across the river before the highway department constructed the bridge.

Calvin was not the first person in my family to operate a ferry. According to a Higdon family history, a Higdon operated a ferry along the Pee Dee River in South Carolina during the colonial period.

This study of ferries in South Carolina, thus, seemed natural. The concepts of moving across water and how people adapted to a new environment using the technology they had to create linkages to the outside world have intrigued me. I guess I also liked the idea of the ferry as a place where different people would meet and intermingle on their travels, much like today's airports.

Moreover, the topic of ferries is an understudied one in the historical record as well as in the documentary world of cultural resources management (CRM). This study as it addresses technological, social, and cultural issues aims to contribute to both historical scholarship and to the CRM documentary record.

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INTRODUCTION

In December 2005 and January 2006, the *Post and Courier*, Charleston, South Carolina's daily newspaper, featured stories on a new water taxi service between Charleston and Mount Pleasant, its neighbor across the Cooper River.[1] While this new tourist development excited the writer of the articles, local residents knew that water transportation between the two cities was not new. As early as 1713, a ferry across the Cooper River connected Charleston and Mount Pleasant, and this remained the primary mode of transportation over the river until the

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[1] Brian Hicks, "Hourly Water Taxi Now Under Way Between Charleston, Mount Pleasant," *The Post and Courier,* 28 December 2005, and "Revived Alternative to Driving," *The Post and Courier,* 9 January 2006. The City of Charleston and the Town of Mount Pleasant are located on opposite banks of the mouth of the Cooper River. Historically, Mount Pleasant was a small community, but the unbridled development that has occurred along the coast in the past 20 years has forever changed the makeup of the town. The development of Charleston in the twentieth century is well documented. Two books on the recent development of Charleston are Stephanie E. Yuhl, *A Golden Haze of Memory: The Making of Historic Charleston* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), and Walter J. Fraser, *Charleston! Charleston! The History of a Southern City* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989).

construction of the Grace Memorial Bridge in 1929.[2] Even with the presence of the state-of-the-art bridges over the mighty rivers of Charleston, it appeared that the ferry was returning to the Lowcountry.

Public fascination with the new water taxis brings to light many questions and issues for public historians regarding the importance, memory, and cultural meaning of ferries in South Carolina, especially in the Lowcountry region of the state. In this age of rapid transportation, why would people take a slower mode of transportation? Why would people pay to cross a river that they could cross on a bridge for free? Why was the return of the ferry so important to the people of the area? More importantly, what does the ferry represent in South Carolina's Lowcountry history, and what does it represent in the Lowcountry's historical memory?

Often overlooked by historians and archaeologists, ferries played an important part in the transportation

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[2] The Grace Memorial Bridge was the only bridge over the Cooper River in Charleston from 1929 until the construction of the Silas N. Pearman Bridge in 1966. In 2005, the South Carolina Department of Transportation completed the Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge and removed the two older bridges. Susan King, "Cooper River Bridges," in *South Carolina Encyclopedia,* ed. Walter Edgar (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 225-226.

network that developed during the colonial period, and continued to operate until the twentieth century. Underwater archaeologist Christer Westerdahl argues that ferries and inland road networks were important because they were part of a larger maritime cultural landscape that includes ports, harbors, wharves, and other structures. Ferries were "the first *transit point* at which river-based cultural area [met] the outer world."[3] Ferries in South Carolina, for instance, were the local connection to the larger Atlantic world network within which South Carolina operated and developed. Without ferries, South Carolina would not have developed as an economic partner in the Atlantic world network. They served as the connection between maritime and inland culture. It is their role as connectors that make them a significant public history topic.

Despite the significance of ferries to the growth of South Carolina's Lowcountry, scholars have rarely examined them solely.[4] This study explores the role of ferries

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[3] Christer Westerdahl, "The Maritime Cultural Landscape," *The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 21, no. 1 (1992): 6.

[4] Judith A. McGaw, *Early American Technology: Making and Doing Things From the Colonial Era to 1850* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 10.

through various disciplinary prisms to assess their significant role in the economic, political, and social development of South Carolina from the early colonial period to the early twentieth century. This study provides a historical context for a better interpretation of ferries by historians, whether in academic publications, markers, museum exhibits, or other public history tools. The dissertation also will provide a framework for future archaeological and historical studies, and the enhanced preservation and management of ferries in the Lowcountry.

This study developed out of my needs as a professional in the cultural resources management (CRM) field. In response to the passage of several pieces of historic preservation legislation in the late 1960s and 1970s, archaeologists created the term *cultural resources management* to describe the identification, evaluation, and management of cultural resources. While archaeologists first developed the concept of CRM, those in other disciplines such as historians, historic geographers, architectural historians, and landscape architects quickly

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McGaw listed the operation and construction of ferries as one of the areas of American technology that needs investigation.

joined in the process.[5] At the beginning, CRM focused only on the management and preservation of cultural resources on governmental lands; however, that soon expanded and now several private groups follow CRM practices in the management of their lands.[6] The blending of public history and archaeology in CRM has also brought to light problems in integrating the two disciplines' different methods and ideas.[7]

The basis for CRM work in South Carolina and most of the nation is the Section 106 process under the National Historic Preservation Act. Section 106 requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their

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[5] Thomas King, *Thinking About Cultural Resource Management: Essays from the Edge* (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 2002), 1. Currently there is not a definitive history of the CRM profession in the United States. Several groups such as the American Cultural Resources Association have attempted to conduct oral histories of the early pioneers in the CRM field. Archaeological groups in South Carolina should conduct similar interviews with similar persons in the state to preserve the early history of CRM in the state.

[6] Yvonne A. Meyer, "Historic Preservation in Skagway, Alaska and Dawson City, Yukon Territory: A Comparison of Cultural Resource Management Policies in Two Northern Towns" (Master's thesis, University of Alaska Anchorage, 2008), 6.

[7] Thomas King, "Prehistory and Beyond: The Place of Archaeology," in *The American Mosaic: Preserving a Nation's Heritage*, ed. Robert E. Stipe and Antoinette J. Lee (Washington, D.C.: US/ICOMOS, 1987), 236-264.

undertakings on historic properties and afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation a reasonable opportunity to comment on such undertakings.[8] This usually requires a cultural resources survey of the area of effect to inventory and assess any potential historic properties in the area.[9] Most of the time, consulting firms conduct these inventories, and their findings are reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Office. These reports are the "gray literature" that forms the basis of a relatively untapped source for historians.

As part of several of these surveys, I found that the historical literature related to several historic resources we assessed was lacking. For example, while we inventory the remains of inland rice fields, an important element to South Carolina's early economy, there has been no comprehensive study. The same was true of other historical resources in the state, such as gas stations, fishing camps, and motor courts. This dissertation developed out of

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[8] 36 CFR PART 800 — PROTECTION OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES (incorporating amendments effective August 5, 2004).

[9] For an overview of the Section 106 process and other federal preservation laws, see Thomas King, *Federal Planning and Historic Places: The Section 106 Process* (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 2000).

a need to study ferries to better understand them in a large context.

In addition to aiding the assessment of the resources in the Section 106 process, this dissertation also strives to show the importance of ferries as sites of connections. This includes the connection between the maritime and inland landscapes, but also the connections between people.[10] At ferry sites, we can explore not only transportation history but also issues related to the labor force, business and military history, and other topics. It is important that public historians and other CRM professionals go beyond the transportation history and explore how ferry sites can present other aspects of history.

Through their material culture, ferries offer many different paths for the historian to explore and present different stories. As Rebecca Conard explains in her study of railroad depots in Iowa:

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[10] In the late 2000s, several archaeological conferences have investigated the connections between maritime and inland landscapes. For example, Edward Salo, "An Ethnohistory of Ferry Transportation in the South Carolina Lowcountry," paper presented at the North American Society for Oceanic History/CAMM Conference, Pensacola, Florida, 2007.

> history offers another way of viewing the tangible remains of the past: historians are not trained to see the world around them in terms of stylistic or artistic elements, nor are they trained to see old buildings as structures to be rescued ... The historical perspective leads one to consider the underlying reasons for and consequences of past activities which have affected the status of tangible resources still with us. By extension, it forces one to examine the philosophies and motives that shape current decisions.[11]

Maritime landscapes, like ferries, offer an opportunity to explore other historical themes than just transportation. As illustrated in this study, public historians can use ferries to discuss diverse topics such as the changing roles of African American labor, the creolization of technology in South Carolina, and the development of legal history of the state. In addition, maritime landscapes offer an opportunity to use historic preservation for economic and urban renewal.[12]

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[11] Rebecca Conard, ""Once I Built a Railroad": Viewing History from the Depot Platform," *Public Historian* 14, no. 2 (Spring 1992), 33.

[12] Andrew Hurley, "Narrating the Urban Waterfront: The Role of Public History in Community Revitalization," *The Public Historian* 28, no. 4 (Autumn 2006): 19-50.

The Importance of Ferries in South Carolina's History

Ferries contributed significantly to multiple themes of South Carolina's history.[13] However, for an unexplained reason, many historical studies of America's maritime heritage ignore the role of ferries.[14] Because of the very

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[13] For examinations of the importance of ferries in other colonies, see Jess Lynn Luthy, "Transportation in Colonial Virginia" (Ph.D. diss., American University, 1933), John Perry, *American Ferryboats* (New York: Wilfred Funk, Inc., 1957), and Alan D. Watson, "The Ferry in Colonial North Carolina: A Vital Link in Transportation," *North Carolina Historical Review* 51, no. 3 (1974): 247-260. Other works include Jane E. Allen, "Lying at the Port of Philadelphia: Vessel Types 1725-1775," *American Neptune* 53, no. 3 (1993): 149-176, Richard L. Champlin, "In the Wake of the Ferries," *Newport History* 42, no. 3(1969): 61-73, Charles F. Gritzner Jr., "Louisiana Waterway Crossings," *Louisiana Studies* 2, no. 4(1963): 213-232, Ruth M. Keesey, "Rivers and Roads in Old Bergen County," *Halve Maen* 39, no. 3 (1964): 9-10, 15, Kevin K. Olsen, "The Periagua: A Traditional Workboat of the New York/New Jersey Area," *American Neptune* 54, no. 3 (1994): 199-204, Donald C. Ringwald, "History of the Kingston-Rhinecliff Ferry," *Steamboat Bill* 45 , no. 2 (1988): 88-103, Miriam Nansfield Stimson, "From Shore to Shore," *Inland Seas* 28 , no. 3 (1972): 171-182, and Alice Wood, "Looking for Gilbert Berry's Property," *Museum Service* 39, no. 3-4 (1966): 43-45. Several works have also studied ferries in Canada during the colonial period. They include George MacLaren, "Communications in the Northumberland Strait and the Gulf of St. Lawrence 1775-1951," *Nova Scotia Historical Quarterly* 1 , no. 2 (1971): 101-126, Joan Payzant and Lewis Payzant, *Like a Weaver's Shuttle* (Halifax, NS: Nimbus, 1979), and Stephen A. Royle, "Bridging the Gap: Prince Edward Island and the Confederation Bridge," *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 14, no. 2 (1999): 242-254.

[14] See Benjamin W. Labaree, William M. Fowler Jr., John B. Hattendorf, Jeffrey J. Safford, Edward W. Sloan, and Andrew W. German, *America and the Sea: A Maritime History*

nature of South Carolina Lowcountry's geography, it was vital, from the start of the colony, to have a means to cross the many rivers that flow from the interior to the Atlantic Ocean.[15] The number of ferries that developed in the first fifty years of the colony is apparent in a 1730 map of the political division of South Carolina, which shows ferries at several rivers, such as the Savannah,

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(Mystic, CT: Mystic Seaport, 1998), and Eloise Engle and Arnold S. Lott, *America's Maritime Heritage* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1973). Neither one of these studies discusses ferries. Ferries have been studied in other English-speaking nations. See L. M. W. Weir, "Ferries in Scotland between 1603 and the Advent of Steam," Ph.D. diss., University of Edinburgh, 1985.

[15] Charles F. Kovacik and John J. Winberry, *South Carolina: The Making of a Landscape* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1987), 81. Kovacik and Winberry is the definitive work on the geography and landscape of South Carolina. The rivers of the state have not been thoroughly studied as rural landscapes. The one exception is Henry Savage, *River of the Carolinas: The Santee* (1956; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968); however, Savage prepared this work before many of the important examinations of landscapes appeared. There is a definite need for scholars to reexamine the important rivers of South Carolina—the Ashley, Broad, Combahee, Cooper, Santee, Pee Dee, and Wando. Jamie W. Moore, "The Ashley and the Cooper Rivers," in *Rolling Rivers*, ed. Richard A. Bartlett (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1984), 10-13. Rivers are beginning to be looked at in the preservation community as part of the historical landscape. For example, both the revised Ashley River Historic District [Draft] and the Combahee Ferry Historic District [Draft] National Historic Landmark Nominations include the rivers as contributing elements to the historic landscape.

Combahee, Edisto, Cooper, Ashepoo, Ashley, Broad, Pee Dee, Wando, and Santee.

Because of the importance of agriculture to the colony, the initial settlement in South Carolina focused on the Coastal Plain and specifically the Charleston area. By the early 1700s, to meet the needs of the growing population, expansion of South Carolina colonial settlement from south of Charleston toward Port Royal and Beaufort resulted in the establishment of several unregulated private ferries along the rivers of the Lowcountry. In the South Carolina backcountry, on the other hand, river fords, not ferries, predominated as river crossings.[16] To manage the developing transportation infrastructure, the South Carolina Colonial Assembly in 1703 chartered the first regulated ferry in South Carolina on the Santee River.[17]

The Colonial Assembly fixed rates and regulated the conditions of ferry operations. Based on requirements of the charter, the owners operated the ferry for a profit. For example, according to a 1715 act of the Colonial

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[16] Robert M. Weir, *Colonial South Carolina: A History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), 158.

[17] Edward C. Gilmore, "South Carolina River Ferries," *South Carolina History Illustrated* 1, no. 2 (1970): 45-46.

Assembly, the lawmakers charged the operator of the Combahee Ferry with maintaining

> a stout boat, a loading ramp, depending rope and capstan, a canoe for attending the ferry, and shelter for travelers on the end of the Combahee causeway. With a permanent shelter for travelers and a rope-drawn ferry operated by capstans, this was undoubtedly the most elaborate and most used facility in the southern district.[18]

While the ferry was just one element of the transportation network that had developed in the Lowcountry, one can see the particular importance of ferries by examining Mouzon's 1776 map of South Carolina, which shows two ferries over the Pee Dee and Savannah rivers, four over the Congaree, and one each over the Black, Combahee, Coosaw, Edisto, and Waccamaw rivers.[19]

While ferries served as important travel stops before the Civil War, they also developed an additional use that supported the slave-based society of the South. Historian George C. Rogers Jr. suggested that ferry crossings became checkpoints for governmental officials to apprehend runaway

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[18] Lawrence S. Rowland, Alexander Moore, and George C. Rogers Jr., *The History of Beaufort County, South Carolina: Volume 1, 1514-1861* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 123.

[19] Gilmore, "South Carolina River Ferries," 46.

slaves and indentured servants or deserting seamen. Some ferries required at least one white man on board to inspect the travelers. If one's identity was questioned, then he was required to obtain a certificate of identity from the justice of the peace.[20] In 1801, as a means to control the movement of slaves, the South Carolina General Assembly passed legislation forbidding the transportation of slaves on ferries without written permission.[21]

Many historians have argued that the rivers in South Carolina's Lowcountry, especially along the Ashley, Cooper, and Combahee rivers, affected the development of the colony's economy and culture, making it distinctive from the other colonies.[22] Historian Lawrence Rowland contends that in the Beaufort District, the Commons House of Assembly[23] established needed ferries and parishes to ease

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[20] George C. Rogers Jr., *The History of Georgetown County, South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1970): 44.

[21] Gilmore, "South Carolina River Ferries," 48.

[22] Robert K. Ackerson, *South Carolina Colonial Land Policies* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1977): 30; Bradford Botwick, "Underwater Historic Archaeological Sites in South Carolina: A Research Plan" (Master's thesis, University of South Carolina, 1989), 10; Moore, "The Ashley and the Cooper Rivers," 10.

[23] The Commons House of Assembly was the lower house of South Carolina's legislature and only elected branch of

travel to church and for commerce as settlers developed portions of the district.[24] The importance of rivers in aiding transportation during the early colonial period is well documented; however, by the 1720s the primary means of travel was by land.[25]

The creation of ferries also reflected a region's political power. Historian George Lloyd Johnson Jr. argues that in the mid-1700s, backcountry residents desired a better transportation network as a means to develop commerce with the coastal markets. Better transportation facilitated the growth of towns and more social interaction as well. Of course, at the time, the political power in the state resided in the Lowcountry, so it was not until after the Revolutionary War and the expansion of the backcountry

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government in the colony from 1670 to 1776. After 1744, the branch was referred to as the Assembly. See Keith Krawczynski, "Commons House of Assembly," in *South Carolina Encyclopedia*, ed. Walter Edgar (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 212.

[24] Lawrence S. Rowland, "Eighteenth Century Beaufort: A Study of South Carolina's Southern Parishes to 1800" (Ph.D. diss., University of South Carolina, 1978), 124.

[25] Carl Bridenbaugh, *Cities in the Wilderness* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), 335; Joseph A. Ernst and H. Roy Merrens, "'Camden's Turrets Pierce the Skies!': The Urban Process in the Southern Colonies during the Eighteenth Century," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 30, no. 3 (1973): 558; Rogers, *The History of Georgetown County, South Carolina*, 28.

with new settlers that roads, bridges, and ferries arrived there.[26]

The Importance of Ferries in American History

Other areas of the United States shared the Lowcountry's pattern of ferry development.[27] Ferry-supported transportation networks supported the economic and urban growth of several major cities and regions.[28] Historians

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[26] George Lloyd Johnson Jr., *The Frontier in the Colonial South: South Carolina Backcountry, 1736-1800*, Contributions in American History vol. 175 (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1997).

[27] Several historic studies have examined the development of the transportation infrastructure. They include Maurice G. Baxter, *Henry Clay and the American System* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995), Lee William Formwalt, "Benjamin Henry Latrobe and the Development of Internal Improvements in the New Republic 1796-1820" (Ph.D. diss., Catholic University of America, 1977), Harry N. Scheiber, ed., *Transportation and the Early Nation: Papers Presented at an Indiana American Revolution Bicentennial Symposium* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1982), and Robert C. Post, *Technology, Transport, and Travel in American History* (NA: American Historical Association, 2003). The literature is considerably more extensive than this.

[28] John L. Lamb, "The Architecture of the Grain Trade on the Illinois and Michigan Canal," *Pioneer America Society Transactions* 26 (2003): 38-45; Laurence J. Malone, *Opening the West: Federal Internal Improvements before 1860* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1998); William H. Thompson, *Transportation in Iowa: A Historical Summary* (Des Moines: Iowa Dept. of Transportation, 1989); H. Roger Grant, *Ohio on the Move: Transportation in the Buckeye State* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2000); David B. Klein and John

argue whether development of transportation accelerated population growth, westward expansion, economic growth, development of commercial markets, formation of investment capital, political transition from colonies to confederated states to nation, or some combination thereof.[29] Contemporaries also observed the vital role of ferry transportation in the new nation. French social and political commentator Alexis de Tocqueville asserted that the country's internal transportation system strengthened

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Majewski, "Plank Road Fever in Antebellum America: New York State Origins," *New York History* 75, no. 1 (1994): 39-65; Gwilym R. Roberts, "The Struggle for Decent Transportation in Western Rutland County, 1820-1850," *Vermont History* 69 (Supplement) (2001): 122-132; Earl F. Woodward, "Internal Improvements in Texas under Governor Peter Hansborough Bell's Administration, 1849-1853," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 76, no. 2 (1972): 161-182; Joel Tarr, *Transportation Innovation and Changing Spatial Patterns in Pittsburgh, 1850-1934* (Chicago: Public Works Historic Society, 1978); James O. Drummond, "Transportation and the Shaping of the Physical Environment in an Urban Place: Newark, 1820-1900" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1979); David Dauer, "Colonial Philadelphia's Intraregional Transportation System: An Overview," *Working Papers from the Regional Economic History Research Center* 2, no. 3 (1979): 1-16; James L. McCorkle Jr., "Moving Perishables to Market: Southern Railroads and the Nineteenth-Century Origins of Southern Truck Farming," *Agricultural History* 66, no. 1 (1992): 42-62; David G. Surdam, "The Antebellum Texas Cattle Trade across the Gulf of Mexico," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 100, no. 4 (1997): 477-492.

[29] For a discussion of technology and its determinism, see Leo Marx and Merritt Roe Smith, eds., *Does Technology Drive History: The Dilemma of Technological Determinism* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995).

the bonds of the Union, which resulted, he claimed, in "Americans becoming assimilated" into one culture and one nation.[30] After the Civil War, the development of the railroad network and, later, highways and air transportation would result in other major changes to the national landscape as citizens expanded westward, creating new economic centers.[31]

In addition to their role as connectors, ferries are also important in the economic development of communities. Because of the ferries' locations on trade routes of local or regional significance, many other commercial services (e.g., warehouses, trading posts, taverns) usually developed nearby.[32] These early commercial institutions

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[30] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. J.P. Mayer, trans. George Lawrence (1969; New York: HarperPernnial, 1988), 384-385.

[31] John Jakle, "Landscapes Redesigned for the Automobile," in *The Making of the American Landscape* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 293-310.

[32] The institutions that developed along transportation routes are referred to as "travel capitalism." For a discussion of the development of travel capitalism, see Wilma A. Dunaway, *The First American Frontier: Transition to Capitalism in Southern Appalachia, 1700-1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), and Wilma A. Dunaway, "The Spatial Organization of Trade and Class Struggle over Transport Infrastructure: Southern Appalachia, 1830-1860," in *Space and Transport in the World-System*, ed. Paul S. Ciccantell and Stephen G. Bunker

frequently contributed to the development of the local economy and sometimes served as catalysts for the creation of a new town. Taverns especially were important social, political, and economic institutions in American colonial life.[33] Many current cities and towns located near historic ferry crossings owe much of their initial development to the economic importance of the ferry. In Virginia, for example, the location of towns was usually the result of an individual's efforts. Typically the individual established a settlement either in a valley or near some other economic center such as a ferry.[34]

Ferries remained important in South Carolina's Lowcountry for a longer period than in many of the other colonies. Geographer Fred Kniffen argues that ferries diminished in New England due to wartime lessons. After the

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(Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 107-124. The concept of travel capitalism is based on the World Systems model.

[33] Tyrel G. Moore Jr., "Role of Ferryboat Landings in East Tennessee's Economic Development, 1790-1870,".*Studies in the Social Studies* 18 (1979): 1-5; Diana diZ. Rockman, and Nan A. Rothschild, "City Tavern, Country Tavern: An Analysis of Four Colonial Sites," *Historical Archaeology* XVIII, no. 2 (1984): 112.

[34] Hermann Wellenreuther, Fred Siegel, Joseph A. Ernst, and H. Roy Merrens, "Urbanization in the Colonial South: A Critique," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series 31, no. 4 (October 1974): 663.

Revolutionary War, because of the length of time required for large armies to cross rivers by ferry, New Englanders saw the need to construct covered bridges as an alternative.[35] However, in South Carolina, because of its geography, the agrarian nature of the economy, and its political ideology, the ferry remained important until after the Civil War. Thereafter, ferries continued to lose their importance as railroads expanded across the state. In 1898, the state government ceased to regulate ferries. With the advent of the automobile and Progressive Era bridge construction program[36], ferries all but ceased to operate in the state.[37]

The operators and regular patrons of ferries also constitute an interesting and significant segment of the early American population. Historical archaeologist James G. Gibb suggests that the "study of the wealth and position of ferrymen and their clients, and of the individuals

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[35] Fred B. Kniffen, "The American Covered Bridge," *Geographical Review* 41 (January 1951): 114.

[36] The history of bridge construction stretches back many centuries, linked closely to technologies associated with stone, wood, iron, and steel construction. It is the development of light steel production in the late nineteenth century that greatly expands the ability to construct bridges cheaply in the early twentieth century.

[37] Kniffen, "The American Covered Bridge," 114.

competing for ferry licenses," contributes to "a broader understanding of colonial social relations and how those relations were expressed in travel when strangers encountered one another."[38] Furthermore, Larry McKee and Jillian Galle argue that "the social role of transportation nodes in a sparsely populated landscape should have been an obvious focus in researching."[39]

Several academic works about ferries in Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee hint at the potential of this line of scholarly inquiry.[40] For example, Charles Farmer argues that, in the absence of towns in the decentralized southern sections of colonial Virginia, economic services dispersed to plantations; the plantations became centers for stores, mills, artisan shops, and other economic activities. Because of ferries' importance as trade

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[38] James Gibb, "Archaeologists as Storytellers Imaginary, But by No Means Unimaginable: Storytelling, Science, and Historical Archaeology," *Historical Archaeology* 34, no. 2 (2000): 3.

[39] Larry McKee and Jillian Galle, "Scientific Creativity and Creative Science: Looking at the Future of Archaeological Storytelling," *Historical Archaeology* 34, no. 2 (2000): page numbers missing.

[40] The earliest work to examine the ferry in the development of a colonial transportation network was Luthy, "Transportation in Colonial Virginia;" see also Watson, "The Ferry in Colonial North Carolina: A Vital Link in Transportation," 247-260.

centers, they too served as centers for economic services.[41] Geographer Tyrel Moore argues that "the use of ferries in East Tennessee was comparable to that in other portions of the eastern United States. The temporal span of the ferry's importance, however, seems to have been greater in Tennessee and the rest of the South, where replacement by bridging was slower."[42]

Although Tennessee developed approximately 100 years after South Carolina, many of the same patterns of ferry development existed there.[43] Because several of the rivers in Tennessee were too wide, large, and swift to ford, ferries served as "vital transportation conduits, facilitating westward expansion and … stimulating regional

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[41] Charles J. Farmer, *In the Absence of Towns: Settlements and Country Trade in Southside Virginia, 1730-1800* (Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1993). While the development of ferries in Farmer's work mirrors the development in South Carolina, the geography of southern Virginia is very different from South Carolina's Lowcountry.

[42] Tyrel G. Moore Jr., "The Role of Ferry Crossings in the Development of the Transportation Network in East Tennessee, 1790-1974" (Master's thesis, University of Tennessee, 1975), 2.

[43] See Moore, "Role of Ferryboat Landings in East Tennessee's Economic Development, 1790-1870," 1-18, Tony Holmes, "Early Cherokee Ferry Crossings of the Eastern Tennessee River Basin," *The Journal of East Tennessee History* 62 (1990): 54-79, and Watson, "The Ferry in Colonial North Carolina: A Vital Link in Transportation," 247-260.

economic growth."[44] Moore sees ferry landings as "important transportation centers as well as trading centers … [and] outlets for local agricultural products" and influential in shaping the economic development of the state.[45] Historian Tony Holmes argues that ferries "played an important role in the development of Tennessee's early frontier … [and] served as foci for commercial activity."[46]

Thesis Statement and Research Questions

In South Carolina's Lowcountry, ferries were not merely a single-function transportation method; they represented a duality of adaption of ideas and technology, but at the same time, ferries stayed relatively unchanged during their history. They were important economical centers that began as another moneymaking pursuit of the planter elite. Ferries changed from small canoes adapted from Native Americans to European-influenced flatboats to

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[44] Holmes, "Early Cherokee Ferry Crossings of the Eastern Tennessee River Basin," 54.

[45] Moore, "Role of Ferryboat Landings," 7. See also Moore, "The Role of Ferry Crossings in the Development of the Transportation Network in East Tennessee, 1790-1794," for a discussion of early Federal-period development of ferries in the state.

[46] Holmes, "Early Cherokee Ferry Crossings of the Eastern Tennessee River Basin," 54.

the steamboats operated by the Mount Pleasant Ferry Company. By the end of the nineteenth century, large corporations operated several important ferries as the railroads consolidated their control of the transportation network across the state.

Several research questions guide this assessment of ferries in South Carolina's Lowcountry development. Research questions address the economic and transportation history of the ferries, as well as the social history of the various people who used the ferries.[47]

1. First, how were ferries regulated, and how did that regulation affect the economic development of certain areas? Did the regulations change with the shift from royal government to state government? What were the changes in the requirements to operate the ferries? How did the regulations address African Americans? What restrictions were placed on slaves and freedmen?

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[47]For a discussion of how to examine the history of the people who used a ferry, see W.L. Rusho, "Living History at Lee's Ferry," *Journal of the West* 7 (1968), 64-75.

2. How did the technology of ferries and ferry sites evolve to integrate new technology and expanding transportation needs? Did ferry landing designs change because of the introduction of new boat types?

3. How did the ferry affect the economic development of the area? What commercial institutions developed around the ferries? What towns and cities developed because of their location near a ferry site? What towns did not develop even though they were located near ferries? What were the differences?

4. What other business activities did ferry operators usually pursue?

5. What roles did ferry sites play during the Indian, Colonial, Revolutionary, and Civil wars in the state? What battles occurred at these sites because of their importance in transportation?

6. How did ferry creation and development facilitate the development of infrastructure for other community institutions — taverns and other gathering spots — that served the larger region? Since ferry operators were travel facilitators and were in contact with the larger world through the travelers, were they somehow different from other local residents?

7. How have historic ferries been identified, assessed, and interpreted in the state? When assessing ferries and ferry locations, are there particular issues and/or patterns that surveyors need to address or keep in mind? What work needs to be done, and how can that be accomplished?

Historiography of Ferries in South Carolina

Surprisingly, recent historical scholarship has left untouched many aspects of South Carolina's ferry or transportation history. Walter Edgar has produced a comprehensive history of South Carolina; however, it is a survey and does not specifically address the importance of

ferries.[48] Currently, Robert Weir's *Colonial South Carolina: A History* remains the most comprehensive synthesis of the colonial period, but it does not significantly address the importance of ferries.[49]

An examination of the historiography of ferries in South Carolina finds that there has only been one article that traces the history of ferries in the state, and it was written in 1970 and not published in a scholarly journal.[50] The article is primarily descriptive in nature and does not provide any real interpretation of the importance of ferries in the state's history. Nor do other maritime histories deal with the development or importance of ferries. For instance, P.C. Coker's significant work on Charleston's maritime heritage contains little discussion of ferries, although several important ferries operated in the Charleston area.[51]

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[48] Walter Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998).

[49] Weir, *Colonial South Carolina*. This work is an excellent synthesis of previous studies, but it lacks notations, making it difficult to review the evidence. However, there is only one reference to the importance of ferries (see page 158).

[50] Gilmore, "South Carolina River Ferries," 44-48.

[51] P. C. Coker, *Charleston's Maritime Heritage, 1670-1865* (Charleston, SC: CokerCraft Press, 1987). Coker gives

This general scholarly neglect has changed in the last twenty years. Since the late 1980s, archaeologists, both academic and in the CRM world, have produced several important works that address historical themes related to ferry boats, landings, and ferry sites. During their study of the Tombigbee River as part of the construction of the Tombigbee Canal, archaeologists stated,

> Examination of ferry sites, with their dock construction and refuse areas, extant engineering elements of bridges and artifact concentrations from historic fords, is necessary for a complete definition of the historic road system.[52]

In 1988, South Carolina archaeologist Mark Newell commented in a review of the rivers around Charleston that many ferry boats and sites remained and could provide important studies. To assist in these investigations, underwater archaeologist Bradford Botwick established a research plan for historic underwater archaeological sites in South Carolina dating from 1670 to 1860. This plan included

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one paragraph to the ferries in Charleston and only names the Hibben Ferry.

[52] Larry Murphy and Allen R. Saltus, *Phase II Identification and Evaluation of Submerged Cultural Resources in the Tombigbee River Multi-Resource District, Alabama and Mississippi,* Report of Investigations vol. 17 (Tuscaloosa: The Office of Archaeological Research, University of Alabama, 1981), 9.

ferries and ferry boats. Underwater archaeologists from the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology (SCIAA) conducted numerous studies of shipwrecks and landings during the 1980s and 1990s.[53] Archaeologists in neighboring states have also studied ferries. For example, Gordon P. Watts and Wesley K. Hall investigated Blossom's Ferry in North Carolina in the mid-1980s.[54]

With that said, archaeologist Jim Errante argues that, while a large percentage of plantations in South Carolina and Georgia maintain elements related to their "waterscape"

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[53] Botwick, "Underwater Historic Archaeological Sites in South Carolina: A Research Plan"; Mark Newell, "Lost Ladies of the Rivers: An Overview of South Carolina's Vanishing Heritage of Shipwrecks" (paper presented at Dive South Carolina '88, Columbia, South Carolina, 1988). For other studies see Lynn Harris, *The Waccamaw-Richmond Hill Waterfront Project 1991: Laurel Hill Barge No. 2 (38GE420)*, Research Manuscript Series 214 (Columbia, SC: South Carolina Institute of Anthropology and Archaeology, 1992). Ironically, one of the most important underwater excavations in South Carolina was the Brown's Ferry Vessel; however, this boat was not a ferryboat; it was only located near Brown's Ferry.

[54] See Gordon P. Watts and Wesley K. Hall, *An Investigation of Blossom's Ferry on the Northeast Cape Fear River* (Greenville, NC: Eastern Carolina University, 1986) for a more in-depth examination of the ferry, and Gordon P. Watts Jr., "Investigating Historic Blossom's Ferry, North Carolina," *Archaeology* 38, no. 5 (September/October 1985): 26-33, for a more public presentation of the research. North Carolina has a very active underwater archaeological program primarily because of the program at Eastern Carolina University.

(boat landings, sunken vessels, rice fields, causeways, etc.), "most archaeological studies, especially in … CRM projects," have failed to assess or inventory them.[55] Currently, several CRM projects across the state are investigating ferries.

University of South Carolina students from both the history and anthropology departments have produced numerous graduate studies relating to South Carolina's maritime history that deal with ferries. Suzanne Linder and Rowena Nylund dealt with maritime histories of the Pee Dee and Black rivers, respectively. They explored trade on the rivers, the types of boats used, and the river's economic contribution to settlement as a transportation system. Whereas Linder's work spans the prehistoric era to the nineteenth century, Nylund's study revolves around a colonial-period shipwreck excavated and recovered by SCIAA in the 1970s. Her thesis provides a historical context for the use of the sailing vessel on the Black River.[56]

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[55] James R. Errante, "Waterscape Archaeology: Recognizing the Archaeological Significance of the Plantation Waterscape," in *Carolina's Historical Landscape: Archaeological Perspectives*, ed. Linda F. Stine, Martha Zierden, Lesley M. Drucker, and Christopher Judge (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1997), 206.

[56] Suzanne Linder, "River in Time: A Cultural Study of Yadkin Pee Dee System to 1825" (Ph.D. diss., University of

One of the most important studies of a South Carolina ferry is William Barr's investigation of the economic and social context of Strawberry Ferry, a colonial ferry landing on the Cooper River. His work also includes an archaeological component describing and discussing the construction techniques used to build the landing.[57] Another important work is Mark Newell's typology for historic working craft in South Carolina, which was included in a dissertation submitted to the Scottish Institute of Maritime Studies at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland. His investigation traced the ethnic origins of the builders of these craft, the history of the transportation network in South Carolina, and the basic design and construction methods. Newell's dissertation utilized material culture to reveal design, function, and construction of vessels. Based on archaeological data, he established a typology of fourteen paddled, wind- and tide-

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South Carolina, 1993); Rowena Nylund, "The Historical Background of the Brown's Ferry Vessel" (Master's thesis, University of South Carolina, 1989).

[57] William Barr, "Strawberry Ferry and Childsbury Towne: A Socio-Economic Enterprise on the West Branch of the Cooper River, Berkeley County, St. Johns Parish, South Carolina" (Master's thesis, University of South Carolina, 1995).

driven craft that operated in South Carolina from the prehistoric period to about 1930.[58]

Methodology

This dissertation had its genesis in research for the intensive cultural resources survey for the proposed widening of U.S. Highway 17 from Jacksonboro to Gardens Corner in Colleton and Beaufort counties. In 2006, Brockington and Associates, Inc., prepared the report for the South Carolina Department of Transportation as part of a routine Section 106 examination.[59] During this survey, the Brockington team examined archaeological remains at the

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[58] Mark Newell, "The Historic Working Craft of South Carolina: A General Typology with a Study of Adaptations of Flatboat Design," (Ph.D. diss., Scottish Institute of Maritime Studies, Saint Andrews University, 1992). Christopher Amer, William B. Barr, David V. Beard, Elizabeth L. Collins, Lynn B. Harris, William R. Judd, Carl A. Naylor, and Mark M. Newell (Amer et al.), *The Malcolm Boat (38CH803): Discovery, Stabilization, Excavation, and Preservation of an Historic Sea Going Small Craft in the Ashley River, Charleston County, South Carolina* (Columbia: South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, 1993) also presents the typology.

[59] Kristrina A. Shuler, Eric C. Poplin, Edward Salo, Suzanne Johnson, and Jason Ellerbee, *Intensive Cultural Resources Survey and Archaeological Testing of Site 38BU1216, US Route 17 Widening Project, Jacksonboro to Gardens Corner, Beaufort and Colleton Counties, South Carolina* (Mount Pleasant, SC: Brockington and Associates, 2006).

Combahee Ferry (on the Colleton and Beaufort county line). While conferring with Eric C. Poplin, the principal investigator of the project, and Kristrina Shuler, the project archeologist, I suggested using research from that project as the first step for this dissertation. They were supportive, as were archaeologists with the South Carolina Department of Transportation.

The environmental regulations pertaining to the protection of cultural resources have spawned a research cottage industry that is not only interdisciplinary in nature but has forced scholars to pursue new research paths, and, in some cases, ask new kinds of research questions. Conard argues that CRM

> could redefine the boundaries of cultural history as we come to understand how much of human thought and activity is reflected in the built environment that surrounds us.[60]

I viewed this study as having an addition role. I hope that the dissertation also offers a framework for future studies of ferries through different prisms of interpretation. The history of the development of inland maritime transportation in South Carolina is an important topic that has not been adequately explored. Many maritime

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[60] Conard, ""Once I Built a Railroad"," 48.

transportation studies have looked at large boats, shipyards, and trains but have not given much attention to the local maritime nature of South Carolina. In fact, the maritime landscape of Charleston is sorely in need of study. By examining ferries using many different prisms of interpretation, public historians can use the material culture of the ferry to explore new themes.

The first step in the process was to conduct a comprehensive literature search related to ferries, South Carolina history, and related topics. The background literature research included a review of published documents (books and articles at both the scholarly and popular level), newspaper articles, maps, and other data accessible through libraries, the Internet, interlibrary loan, or by request.

This effort resulted in the preparation of a chapter outline and an annotated bibliography. The outline featured descriptions of each chapter containing sufficient detail to demonstrate the complete range of topics and themes to be discussed as well as chronological periods. The outline provided the basis for the table of contents for the dissertation. The research continued with a review of primary-source materials, secondary resources, and "gray

literature" at various South Carolina repositories. The research focused on four areas: compilation and mastery of the published literature, familiarity with the primary sources on which the published literature is based, original research in primary sources on issues that pertain specifically to ferries, and review of existing cultural resource documentation.

Archival Research

I conducted archival research at local libraries, local historical societies, and local museums as well as the University of South Carolina Library, SCIAA, the Special Collections of the College of Charleston Library, the South Carolina Room at the Charleston County Public Library, the South Carolina Room at the Dorchester County Library, the Charleston Library Society, the South Caroliniana Library, the South Carolina Historical Society, and the South Carolina Department of Archives and History (SCDAH).[61] The records of the General Assembly provide

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[61] See Allen Stokes and E. L. Inabinett, *A Guide to the Manuscripts Collection of the South Caroliniana Library* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1982), and David Moltke-Hansen and Sallie Doscher, *South Carolina Historical Society: A Manuscript Guide* (Charleston: South Carolina Historical Society, 1979) for discussion of the manuscript collections at these repositories.

important information related to the regulation, chartering, and ferriages of ferries.[62] In addition, some family papers, particularly at the South Carolina Historical Society, contain ledgers and other records from ferries operated by leading families. Unfortunately, only a few ledgers remain, so it is almost impossible to study the economic history of most ferries. For this project, I used previous studies and compared and contrasted their discussions. The Institute of Southern Studies at the University of South Carolina also supported research for my dissertation.

This research gives particular attention to maps and plats that illustrate the early transportation network. I examined early maps of the colony to find which ferries the cartographers listed, their locations, and other details.[63] I also gathered historic photographs, drawings, and paintings to illustrate the ferry sites. Another important

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[62] Google Books has scanned the Acts of the South Carolina General Assembly to 1922 on its Web site. This easy access to those important records aided in the preparation of this dissertation.

[63] South Carolina has a wealth of early maps. For a useful review of the colonial maps of South Carolina as well as other southern colonies, see William P. Cummings, *The Southeast in Early Maps* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962).

source was the probate records that show what cultural materials were at ferry sites.[64]

At SCIAA and SCDAH, I also reviewed previously listed or recorded architectural and archaeological sites relating to ferries in the Lowcountry. Using the data provided from previous surveys, one can ask new questions and provide new interpretations. My methodology for identifying ferry sites borrows heavily from Lucy Wayne's unpublished dissertation regarding brick kilns in the Lowcountry, another important ancillary function of plantations.[65] I contacted the staff of the underwater division of SCIAA to investigate several ferry sites to be used as examples for this dissertation.

Another important source was nominations to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Over the years, historians have listed on the NRHP several communities and plantations that historically contained ferries. Using those files, I examined how ferries are

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[64] While probate records are important in the examination of colonial history, they must be viewed with some care. See Gloria Main, "Probate Records as a Source for Early American History," *William and Mary Quarterly* 32 (January 1975): 89-99, and Gloria Main, "The Correction of Biases in Colonial American Probate Records," *Historical Methods Newsletter* 8 (December 1974): 10-28.

[65] Lucy E. Wayne, "Burning Brick: A Study of a Lowcountry Industry" (Ph.D. diss., University of Florida, 1992).

interpreted on the NRHP, what ferry sites contain, the description of buildings at ferry sites, and why ferries are not listed at some places even when significant remnants are present. James Jones's article regarding the NRHP listings in Tennessee serves as a model for this portion of the study.[66]

Chapter Outline

The work is organized by certain themes and topics to fully explore the various issues that arose during the research.[67] Addressing the various topics, I hope that this effort represents a truly interdisciplinary work in both topics and methodologies.

Chapter I, the introduction, provides a discussion of the themes and questions in this dissertation; a discussion of the methods; and historiographies of ferries and

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[66] See James B. Jones Jr., "An Analysis of National Register Listings and Roadside Historic Markers in Tennessee: A Study of Two History Programs," *Public Historian* 10, no. 3 (1988): 19-30.

[67] Because of a study of industrial sites during my doctoral coursework and since the initial focus of my work was copper mining in Tennessee, I have read several works on copper mining in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. I attempt to base the thematic style of this work on Larry Lankton, *Cradle to Grave: Life, Work and Death at the Lake Superior Copper Mines* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

transportation, the development of South Carolina, and transportation.

Chapter II supplies the reader with an examination of the legal history of ferry regulation. As an extension of the British common-law tradition of ferry chartering, the development of the legal framework of regulation of ferries represented another effort by the planter elite to maintain control over the blossoming South Carolina economy. By establishing monopolies in the chartering of ferries, certain elites could ensure that they controlled for profits the ways farmers got goods to the merchants in Charleston as well as the minor ports of Beaufort and Georgetown. This chapter explores why some individuals received charters and others did not, and how the chartering process changed over time. Finally, the chapter delves into the responsibilities of ferry operators. This chapter is based primarily on petitions, acts of the General Assembly, and other legal documents.

Chapter III examines the role of ferries in governmental operations, specifically military activities. Also, the chapter examines the importance of ferries in South Carolina during military operations. This ranges from the early Native American wars through the Revolutionary

War. Because of the partisan war that developed in South Carolina, both sides vied for control of the ferries. During the Civil War, the Confederate forces protected many ferries, but also replaced some ferries with temporary bridges.

Chapter IV explores the economics of ferries and the development of towns around the ferries. Additionally, this chapter contains a discussion that places ferries and transportation in South Carolina into the broader context of the South, a region always challenged by the notion of internal improvements.[68] How did South Carolina's development and reliance on ferries mirror that of other southern states, especially the coastal ones? This chapter uses existing scholarship to compare and contrast the development of South Carolina ferries to those in the Chesapeake region of Virginia and Maryland, as well as those in North Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee. Also, this

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[68] For discussions of the development of the transportation network in the United States, see Brooke Hindle, *Technology in Early America: Needs and Opportunities for Study* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), Carroll W. Pursell, *The Machine in America: A Social History of Technology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), William L. Richter, *Transportation in America* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio, 1995), George Rogers Taylor, *The Transportation Revolution, 1815-1860* (New York, 1951), and Louis C. Hunter, *Steamboats on Western Rivers: An Economic and Technological History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949).

chapter explores the role of ferries in the development of tourism in the Lowcountry.

Chapter V is an examination of the material culture related to the technical development of ferryboats and landings. Using archaeological data, I chart the development of ferryboats and landings from the early dugout canoes through steamboat ferryboats of the late nineteenth century. Also, this chapter analyzes how different environmental conditions required different landings and boats. For example, were ferryboats on the Santee River different from ferryboats on the Cooper River? Did different river systems require different ferry landing designs? Also, what do changes in ferry design show? This chapter is based on the archaeological studies conducted in the state primarily by SCIAA and various CRM firms.

Because the history of the Lowcountry is linked to slavery and race relations, Chapter VI explores the roles of slaves in the operation of ferries and the development of laws to restrict slaves' and later African Americans' use of ferries.

Chapters VII and VIII provide case-study histories of ferries located in the Charleston area and the Combahee Ferry, located outside of Charleston. These case studies

provide a more detailed history of the ferries to expand on the themes in previous chapters.

Chapter IX is an epilogue that explores the last state-operated ferry in Georgetown, South Carolina. This ferry, which operated into the 1970s, continued many of the historic themes previously identified.

Chapter X explores the preservation and commemoration of ferries in South Carolina. How have historic ferries been identified, assessed, and interpreted in the state? Chapter XI provides a preservation plan for ferries in the Lowcountry. When assessing ferries and ferry locations, are there particular issues and/or patterns that surveyors need to address or keep in mind? What work needs to be done, and how can that be accomplished?

CHAPTER II

GRANTING A CHARTER: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FERRY CHARTERING PROCESS IN SOUTH CAROLINA

The history of the chartering and regulation of ferries in South Carolina illustrates several important themes in South Carolina's history. First, early chartering shows how the colonial government attempted to spur the economic development of the colony through the creation of an adequate transportation infrastructure. Second, the granting of charters to certain citizens illustrates the connections between certain planter families and political power. Third, the charters and other legislation governing ferries show the early regulatory nature of the South Carolina government as it attempted to protect the ferry customer as well as the operator. Finally, the evolution of the chartering process reveals how corporations and local governments received charters in the 1800s.

Ferry Regulation under the British Common Law Tradition

To interpret the legal history of the regulation of ferry charters, an understanding of the legal definitions of the terms *ferry, ferriage,* and *ferryman* is necessary. Henry Black's *Dictionary of Law* defines a ferry as

> A liberty to have a boat upon a river for the transportation of men, horses, and carriages with their contents, for a reasonable fee. The term is also used to designate the place where such liberty is exercised.[1]

Black defines a ferriage as "the toll or fare paid for the transportation of persons and property across a ferry."[2] Legal scholar John Bouvier characterizes a ferryman as

> One employed in taking persons across a river or other stream, in boats or other contrivances at a ferry. The owner of a ferry is not considered a ferryman, when it is rented and in the possession of a tenant.[3]

Like many concepts in the American legal system, the roots of the origins of ferry regulation are in English common law, and the rights of the Crown, through royal privilege, to establish a public ferry and grant a

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[1] Henry Campbell Black, *A Law Dictionary Containing Definitions of the Terms and Phrases of American and English Jurisprudence, Ancient and Modern, and Including the Principal Terms of International, Constitutional, Ecclesiastical, and Commercial Law, and Medical Jurisprudence, with a Collection of Legal Maxims, Numerous Select Titles from the Roman, Modern Civil, Scotch, French, Spanish, and Mexican Law, and Other Foreign Systems, and a Table of Abbreviations* (St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Co., 1910), 492.

[2] Ibid.

[3] John Bouvier, *Bouvier's Law Dictionary and Concise Encyclopedia* (St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Company, 1914), 1208.

franchise to the ferry operator.[4] The concept of government regulation of and granting of franchises for ferries came to the colonies in the early 1640s. In 1641, the Massachusetts assembly passed an act that authorized the colonial government to regulate ferries in the colony.[5] This concept of granting charters originated in the English common-law principles of granting certain franchises, in which the Crown could grant "exclusive rights of sporting, or such as the exclusive right to keep a market or a ferry, and to take toll from those who resort to it."[6] During the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I, the monarchs granted many of these franchises as a means to reward their political supporters and to repay political and economic debts.

Under this English legal doctrine, no private citizen could establish a ferry without the Crown's approval. The English courts wrote in *Blisset vs. Hart* (1744):

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[4] J.F.D., "Ferry Rights of Riparian Proprietors," *The American Law Register* 13, no. 9 (July 1865): 514; Bouvier, *Bouvier's Law Dictionary and Concise Encyclopedia*, 1208.

[5] Nathan Dane, *General Abridgement and Digest of American Law with Occasional Notes and Comments, Vol. II* (Boston: Cummings, Hilliard & Co., 1823), 683.

[6] Roland Knyvet Wilson, *History of Modern English Law* (London: Rivingtons, 1875), 19.

> a ferry is *publici juris*. It is a franchise which no one can erect without a license from the Crown … If a second be erected without license the Crown has a remedy by *quo warrante*, and the former grantee has a remedy by action.[7]

This concept of protecting ferry franchises from competition continued in South Carolina's practice of ferry regulation.

The right of granting ferry franchises became one of the issues that framed the constitutional fight between the king and Parliament in seventeenth-century England. As the House of Commons gained more political power in England before and during the Glorious Revolution, it passed several statutes that voided many of the franchises established by the monarchs. However, the granting of franchise rights for the operation of ferries was one of the legal traditions that the House of Commons maintained, and the legal concept would influence the development of ferry regulation in the colony of Carolina.[8] While the franchises usually did not specifically provide for exclusive ferry privileges, English legal tradition

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[7] J.F.D., "Ferry Rights of Riparian Proprietors," 514.

[8] Wilson, *History of Modern English Law*, 19.

indicated that common carriers necessarily enjoyed the right to exclude competition.[9]

Ferry Regulation under the Lords Proprietors

From its very beginning, South Carolina relied on ferries as a means of transportation, and early land grants illustrate their importance. In 1686, the Lords Proprietors stated in the "Rules and Instruction for Granting Land":

> You are to consider a convenient place for a ferry upon every navigable river, and having pitched upon a place convenient, you are to order to be set out one thousand acres which whosoever takes up shall be obligated to keep up a ferry for the ferrying over men and horses at such price as shall be agreed upon by the Governor and Council, and when you pass a grant for the said land, you are to insert this condition for keeping a ferry in the grant besides the rent.[10]

Although the motivations for the order are not stated specifically, one can decipher several reasons for it. First, and probably most important, was to aid in the creation of a transportation system as a means to get

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[9] Morton J. Horwitz, *The Transformation of American Law, 1780-1860,* Studies in Legal History (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1977), 114-116.

[10] A. S. Salley Jr., ed., *Records in the British Public Record Office Relating to South Carolina: 1663-1710* (Columbia: Historical Commission of South Carolina, 1916), 152.

agricultural products to markets. Second was to develop roads and transportation as a means to move troops around the colony to protect it from French, Spanish, and Native American threats. In their 1691 orders, the Lords Proprietors reiterated verbatim the order to find places for ferries, which supports the importance of establishing of ferries to the economic development and military security of the colony.[11]

However, the Lords Proprietors' instructions did not provide any framework for landowners to operate ferries. There was no discussion of granting any charters, rules for operation, or any concept of centralized planning of ferries as part of a larger transportation system. In the early 1700s, the Commons House of Assembly took steps to institute some control over the establishment of ferries as part of the larger transportation network. However, the fact that the Lords Proprietors ordered new landowners to establish ferries indicates that they realized ferries would be important to the colony's development.

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[11] Ibid., 52-53.

Granting the First Ferry Charters

The first ferries in South Carolina operated near the Charleston area, the center of the colony, along the Ashley and Cooper rivers. Before 1721, separate acts of the Commons House of Assembly established all roads and ferries constructed in South Carolina. For each road and bridge built, a separate commission was appointed to oversee the work, and the colonial treasury supplied all funds necessary for the project. The commissioners named for a specific project were usually residents of the neighborhood in which the work was to be undertaken. The first roads were intended chiefly for purposes of defense. However, another important purpose, as stated by a 1702 act, was "for the better encouragement to settle inland plantations, and for the community of persons which are already settled inland."[12]

In 1703, the Commons House of Assembly established the first regulated ferry in South Carolina at Stony Point along the Ashley River in Colleton County. The charter for this ferry also contained many of the regulatory elements

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[12] George Terry, "'Champaign Country:' A Social History of an Eighteenth Century Lowcountry Parish in South Carolina, St. Johns Berkeley County" (Ph.D. diss., University of South Carolina, 1981), 180.

that were standard in later charters.[13] First, the charter authorized the establishment of the ferry as part of a larger road-building project. The act sanctioned the construction of a road "on the North side of the Ashley river, through the Plantation of William Williams, to Stony Point," to assist in business and commerce as well as aid during the mustering of the militia.[14] For many years, the chartering of ferries would be included in these larger road-building bills. The Commons House of Assembly would authorize a new road, causeway, or highway, and it would also authorize the commissioners to establish ferries along the route.

The 1703 charter also set the precedent for establishing a commission of local economic/political leaders with the power to designate the ferries in the area. For example, the act that established Stony Point Ferry named John Cattle, James Cochran, Thomas Elliott,

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[13] David J. McCord, ed., *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. IX* (Columbia, SC: A. S. Johnston, 1841), 2-3. The first chartered ferry in South Carolina has been mistakenly thought to be along the Santee River. According to Gilmore, "South Carolina River Ferries," 45-46, the colony chartered the first ferry in 1709, along the Santee. However, an examination of the archival records indicates that the Commons House of Assembly issued charters six years earlier.

[14] Ibid., 2.

William Elliott, and John Reamer the commissioners. Thomas Rose, on whose plantation the ferry originated, was not a commissioner, but Rose operated the ferry and could not serve as a commissioner as well as an operator.

One can see from the records of the General Assembly that the men appointed as commissioners had other political and economic interests. For example, John Cattle represented Berkeley and Craven counties in the Fifth Assembly (1700-1702). James Cochran, a physician and planter, owned 5,000 acres in Colleton and Granville counties and served in the Seventh (1703-1705), Tenth (1707-1708), and Twelfth through Fifteenth assemblies. Additionally, he served as a road commissioner in 1712 and 1714.

Another of the commissioners, Thomas Elliott, was one of the largest planters in South Carolina. He owned 7,156 acres, as well as a wharf in downtown Charleston. In addition to his economic pursuits, Elliot served as a tax assessor, high sheriff, tax collector, captain in the militia, and member of the assemblies. Thomas's brother William Elliot owned over 5,300 acres and served nine terms in the Commons House. In addition to his service in the assembly and as a road commissioner, William later served

as Commissioner of the High Roads for St. Andrew Parish (1721).[15] The commissions were temporary in nature, and the commissioners did not receive a salary.[16]

The appointment of these men as the commissioners illustrates that the early political leadership of the colony felt it necessary to assert control of an already expanding transportation network. As the colony expanded toward Savannah, several unregulated private ferries began to operate along other rivers. Passing an assembly act was not enough. The colonial authorities chose to appoint men who had a vested interested in the economic development of the colony as commissioners.

Finally, the charter set standard tolls for transportation across the ferry. For Stony Point Ferry, the owner could charge one royal for a passenger, and one royal

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[15] Walter B. Edgar and N. Louise Bailey, eds., *Biographical Directory of the South Carolina House of Representatives: The Commons House of Assembly, 1692-1775* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1977), 145, 157, 224. John Reamer held no other offices. There was a Thomas Rose who served as the clerk for six of the early assemblies and later declined to serve in the Eighth Assembly. Based on the archival records, one cannot discern which of the Thomas Roses this was.

[16] Jonathan Mercantini, *Who Shall Rule at Home? The Evolution of South Carolina Political Culture, 1748-1776* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2007), 56.

and a half for man and a horse.[17] The official prices for the tolls were important because they allowed the owners to operate the ferries as a moneymaking pursuit but also protected citizens from unreasonable rates. As later practice shows, ferry rates could vary depending on the location of the ferry.

After the establishment of Stony Point Ferry, the assembly established several other ferries from 1705 to 1721. Table 1 provides a list of the ferries chartered between 1705 and 1721.

Table 1. Ferries Chartered from 1705 to 1721[18]

Ferry Name	**River**	**Date**	**Act Number**
Strawberry Ferry	Cooper River	1705	246
Unnamed ferry	Echaw Creek	1709	273
Unnamed ferry	Santee River	1709	273
Unnamed ferries	Combahee and Ashepoo rivers	1711	304
Williamson Ferry	Ashley River	1711	no act number
Bonneau Ferry	Cooper River	1712	315

[17] McCord, ed., *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. IX*, 2-3.

[18] Ibid., 6, 11, 14, 17, 21.

The development of the ferry chartering system corresponded to the growth of the Commons House of Assembly as the dominant political power. The assembly was the lower house of the provincial legislature and the only popularly elected branch of government. Historian Keith Krawczynski argues that as part of the Commons House process of gaining authority, it used the commission's control of expenditures of local government to protect that power from local authorities.[19] Therefore, maintaining ferry chartering power allowed the assembly to control the development of the transportation infrastructure.

In addition to establishing the ferry and setting rates, by 1711 the acts establishing ferries also began to offer protection for customers. The assembly ordered that the ferry operators could not charge ferriage to men during times of alarm or muster. Additionally, individuals traveling to religious services did not have to pay ferriage. These two exemptions reflect the importance of ferries in the transportation of troops in times of military conflict as well as the desire of the colonial government to allow its citizens to attend their churches. In addition, the charters began to list penalties that the

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[19] Krawczynski, "Commons House of Assembly," 212.

operator would have to pay for unreasonable delay in travel. However, fees for delay were not uniform. For example, the fee for delay at the Ashley River Ferry was 40 shillings, but the fee for delay at the Bonneau Ferry was only 20 shillings. Additionally, the charters began to include rates to transport oxen, cows, hogs, and sheep.[20]

The acts establishing the fees allowed the commissioners to set tolls for the ferry, on the assumption that these fees would support its operation. Sometimes, however, the fees did not meet the needs of the operator. For example, although Act 304 (1711) authorized the establishment of the ferry at Combahee, the earliest archival evidence of the Combahee Ferry was a 1715 Commons House of Assembly act that authorized Joseph Bryan, the keeper of the Combahee Ferry, to charge an additional "half a rial for a man, and one rial for a man and horse" to pay for the maintenance of the Combahee River causeway for the next three years.[21] Bryan was to take the excess ferriage and confer the money to the commissioners on October 1 of each year, and the commissioners would use the surplus

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[20] McCord, ed., *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. IX,* 15, 19, 22.

[21] Ibid., 37.

money to repair the causeway. The act details the penalties Bryan would face if he did not provide the extra ferriage. The Colonial Assembly stated the price in Spanish currency (the rial), which demonstrates the continued Spanish economic influence in the colony's southern regions. In addition, the silver in the rial guaranteed its value during periods of economic flux.

Reorganizing the Chartering System in 1721

In 1721, the Commons House of Assembly, as part of a more general tendency at that time to disperse local governmental powers to the various parishes, established permanent road commissions for each parish, thus doing away with the appointed commissions for each road, ferry, and bridge. Behind the assembly's decision to delegate road-building responsibilities to the communities was the desire of the colonial government to rid itself of the problem of having to act on every request to build or repair roads and bridges. Permanent commissioners in each parish would be responsible for "laying out both public and private paths, making causeways not exceeding twenty feet in width, building bridges not exceeding forty feet in length" and "clearing of water-courses and creeks." The commissioners,

whose jurisdiction coincided with the parish boundaries, had the ability to tax local inhabitants to fund road building and repairs. In addition, they could seize the property of persons who did not pay the taxes for the roads. Having the power to tax and seize, as well as the mandate to create a road system, the Commission of the High Roads was one of the most powerful local governmental institutions in South Carolina.[22]

Like the previous commissioners, the members of the Commission of High Roads maintained a deep-seated economic and political interest in the development of South Carolina. For example, the commissioners for St. Helen Parish, which included the Combahee Ferry, were Captain John Palmer, John Bull, and Joseph Bryan Jr.[23] Palmer, who owned five plantations and over 60 slaves, served in the Second through Fourth Royal Assemblies, as well as serving as a militia officer, commissioner to lay out a road between Port Royal and Purrysburgh (1733), commissioner to establish ferries on Port Royal Island (1735), and

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[22] Ibid., 49-57; M. Eugene Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina: A Political History 1663-1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 142-143; Terry, "'Champaign Country,'" 180-181.

[23] McCord, ed., *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. IX,* 53.

commissioner to lay out a road from Willtown to Charleston (1736). John Bull, youngest son of Stephen Bull, served as ferry and road commissioner, as a captain in the militia, and in four Royal Assemblies. Bryan was the son of Joseph Bryan, who had ferry rights over the Combahee River. In addition to serving as a commissioner, Bryan served in the Third Royal Assembly.[24]

From 1721 to 1733, the colony experienced a dramatic growth in the number of chartered ferries. Table 2 provides a listing of the ferries established in colonial South Carolina from 1721 to 1733. The list demonstrates that the assembly was chartering ferries near Charleston and outside the area. The charters for these ferries maintained the patterns established in earlier charters.

The ferry charters after 1721 also contained many provisions to protect travelers. For example, the assembly granted a ferry (Winyaw) over the Black River to Alexander Montgomery in 1725 for ten years. Table 3 shows the rates for the Black River ferry. The charter stated that owner could be fined £10 for not having the ferryboat in

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[24] Edgar and Bailey, eds., *Biographical Directory of the South Carolina House of Representatives: The Commons House of Assembly, 1692-1775*, 110-113, 501.

Table 2. Ferries Established from 1721 to 1733[25]

Ferry Name	**River**	**Operator**	**Date**	**Act Number**
Pon Pon	Pon Pon	John Bull, Henry Jackson, Christopher Smith	1725	500
Unnamed public ferry	Black River	Alexander Montgomery	1725	
New Pon Pon	Pon Pon	John Bull, John Jackson, Rial Spray	1725	
Godfrey Ferry	Pon Pon	James Ferguson, John Hunt, Joshua Saunders	1726	524
Unnamed public ferry	Winyaw River	Samuel Masters	1731	541
Unnamed public ferry	Santee River	John and Isaac Dubose	1731	541
Unnamed public ferry	Sampit Creek	Robert Scriven	1731	541
Unnamed public ferry	Santee River	Jonathan Skeine	1731	541
Unnamed public ferry	Cooper River	Richard Codner	1731	541
Jermain's Ferry	Santee River	Joseph Spencer	1733	557
Hobcaw	Cooper River	William Watson	1733	558
John's Island Ferry	Stono River	Alexander Hext, Thomas Heyward, and John Raven	1733	559
James Island Ferry	Ashley River	Gabriel Manigault, John Hyrne, and William Chapman	1733	559
Prioleau Ferry	Port Royal Sound	Samuel Prioleau	1733	560
Combahee Ferry	Combahee River	John Jackson	1733	560
Ashley Ferry	Ashley River	Edmund Bellinger	1733	562

[25] McCord, ed., *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. IX*, 61, 64, 68, 70, 75, 77, 79, 79, 81, 82, 84, 102, 105, 110, 111, 112, 121.

Table 3. Ferriage Rates at Winyaw Ferry Over the Black River in 1725[26]

Item to Transport	**Ferriage**
Man	1 shilling, 3 pence
Horse	1 shilling, 3 pence
Sheep or pig	7 pence, ½ penny

"good order and repair," with half of the penalty going to the royal government and the other half to the informant.[27] Also, the charter contained a graduated penalty for nonattendance of the ferry. While the charter contained many penalties to ensure that the ferry operator maintained an effective operation, it also contained a £50 fine for anyone operating a ferry within ten miles of either side of the ferry.[28] This ensured the operator monopoly on travel over the river at that site and guaranteed the profitability of the ferry. In addition to the guarantees, the charters in the 1720s also began to include ferriage rates for slaves. The Wrixam Ferry Charter (April 1725) gave the rate of fifteen pence for each slave to cross by ferry. This rate was less than that for a man but twice the

[26] McCord, ed., *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. IX,* 63.

[27] Ibid., 63.

[28] Ibid.

rate for a piece of livestock.[29] The rates of toll bridges were proportional to, or less than, the rates of several ferries in this province.[30]

While the Commons House of Assembly usually chartered each ferry individually, in 1748 it passed revised legislation that continued any ferry or ferries nearing the expiration date of the charter.[31]

Law professor James W. Ely Jr. points out that early South Carolina transportation legislation reflects economic motives, a pattern characteristic of the colony's framework in general. While most colonial legal history suggests that colonial law was static, Ely contends that South Carolina cultivated economic growth in the colony through its legislative actions.[32]

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[29] Ibid., 61.

[30] J. H. Easterby, ed., *The Journal of the Commons House of Assembly March 28, 1749-March 19, 1750* (Columbia: The Historical Commission of South Carolina, 1962), 465.

[31] J. H. Easterby, ed., *The Journal of the Commons House of Assembly January 19, 1748-June 29, 1748* (Columbia: The Historical Commission of South Carolina, 1961).

[32] James W. Ely Jr., "Patterns of Statutory Enactment in South Carolina, 1720-1770," in *South Carolina Legal History Proceedings of the Reynolds Conference, University of South Carolina, December 2-3, 1977*, ed. Herbert A. Johnson (Columbia: Southern Studies Program, University of South Carolina Press, 1980), 79.

Ely shows that in response to demands for better infrastructure, politicians countered with a series of statutes that established ferries, and that these charters reflected a legislative commitment to foster internal improvements at minimum cost to the public purse. While the General Assembly kept the costs of internal improvements to a minimum, Ely claimed that ferry charters were highly prized among merchants despite regulatory features and the limited life span of the concession.[33]

Regulation of Ferries in Other Colonies

The development of ferry regulation in South Carolina was similar to that in other early colonies; however, South Carolina maintained its centralized control while other British colonies shifted that authority to the local county governments. Historian Donald J. Pisani argued that regulation of ferries and other franchises during the colonial period focused on four areas:

> the number of participants in an activity, the conditions of their participation, the prices charged for goods and services, and the quality of products. However, the colonies lacked both the financial resources and the administrative

[33] Ibid., 71-72.

expertise to take on such broad regulatory duties.[34]

The development of early English colonies showed a concern for the regulation of ferries. In 1641, the Massachusetts Bay Colony began to regulate the weight of loaves of bread, the business hours of inns and taverns, the size and weight of iron nails, and the tolls charged by ferries and coaches.[35] Virginia's early regulatory history of ferries differed from South Carolina's experience. Early scholars have argued that the settlements in Virginia occurred first along the coast and rivers and then extended into the interior. As the colony extended, Native American paths became the major roads, and from there the "parish churches, court-houses, ferries and ordinaries became the focal points for the roads" because of the growing economic needs of the communities.[36]

As a matter of principle, between 1634 and 1676, Virginia's assembly vested control of local affairs in

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[34] Donald J. Pisani, "Promotion and Regulation: Constitutionalism and the American Economy," *The Journal of American History* 74 (December 1987), 757.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Anonymous, "Colonial Roads and Wheeled Vehicles," *William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine* 8, no. 1 (July 1899): 37.

county courts. In 1643, the assembly assigned the power to maintain bridges and ferries to the county courts. In the 1690s, the colonial government of Virginia vested the postmaster with the general supervision of ferries. However, on July 24, 1695, the royal governor informed the council that the postmaster was not fulfilling the post in a manner that would ensure a productive transportation network. From 1692 to 1775, according to historian Percy Flippin, the Virginia House of Burgesses retrieved the power to establish ferries, appointed keepers, and fixed rates. Later the county courts again became the regulators of Virginia ferries. In colonial Virginia, justices of the peace established a county levy, or poll tax, that they used to pay all of the county's debts, including the repair of county businesses, bridges, and ferries. [37]

Historian Carville Earle claims that in Maryland, like in South Carolina, ferries were an "integral part of [Maryland's] transportation network." The Maryland assembly had the power to license and supervise taverns, the

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[37] Warren M. Billings, "The Growth of Political Institutions in Virginia, 1634-1676," *The William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Series* 31, no. 2 (April 1974): 229; Percy Scott Flippin, "The Financial Administration of the Colony of Virginia" (Ph.D. diss., The Johns Hopkins University, 1915), 20, 58.

operation of ferries, and the maintenance of roads and bridges. In 1696, the Maryland General Assembly ordered that public roads be clearly marked with tree-notched road signs indicating directions to the courthouse, ferries, churches, and Annapolis. The accounts show that Lord Baltimore's private revenues fell into three main categories: income from land, income from permanent customs duties, and income from minor sources, namely, the fines, forfeitures, and fees collected in the law courts and the fees paid for ferry licenses and rangers' commissions.[38]

By 1673, private citizens operated ferry crossings along the South and Paxturent rivers. Archival records show the ferriage listed in pounds of tobacco, with eighteen pounds of tobacco for a man and horse in the 1670s. The price of the ferriage in the 1680s was thirty pounds of tobacco.

In North Carolina, the pattern of ferry development was slower but also represented a decentralized approach.

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[38] Wesley Frank Craven, *The Southern Colonies in the Seventeenth Century, 1607-1689* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), 321; Carville V. Earle, *The Evolution of a Tidewater Settlement System: All Hallow's Parish, Maryland, 1650-1783* (Chicago: University of Chicago, Department of Geography, 1975), 146, 149; Charles A. Barker, "Property Rights in the Provincial System of Maryland: Proprietary Revenues," *The Journal of Southern History* 2 (May 1936), 212.

In 1700, North Carolina only had one operating ferry; by the 1760s, the colony contained an established and adequate ferry service all over the eastern portion of the colony. Much like those in South Carolina and Virginia, the North Carolina ferries aided in transportation of commerce but also in getting settlers to court, church services, and militia muster. However, unlike in South Carolina, the ferry system in North Carolina was decentralized, with local governments handling the chartering process.[39]

While the centralization of the transportation system in South Carolina was a success, in neighboring colonies it met with failure. For example, a similar attempt by the North Carolina General Assembly to establish the commission system in that colony failed.[40]

Changes in the Ferry-Chartering System

Like many other states in the nineteenth century, South Carolina instituted a statewide, state-funded, and state-operated system of internal improvements. In 1816,

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[39] Watson, "The Ferry in Colonial North Carolina," 247-260.

[40] Alan D. Watson, "Regulation and Administration of Roads and Bridges in Colonial Eastern North Carolina," *North Carolina Historical Review*, XLV (1968), 399-417.

Governor David R. Williams announced a series of improvements, and in 1817, the General Assembly authorized a state civil and military engineer to survey the navigational needs of South Carolina's rivers. In 1819, the General Assembly created the Board of Public Works, with five legislatively elected commissioners. The board's responsibilities included surveying and building a road from Charleston through Columbia to the North Carolina border; improving navigation along the Pee Dee, Santee, Wateree, Catawha, Broad, Saluda, Keowee, Edisto, Black, Combahee, and Salkehatchie rivers; and constructing canals.[41]

In 1821, the Board of Public Works, composed of Nicolas Herbemont, Robert G. Mills, Robert Mills, and Abram Blanding prepared a report on the condition of ferries and toll bridges in South Carolina and presented their findings to the General Assembly. They suggested that the primary problem with the state's ferry system was that it was flawed from the beginning. They stated that

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[41] Alexia Jones Helsley, "Internal Improvements Campaigns," in *South Carolina Encyclopedia,* ed. Walter Edgar (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 480-481.

> Our ferries are invariably granted for a term of years, (usually fourteen) the charter generally excludes the establishment of other ferries within prescribed limits, and the rate of toll is fixed without regard to the amount of capital expended by the grantee. It is difficult to conceive a plan better calculated to keep them in bad order. It cannot be expected or required that permanent improvements should be put upon a temporary estate, and the dictates of self-interest unceasingly enforce the consideration that there should be the least possible expenditure on a ferry, when the increase of capital adds nothing to the income. [42]

They suggested changing the chartering plan so that the ferry operator's profit would

> depend on the amount of capital invested … self-interest will induce an expenditure as large as will allow a good profit, and the fear of competition will add force to the ferry duty and interest, which will be thus brought to coincide.[43]

The board therefore recommended that all grants of ferries should be in perpetuity and that the General Assembly should retain the power to establish other ferries at any distance from them to create competition.[44] However,

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[42] "Report of Board of Public Works for 1821," in *Internal Improvement in South Carolina 1817-1828 from the Reports of the Superintendent of Public Works and from Contemporary Pamphlets, Newspaper Clippings, Letters, Petitions, and Maps,* ed. David Kohn and Bess Glenn (Washington, DC: Privately Printed, 1938), 127.

[43] Ibid., 127.

the assembly did not change the chartering process. From statehood until the Civil War, the General Assembly continued to charter ferries in the Lowcountry and the rest of the state as needed. Table 4 presents the rates of Britton's Ferry across Big Pee Dee River in 1849 to illustrate typical rates in the 1840s.

Table 4. Ferriage Rates of Britton's Ferry Over the Big Pee Dee River in 1849[45]

Item to Transport	**Ferriage**
For every foot passenger	Six and a fourth cents
For a man and horse	Twelve and a half cents
For a led horse	Six cents
For each head of cattle	Six cents
For each head of hogs, sheep and goats	Three cents
For a carriage with two wheels	Twenty-five cents
For a buggy	Thirty-seven and a half cents
For a barouche	Fifty cents
For a two-horse wagon	Seventy-five cents
For a four- or six-horse wagon	One dollar, inclusive of drivers, horses, and passengers

[44] Ibid., 128.

[45] General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, *Acts of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed in December 1849* (Columbia, SC: I. C. Morgan, State Printers, 1849), 613.

The General Assembly also began to grant charters to corporations. In 1849, the General Assembly passed legislation that established the Mount Pleasant Ferry Company "for the purpose of conveying passengers and transferring goods, wares and merchandize by Steam Boats, between the city of Charleston and Mount Pleasant."[46] At the same time, the assembly rechartered the Milton Ferry but granted it to Mount Pleasant Ferry.[47] In 1830, a Mr. McDaniel established a ferry over the Seneca River. He operated the ferry until 1854, when he joined with Rev. David Simmons and Samuel Brown to form a company to erect a log bridge over the river.[48] These changes illustrate that ferry ownership now extended beyond the planter elite. Also, when the General Assembly rechartered the ferry over the Wando River, it lodged the ferry with the Commissioners of Roads for St. Thomas Parish for seven years.[49]

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[46] Ibid., 580-582.

[47] Ibid., 614-615.

[48] Horace G. Williams, "Anderson County Place-Names Part Two," *Names in South Carolina* XI (Winter 1964), 59-60.

[49] General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, *Acts of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed in December 1853* (Columbia, SC: R. W. Gibbes & Co., State Printers, 1854), 254.

Ferry Regulation in Other Southern States, 1790s-1860

While South Carolina maintained centralized control of the ferry chartering system, other southern states embraced a decentralized model of ferry regulation. An examination of ferry regulation in the Southwest Territory (later Tennessee) in the late 1700s illustrates that officials continued to move away from centralized regulation of ferries in the backcountry. Because of the rapid expansion of the Southwest Territory, much of the regulatory functions of the government were vested in the independent courts that not only served as criminal courts but also directed "internal improvements" and licensed such public services as ferries, taverns, and mills.[50]

In Georgia, the chartering of ferries continued in a similar way. Following colonial independence, entrepreneurs obtained ferry licenses from the state legislature to operate.[51] Other parts of the South experienced conflict on how to expand the transportation infrastructure. For example, in Texas the improvement of railroads, rivers,

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[50] See Michael Toomey, "'Doing Justice to Suitors': The Role of the County Courts in the Southwest Territory," *Journal of East Tennessee History* 62 (1990): 33-53.

[51] Rita Folse Elliott, *Georgia's Inland Waters* (Ellerslie, Georgia: Southern Research Historic Preservation Consultants, Inc., 2003), 52.

plank roads, lighthouses, and buoys suffered from insufficient funds and political promotion. Speaking of the early 1850s, historian Earl F. Woodward found that

> the governor, an economic and political conservative, refused to press the legislature for adequate state aid to fund the projects, thus leaving the works to depend primarily upon the capricious money sources of private enterprise.[52]

The latter improved transport systems and secured modest provision for agrarian and industrial economic growth.

While the number of ferries in the South grew during the early nineteenth century, their importance in other parts of the nation declined after the Revolutionary War. While they declined in importance in New England, ferries remained essential elements of the transportation infrastructure on the western frontier. Geographer Ary Lamme suggests that ferries were essential to the westward movement during the nineteenth century. All of the major transportation routes ended at the Wabash River in the

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[52] Woodward, "Internal Improvements in Texas under Governor Peter Hansborough Bell's Administration, 1849-1853," 161-182.

western territories, and ferries were the only means of river crossing until after 1850.[53]

In addition to other states, the Cherokee Nation also operated ferries in Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee, which showed that the Cherokee government also regulated ferries. In 1809, a federal census showed no ferries operating in the Cherokee Nation; however, fifteen years later, in 1826, 18 ferries were operating in the Cherokee Nation.[54] In the 1810s, the U.S. government provided the Cherokee Nation funds to build the Federal Road through its lands. The U.S. government also instructed the Cherokee Nation to establish tolls and ferry charges in order to keep the road working.[55]

The Cherokee National Council regulated ferries, traders, the sale of liquor, and the admission of millers and other artisans into the Nation. Historian Mary Young argues that Cherokees, like early South Carolinians, saw legislation as a way to protect their economic pursuits.

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[53] Ary J. Lamme III, "Crossing the Wabash: The Role of Ferries since the Early Nineteenth Century," *Professional Geographer* II, no. 6 (November 1969): 401-405.

[54] Donald Edward Davis, *Where There Are Mountains: An Environmental History of the Southern Appalachians* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000), 84.

[55] Ibid., 128.

The Cherokee National Council awarded franchises for roads and ferries to mixed-blood politicians, rather than to old chiefs who did.[56] After the removal of the Cherokee Nation, the ferries went to whites and state laws regulated the ferries.

Ferries after the Civil War

The Civil War devastated South Carolina's transportation network, including the ferries. The Civil War resulted in the destruction of all but twenty ferries. In addition to changing the landscape of the state, the creation of a new constitution in the late 1860s changed the government to a more democratic one.[57]

Soon after the Civil War, the new political system of South Carolina implemented changes in who controlled the ferries. Citizens now disputed the wisdom of giving appointed county commissioners jurisdiction over roads, highways, ferries, bridges, collection of local taxes, and

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[56] Mary Young, "The Cherokee Nation: Mirror of the Republic," *American Quarterly* 33 (Winter 1981), 518.

[57] Louis P. Towles, "Ferries," in *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, ed. Walter Edgar (Columbia: the University Press of South Carolina, 2006), 321; Cole Blease Graham Jr., "Constitutions," in *South Carolina Encyclopedia*, ed. Walter Edgar (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 216-219.

disbursement of county funds.[58] In 1868, the state constitution called for the election of a board of county commissioners for a two-year term. The board was to have jurisdiction over roads, ferries, and bridges in all matters relating to taxes and in all disbursements of public funds. Thus, the power over county matters, so long guarded by the General Assembly, was given to the county.

However, with the end of Reconstruction and the return of white elite political control, the assembly soon reclaimed the power to grant charters. For example, in February 1870, the General Assembly granted a ferry charter to Toney Stafford for a term of fourteen years at Dill's Bluff on James Island.[59] Tables 5 and 6 show ferry rates for Peap's Ferry over the Wateree River in 1871 and the Sampit Ferry in Georgetown County in 1880 to illustrate the increases in ferriage rates during the 1870s.

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[58] Thomas C. Pope, *The History of Newberry County, South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1973), 36; A. A. Taylor, "The Convention of 1868," *The Journal of Negro History* 9 (October 1924), 401.

[59] General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1869-'70, Part I* (Columbia, SC: John W. Denny, Printer to the State, 1870), 328.

Table 5. Ferriage Rates for Peap's Ferry Over the Wateree River in 1871[60]

Item to Transport	**Ferriage**
Single passengers	5 cents
Man and horse	15 cents
Buggy	25 cents
One-horse wagon	25 cents
Two-horse wagon	50 cents
Four-horse wagon	76 cents

Table 6. Ferriage Rates for the Sampit Ferry in Georgetown County in 1880[61]

Item to Transport	**Ferriage**
Buggy with one horse	35 cents each way
Buggy with two horses	60 cents each way
Carriage with two horses	75 cents each way
Wagon with two horses	75 cents each way
Wagon with four horses	$1.00 each way
Sulky with one horse	25 cents each way
Ox cart with two oxen	30 cents each way
Ox cart with one ox	20 cents each way
Ox cart with four oxen	60 cents each way
Man and horse	10 cents each way
Led horses	5 cents per head
Cattle sheep and swine	5 cents per head
Cart and horse or mule	25 cents each way

[60] General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1871-'72* (Columbia, SC: Republican Printing Company, State Printers, 1872), 203.

[61] General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1879 and Extra Session of 1880* (Columbia, SC: Calvo & Patton State Printers, 1880), 12.

While the General Assembly continued to grant ferry charters, it also protected new bridges. For example, as part of the charter for the Ashley River Bridge Corporation in 1869, the General Assembly stated, "No bridge or ferry shall hereafter be established on the said river within three miles of the bridge."[62]

As before the Civil War, the General Assembly also granted charters directly to counties. For example, in 1871, the assembly authorized the county commissioners of Charleston County

> to place a flat at Bonneau Ferry, on the eastern branch of Cooper River, to employ and pay a ferryman, and to charge the regular rates of ferriage, out of which the wages of the ferrymen are to be paid, and the balance to be turned over to the County Treasurer, for the use of the County.[63]

Also, the John's Island Ferry was rechartered and vested in the Board of County Commissioners of Berkeley County in 1891.[64] Granting charters to the counties represented a

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[62] Ibid., 307.

[63] General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1871-'72*, 53.

[64] General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the*

switch to more local authority over the transportation network; however, the state government still maintained most of the control.

In addition to granting ferries to county governments, the General Assembly continued to grant ferry charters to corporations. The Mount Pleasant and Sullivan's Island Ferry Company received a charter

> for the purpose of keeping up a ferry, conveying passengers, and transferring goods, wares, and merchandise … [and to operate] steamboats between the city of Charleston and Mount Pleasant and Sullivan's Island, and of conveying passengers, goods, wares and merchandise.[65]

Additionally, Charleston Land Company received a charter for a public ferry at Hamlin's Wharf, in Charleston, to several points along the Wando River for the term of twenty years. The charter stated that the ferriage would be fifty cents for each passenger and a "reasonable

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State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1891 (Columbia, SC: James Woodrow, State Printers, 1892), 1266.

[65] General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1869-'70, Part I*, 320.

freight on merchandise."[66] Even large landholding corporations that developed in the late 1800s received ferry rights. As part of the charter for the Trimblestone Land Company of Beaufort County, the company received ferry rights on all lands it owned that were suited for such purpose.[67]

While ferry charters more often seemed to go to corporations by this time, the General Assembly still protected individual owners of ferries. Toglio Ferry Company received a charter to operate ferries from Charleston to James Island, John's Island, Wadmalaw Island, Edisto Island, and Toogoodoo. However, the charter stated that this company was not interfering with the operation of the James Island Ferry, a privately owned ferry.[68]

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[66] General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1870-'71* (Columbia, SC: Republican Printing Company, State Printers, 1871), 568-569.

[67] General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1891*, 1255.

[68] General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Special Session of 1873 and Regular Session of 1873-74* (Columbia, SC: Republican Printing Company, State Printers, 1874), 590-591.

In addition to granting charters, the General Assembly instituted other rules and regulations related to ferries. For example, ferry operators were exempted from service in the state militia, demonstrating ferries' importance. Also, the General Assembly stated that ferries would operate "every day, from sunrise until twelve o'clock P. M."[69]

The method of chartering ferries finally changed in 1899. The General Assembly passed a law stating that requests for charters would be

> by application to the County Board of Commissioners instead of to the General Assembly; and where the ferry is across a river at a point where such river is the boundary between two or more counties, then twenty-one years, and shall be subject to revocation at any time by the County Board of Commissioners which granted or

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[69] General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, *Acts of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Sessions of 1864-65* (Columbia, SC: Julian A. Selby, Printers to the State, 1866), 353; General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, *The General Statutes and the Code of Civil Procedure of the State of South Carolina, Adopted by the General Assembly of 1881-82 to Which Is Appended the Constitutions of the United States of America and the State of South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: James Woodrow, State Printers, 1882), 116-117. Other groups exempted from service in the state militia included ordained ministers, the lieutenant governor, members of the General Assembly, the secretary of state, the attorney general, the comptroller general, the commissioner of agriculture, the superintendent of education, the state treasurer, clerks, judicial officers, millers, teachers, doctors, former militia officers, and the mentally ill.

> renewed the same, for such cause or causes as to them may seem just and proper.[70]

The new chartering system also set standard rates for all new ferries. Table 7 contains the standard rates prescribed by the General Assembly in 1899.

Table 7. Ferriage Rates Prescribed by the General Assembly in 1899[71]

Item to Transport	**Ferriage**
For every passenger	Five cents
For every head of sheep, goats, hogs, and other small animals	Five cents
For every horse, mule, and head of cattle	Ten cents
For every passenger with single horse, mule, ox, or other riding animal	Twenty cents
For every single horse buggy, cart, or other vehicle	Twenty-five cents
For every two-horse wagon or other vehicle	Fifty cents
For every three-horse wagon or other vehicle	Sixty-five cents
For every four-horse wagon or other vehicle	Seventy-five cents

[70] General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1899* (Cobb, California: The Bryan Printing Company, State Printers, 1899), 85-87.

[71] Ibid., 86.

Regulation of Ferries during the Progressive Era

Historian Frederick Paxton argues that while the construction of new highways during the Progressive Era was important to the development of a modern transportation infrastructure, geography created bottlenecks. Rivers needed bridges, not car ferries, which "slow down traffic at the water's edge."[72]

The General Assembly still chartered new ferries. For instance, in 1900 the General Assembly issued charters for Rentz Ferry between Dorchester and Colleton (D. W. Heaton, Supervisor), to D. H. Jordan & Co. for the ferry across the Catawba River near Fort Lawn (J. R. Culp, Supervisor), and to Charles Dusenbyr for the Bull Creek Ferry in Georgetown (S. W. Rouqie, Supervisor).[73] However, that same year the General Assembly authorized the state's County Boards of

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[72] Frederic L. Paxson, "The Highway Movement, 1916-1935," *The American Historical Review* 51, no. 2 (January 1946): 252.

[73] M. R. Cooper, *Report of M. R. Cooper, Secretary of State to the General Assembly of South Carolina, for the Fiscal Year Beginning January 1, 1900, and Ending December 31, 1900* (Columbia, SC: The State Company, State Printers, 1901), 74-75.

Commissioners "at their discretion, to discontinue any public road, bridge or ferry."[74]

Several years later, the General Assembly passed an act to protect the users of the ferries. The new legislation required chartered ferries to give free passage if a delay was longer than thirty minutes. The fine for a one-hour delay was $5 or thirty days in prison. This act was only for chartered ferries, not free or steam ferries.[75] Even as late as 1909, the General Assembly exempted school trustees from paying ferriages or tolls while traveling on official business.[76]

With the establishment of the Naval Station in Charleston County, on February 25, 1904, the General Assembly discontinued Clement's Ferry and the public road known as Clement's Ferry Road that crossed over the new

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[74] South Carolina General Assembly, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1900* (Columbia, SC: The Bryan Printing Company, State Printers, 1900), 286.

[75] General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1903-1905* (Columbia, SC: The State Company, State Printers, 1905), 443-444.

[76] W. H. Townsend, ed., *General School Law of South Carolina* (Columbia: State Superintendent of Education, 1909), 36.

Naval Station at Goose Creek. The assembly also repealed the charter to the ferry over the Waccamaw River vested in William R. Leis on January 5, 1895.[77]

While the General Assembly had stopped regulating ferries in the 1890s, politicians still realized the importance of ferries in the transportation system. In 1911, the General Assembly required the county supervisors of Newberry and Saluda counties to jointly establish and maintain a free ferry across the Saluda River at Holly's Ferry, and ordered the two countries to pay the $200 per annum required to maintain the ferry.[78]

In 1911, the owners had abandoned the ferry connecting Edisto Island and the mainland and the bridge from Whooping Island and Edisto Island. The citizens petitioned the General Assembly to reestablish the ferry and the bridge

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[77] General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1903-1905*, 604-605, 656.

[78] General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, *Acts and Joint Resolutions Also Certain Concurrent Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1912* (Columbia, SC: Gonzales and Bryan, State Printers, 1912), 1066.

because of the citizens' need to be able to get to the mainland.[79]

In 1912, the General Assembly reestablished the Edisto Island, or Dawho, Ferry and vested it in J. G. Murray, J. Swinton Whaley, and M. W. Simmons and their successors in the office as a special commission, to work with the county commissioners of Charleston County to reestablish the ferry and rebuild the bridge. The special commissioners held office for only two years, or until the new ones were appointed. Based on the legislation, the Board of Township of Edisto Island Township, the Board of Township Commissioners of Adams Run Township, and the Board of County Commissioners for Charleston County each appointed one special commissioner. [80]

Not only was the administration of the ferry divided between the special commission and the county commissioners, but also the cost of the ferry was divided equally between the state and the county, with each paying $1,500 for its construction. The legislation authorized the county to use fees from the ferry for its upkeep and

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[79] Ibid, 987-988.

[80] Ibid.

maintenance, and any profit was to be deposited into the general fund.[81]

The division of authority and costs did not work as planned. On March 9, 1915, the General Assembly reestablished the Dawho Ferry with the Sanitary and Drainage Commission for Charleston County as overseer. Unlike the divided responsibility plan, the 1915 legislation required Charleston County to pay the entire $3,000 required to reopen and operate the ferry.[82]

In 1901, the General Assembly passed special regulation for steam-powered ferries. It required

> That each and every public ferry in this State, heretofore or hereafter chartered, or now existing under and by authority of any general or special Act, shall operate daily and with only such intermission as is reasonable, commencing at 6 A. M. and ending not earlier than 9 P. M., each day. If any person or persons .shall meet with unreasonable delay at any of the public steam ferries established by law in this State, every such person or persons may, by action in any Court of competent jurisdiction, recover from the proprietors or owners of such ferry, the sum of

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[81] Ibid.

[82] General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1915* (Columbia, SC: Gonzales and Bryan, State Printers, 1915-16), 559-560.

> ten (10) dollars for each and every hour of such unreasonable delay.[83]

They also set the maximum ferriage as ten cents for a single trip.

As part of the assembly's move to gain control of the transportation infrastructure, it also divested control of ferries from private individuals and placed them in the control of local political boards. For example, in 1901 the General Assembly took away the charter granted to the Port Royal Ferry Company and vested it with the County Board of Commissioners. The County Board received the powers to

> recharter, operate or lease said Ferry, and if operated or leased by them, to maintain the causeways, and to charge the toll … turning over all moneys thus received to the County Treasurer as County funds, and the expenses of keeping said Ferry and operating the same may be paid out of the ordinary County Fund of Beaufort County.[84]

In Charleston, the General Assembly granted the Sanitary and Drainage Commission the power to "operate and maintain ferries necessary to the public convenience, and for such

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[83] South Carolina General Assembly, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1901* (Columbia, SC: The State Company, 1901), 722.

[84] Ibid., 807.

purpose are authorized and empowered to condemn all necessary landings for said purpose."[85]

In the 1920s, the General Assembly continued to pass laws to ensure the safety of operating ferries and to adapt to the needs of the growing automobile culture. In 1924, it passed a law requiring ferry operators in Georgetown County to have at least two oars "to propel the said flat in case same is needed," and to have a chain across the end of the flat so that cars would not roll off the end of the ferry.[86]

However, the laws did not always ensure safety. On Easter Sunday, 1920, Harper's Ferry, a cable ferry that crossed the Savannah River near Lowndesville, failed, resulting in the deaths of ten people.[87]

Through the history of South Carolina, the chartering and regulation of ferries illustrated the state government's desire to maintain centralized control of the

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[85] South Carolina General Assembly, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1917* (Columbia, SC: Gonzales and Bryan, State Printers, 1917), 540.

[86] General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1924* (Columbia, SC: Gonzales and Bryan, State Printers, 1924), 951-952.

[87] J. Oscar Hunter, "Abbeville County Towns and Communities," *Names in South Carolina* XXVIII (Winter 1981): 15.

state. The state first granted ferries to the planter elite, then to corporations, and finally to local governments.

CHAPTER III

IMPORTANT PLACES TO DEFEND: DEFENSE OF FERRIES IN SOUTH CAROLINA

In addition to regulating ferries, the colonial and later state government also utilized ferries as part of the common defense of South Carolina. Ferries were originally crucial parts of the defense network devised by the colonial government to protect the colony, first from the Native Americans and later from the Spanish and French. The ferries allowed the government to move troops rapidly from the settlements to the frontier. During the Indian and Revolutionary wars, ferries were crucial places for battles, raids, and other skirmishes and were essential elements in the logistical infrastructure. However, during the Civil War, military engineering and the plethora of pontoon bridges rendered ferries negligible as defense sites.

Ferries also served as essential support facilities for several governmental operations. Archaeologist Kenneth Lewis argues that the development of an overland transportation infrastructure during the early colonial period was essential to colonial development. He contends

that the establishment of roads and ferries strengthened "military requirements, economic access to markets, inter-colony and intra-colony communication, social interaction, and religious activity."[1] Based on the archival evidence, it is apparent that ferries were vital contributors to the development of South Carolina's early defense network.

Defense as a justification for ferries appears early in the colonial records. The Commons House of Assembly noted in 1705 that the lack "of convenient ferries and roads hath much prevented the uniting of her Majesty's forces in the defense of this colony."[2] The assembly established many of the early Lowcountry ferries along routes to the south, where South Carolina governmental officials feared the Spanish and Native Americans. There is no indication in the archival record that the early ferry sites in the colony had fortifications, yet they were part of the militia-based defense network.[3]

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[1] Kenneth Lewis, *The American Frontier: An Archaeological Study of Settlement Patterns and Process* (New York: Academic Press, 1984), 157-159.

[2] McCord, ed., *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. IX*, 6.

[3] David H. Overy and Kevin M. Gannon, "The Colonial Wars and the American Revolution," in *The American Military Tradition from Colonial Times to the Present*, ed. John M.

One of the recurring themes in American military history is the use of citizen soldiers rather than a large standing army. During the Revolutionary War, informally trained citizens joined in local militias to combat the British army. Local and state militias were important components of George Washington's military strategy by augmenting his standing army. After the Revolutionary War, citizen soldiers such as the Minutemen were mythologized. However, the regular Continental Army was more akin in training and tactics to the professional armies of Europe than the irregular forces. In the southern theater of operations, militia forces did win numerous important battles such as the Battle of King's Mountain.[4]

Because of the fear of attack from the Spanish to the south or from slave revolts, South Carolina required a localized place for members of the local militia to rally, and ferries were convenient rallying points. Area residents knew the location of the ferry, and ferries were on major

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Carroll and Colin F. Baxter (New York: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 1.

[4] For a general history of American military history in colonial times see Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973); Overy and Gannon, "The Colonial Wars and the American Revolution," 1-33.

transportation routes and allowed for rapid access to Charleston for reinforcements or retreat.[5]

Many Lowcountry ferries served as militia gathering points during the eighteenth century. For example, the Ashley Ferry Militia Company gathered at the Ashley Ferry, the Four Holes Militia Company met at Smith's Ferry, and Captain Chinners' Militia Company gathered at the south side of Kinloch's Ferry.[6] Troops who used a ferry site rarely sought any change to the built environment. Ferry charters from before the Revolutionary War exempted militia troops from paying ferriage when mustering.[7]

In addition to militia meeting places, the government also used ferries as part of frontier patrols. For example, on April 9, 1725, the citizens of Pon Pon filed a petition with the assembly requesting "about 6 Scout men that they may have a ferry."[8] These men would guard the frontier

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[5] Barr, "Strawberry Ferry and Childsbury Towne," 79.

[6] J. Russell Cross, *Historic Ramblin's through Berkeley* (Columbia, South Carolina: The R. L. Bryan Company, 1985), 256-257.

[7] McCord, ed., *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. IX*, 115.

[8] A. S. Salley Jr., ed., *Journal of the Commons House of Assembly of South Carolina for the Session Beginning February 23, 1724/5 and Ending June 1, 1725* (Columbia:

settlements and plantations against raids by Native Americans and the Spanish as well as protect again slave insurrections.

After King George's War in 1748, colonists again feared Spanish invasion and responded by renewing their defenses, including protection of their transportation network.[9] In Port Royal, citizens formed a committee in 1744 and petitioned to the Commons House of Assembly that the colonial government construct a fort at Cochran's Point to defend the Port Royal ferry and another fort on the mainland to protect Bryan's Ferry.[10]

In addition to using ferries as an important as part of the growing defense network, South Carolina governmental officials used ferry sites for official meeting places, especially when dealing with Native Americans. For example,

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Printed Under the Direction of the Joint Committee on Printing, General Assembly of South Carolina, 1945), 78.

[9] Rowland, Moore, and Rogers, *The History of Beaufort County, South Carolina*, 150; Weir, *Colonial South Carolina*, 265.

[10] James Spirek and Christopher Amer, *The Port Royal Sound Survey, Phase One: Preliminary Investigations of Intertidal and Submerged Cultural Resources in Port Royal Sound, Beaufort County, South Carolina* (Columbia: Underwater Archaeology Division, South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina, 1999), 30.

in December 1726, agents met the Creeks at an unnamed ferry near Goose Creek.[11] There are many reasons for the use of ferries as governmental meeting places. First, most people knew the location of the ferry site. Second, the ferry was located on a major transportation route that aided people in reaching the site. Third, most ferries had taverns and public houses so that people meeting there could have accommodations, food, and drink.

Ferries during the Revolutionary War

During the Revolutionary War, ferries served several important roles. Because of the geography of the Lowcountry and the partisan tactics employed by Francis Marion and other militia leaders, ferries served as important transportation routes and the sites of many engagements.[12]

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[11] A. S. Salley Jr., ed., *Journal of the Commons House of Assembly of South Carolina November 15, 1726-March 11, 1726/7* (Columbia: Printed Under the Direction of the Joint Committee on Printing, General Assembly of South Carolina, 1946), 34-35.

[12] For information of the tactics used in the Revolutionary War in the Lowcountry see John Morgan Dederer, *Making Bricks without Straw: Nathanael Greene's Southern Campaign and Mao Tse-Tung's Mobile War* (Manhattan, KS: Sunflower University Press, 1983), John W. Gordon, *South Carolina and the American Revolution: A Battlefield History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), and Walter Edgar, *Partisans & Redcoats: The Southern*

Each side wanted to maintain control of the ferries to ensure that it could transport troops and supplies from its major bases to other locations throughout the Lowcountry.

The first major military role of ferries was to transport troops and supplies. While they aided travel, ferries also created natural bottlenecks for the movements of military units. Even with good weather, crossing a ferry took a lot of time. For example, when Lord Cornwallis's British army (3,000 troops) crossed the Santee River by ferry, the operation took over twelve hours.[13] The need for faster ferries led American General William Moultrie to request that the governor have "large flats stationed at Ponpon, Ashepoo, and Combahee rivers, to facilitate the marching of troops through those parts of the country."[14]

Most of the time, both armies utilized existing ferries, not their own boats. John Simmons operated a

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Conflict That Turned the Tide of the American Revolution (New York: Perennial, 2001).

[13] William Thomas Sherman, *Calendar and Record of the Revolutionary War in the South: 1780-1781* (Seattle, WA: Cinema Books, 2007), 12.

[14] William Moultrie, *Memoirs of the American Revolution: So Far As It Related to the States of North and South Carolina, and Georgia* (New York: Printed by D. Longworth, 1802), 10.

private ferry along the Wateree River, and he routinely transported the South Carolina Militia across the river.[15]

Ferries played a crucial role during the siege of Charleston. Knowing that they needed to cross the rivers to lay siege the city, the British quickly captured the Ashley and Stono ferries to transport their forces across the rivers with ease and to control their attack on the American forces along the peninsula.[16] As the British captured the city, American forces used ferries, such as Lempriere's Ferry, to evacuate the city to the east of the Cooper River.[17] Neither the capture of the city nor its evacuation could have happened without the ferries.

Besides transporting military units, the Americans used the ferries as spots from which to initiate foraging and reconnaissance missions. For example, on March 25, 1780, during the siege of Charleston, the Americans landed at Stono Ferry as part of their mission to gather

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[15] Thomas M. Stubbs, "Garner's Ferry Road," *Names in South Carolina* I (Winter 1954), 5.

[16] Sherman, *Calendar and Record of the Revolutionary War in the South*, 79.

[17] Petrona Royall McIver, *History of Mount Pleasant South Carolina* (Mount Pleasant, SC: The City of Mount Pleasant, 1960), 17.

livestock.[18] As the war turned on the British, the British also raided ferry sites along the Pon Pon and Santee rivers to obtain rice for their forces. American Colonel William Harden, who was monitoring the British for General Nathanael Greene, wrote a report on August 15 noting that the "enemy [is] still at Combahee Ferry waiting for boats (schooners) to arrive for rice. What rice they can't take with them, they say they will burn." Francis Marion would have assisted Colonel Harden at this time but was kept in check by a loyalist force blocking the way at Fairlawn, a fortified mansion at Moncks Corner.[19]

While both sides used ferries to transport forces, they also attempted to control how the other side used them. As part of his retreat after a skirmish at Saltketcher Bridge in March 1780, Colonel Ames Ladson's Colleton County Militia destroyed the ferryboats to slow the British advance. On August 17, 1780, Colonel Marion took command of the Williamsburg militia at Witherspoon's Ferry. He quickly ordered Peter Horry to destroy all boats

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[18] Sherman, *Calendar and Record of the Revolutionary War in the South*, 88.

[19] Ibid., 426.

from the lower ferry on the Santee to Lenud's Ferry and to stop the British from crossing the rivers.[20]

In addition to transporting troops, ferries also served as logistics bases. In 1781, the American forces defended their supplies at Haley's Ferry from a British raid.[21] Because many of the ferries had wharves, warehouses, and other facilities, it was easier for the military units to gather and store supplies there. The British also used the ferries as supply points. Loyalist Robert Gray reported that

> the stores at Camden were sent by water from Charles Town to Monck's Corner, from thence waggoned [*sic*] to a landing on Santee near Nelson's ferry where they were embarked in boats for Camden.[22]

Some ferry sites became war zones. As the British advanced on Charleston in 1780, the American forces constructed earthworks at various ferries and bridges to

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[20] Robert D. Bass, *Swamp Fox: The Life and Campaigns of General Francis Marion* (Orangeburg, South Carolina: Sandlapper Publishing, 1974), 167; Sherman, *Calendar and Record of the Revolutionary War in the South*, 86.

[21] Sherman, *Calendar and Record of the Revolutionary War in the South*, 338.

[22] Ibid., 12.

protect them and slow the British advance.[23] When Marion captured Port's Ferry in Marion County, he quickly constructed fortifications and placed two artillery pieces and eighty men to guard the ferry and control enemy movement. As the British expanded their control from Charles Town to other enclaves, they fortified ferry sites to protect the lines of communication.[24] A map of Port Royal Island shows fortifications at the ferry at Roupell's Plantation during the Revolutionary War.[25]

Ferries during the Civil War

During the Civil War, the use of railroads and development of better pontoon bridges made protection of ferry sites a lesser priority for Confederate and Union forces alike. Both sides seldom utilized ferryboats; they were too slow to transport the large, modern armies of the Civil War. Confederate engineers routinely replaced ferry

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[23] Patrick O'Kelley, *Nothing but Blood and Slaughter: The Revolutionary War in the Carolinas, Volume Two: 1780* (None Given: Blue House Tavern Press, 2004), 34.

[24] Sherman, *Calendar and Record of the Revolutionary War in the South*, 180-181, 193.

[25] Michael Trinkley and Debi Hacker, *Cartographic Survey of Historic Sites in Beaufort County, South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: Chicora Foundation, 1992).

sites with pontoon bridges as a more effective means of keeping the rivers open.

In that sense, ferries were like bridges and were defended accordingly.[26] A study of Civil War fortifications in five Lowcountry counties found approximately nine different fortifications at ferry sites.[27] After the fall of Port Royal and Beaufort in 1861, General Robert E. Lee, who had been given command of the defense of the Carolina coast, changed the defense strategy. When Lee reached Coosawhatchie on November 7, 1861, Brigadier General Roswell Ripley, commander of coastal defense, reported the defeat at Port Royal. Ripley moved his forces from the Sea Islands to defend the Charleston to Savannah Railroad, the vital transportation artery for the area.[28]

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[26] Letter dated December 16, 1864, from Lt. Thomas C. Veal to Maj. W. H. Echols, Records of the Confederate States of America, Corps of Engineers, South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, SC.

[27] Michael Trinkley and Sara Fick, *A Survey of Civil War Fortifications in Charleston, Beaufort, Berkeley, Hampton, and Jasper Counties, South Carolina,* Research Series 59 (Columbia: Chicora Foundation, 2000), 27-30.

[28] Christopher Ohm Clements, Steven Wise, Steven Smith, and Ramona M. Grunden, *Mapping the Defenses of the Charleston to Savannah Railroad: Civil War Earthworks in Beaufort and Jasper Counties, South Carolina* (Columbia: South Carolina Institute of Anthropology and Archaeology, 2000), 14.

Realizing the importance of the railroad, Lee moved the defenses from the coastal islands and deep waterways inland to where the rivers emptying into the sounds were narrow and shallower. He constructed batteries and fortifications at these spots to stop Union advances. The fortifications would be reinforced by reserves moving on the Charleston and Savannah Railroad to where they were needed. Military historian Russell Weigley compared Lee's defense strategy with his father Light Horse Harry Lee's Revolutionary War defense of parts of Virginia's coast. The strength of this plan lay in the fact that it also allowed the Confederate forces to control the location of the battlefield. The strategy did protect the South Carolina-Georgia coast against deep penetration by Union forces until General William Sherman's attack from the interior of the state.[29]

Because of the Combahee Ferry's importance as a transportation center, Confederate forces constructed fortifications at the ferry and on the causeway leading to the northeast. The first description of the Confederate defenses at the Combahee Ferry site, in a report of provisional forces in South Carolina dated November 18,

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[29] Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 100.

1861, stated that Colonel James Jones's 14th Regiment, South Carolina Volunteers, held Garden's Corner and were stretched in observation toward Combahee Ferry. The regiment, formed of men from Edgefield, Darlington, Laurens, Greenville, Spartanburg, and Kershaw counties, was stationed in the Pocotaligo area in October 1861.[30]

In February 1862, Union forces conducted a reconnaissance mission up Bull River and Schooner Channel. Captain Ely, 8th Regiment, Michigan Volunteers, reported that an estimated 300-man Confederate force was stationed at Combahee Church, approximately two miles west of the ferry, on the Garden's Corner road. He also reported that to the left of the ferry were two pieces of artillery placed behind an earthwork and covered with pine brush. He observed, "The Combahee Ferry is made passable by flats, so that teams pass over as on a bridge."[31] A former slave owned by Robert Barnwell and another former slaved named Cyas served Union troops as guides up the river.[32] The use of former slaves by the Union Army as guides for

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[30] United States, *The War of the Rebellion: Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series I: Index to Battles, Campaigns, Etc.* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1899), Part I, Serial 6:324.

[31] Ibid., 92.

[32] Ibid.

reconnaissance missions foreshadowed the intelligence work of Harriet Tubman one year later.

To strengthen the defense of the area after the landing of Union forces at Page's Point, on April 2, 1862, Confederate General J. C. Pemberton ordered an artillery detachment commanded by A. M. Huger, 1st Artillery, South Carolina Militia, from near Fishburn's Causeway to the east end of the Combahee Ferry Causeway. This probably is the fortifications at Lowden's Plantation (archaeological site 38CN257). Four companies of the 13th South Carolina Volunteers supported the artillery. Two more companies were located on the west side of the ferry.[33] As part of a realignment of the Confederate Military District, a detachment of the company of German artillery located at Chapman's Fort was relocated to serve the guns at Combahee Ferry.[34] Figure 1 shows the location of the Confederate fortifications at the Combahee Ferry and those located at the end of the causeway in 1866. Figure 2 provides an undated plan of the Confederate defenses at Combahee Ferry.

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[33] Ibid., 423.

[34] Ibid., 435.

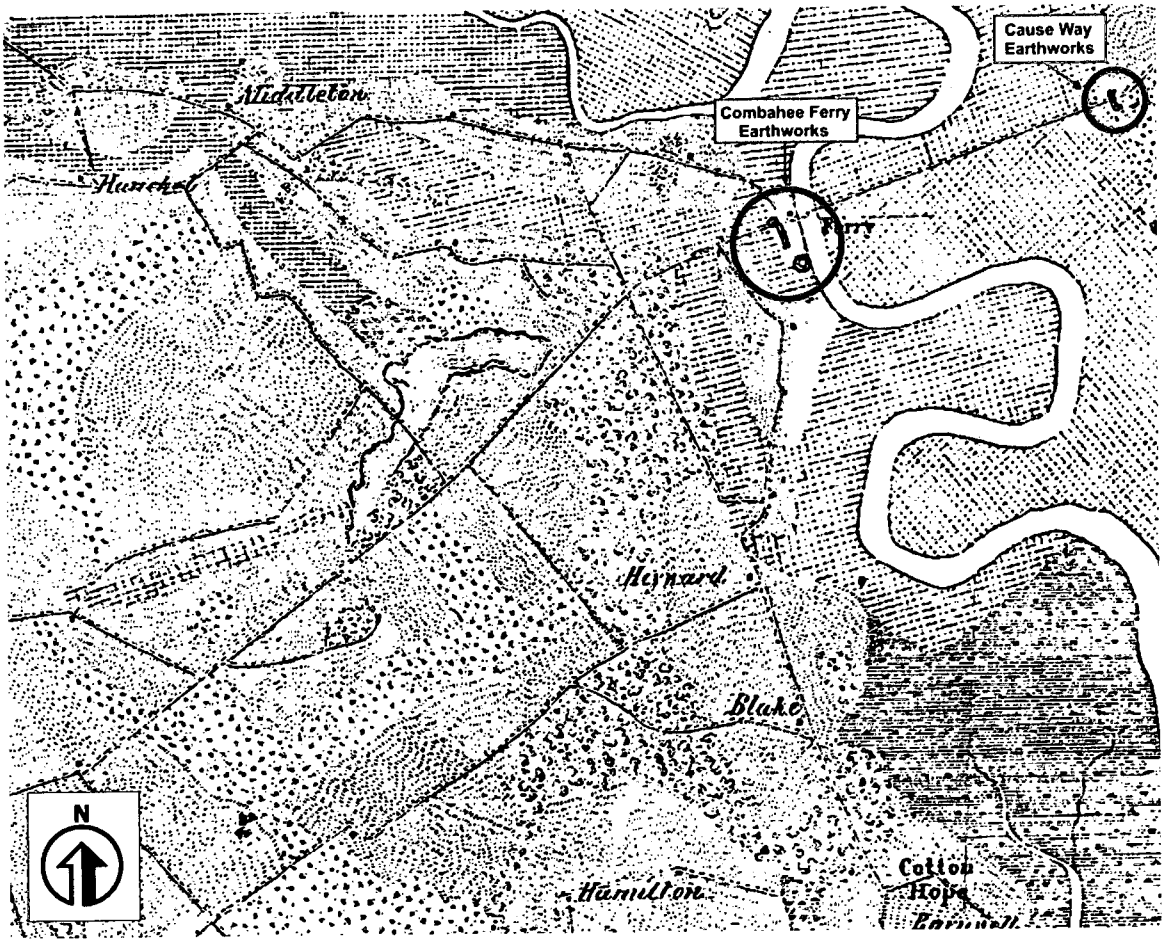

Figure 1. A portion of the 1866 Poe map showing the fortifications at and near Combahee Ferry (courtesy of Brockington and Associates, Inc., Map Collection).

Figure 2. An undated plan of Confederate defenses at Combahee Ferry (courtesy of Brockington and Associates, Inc., Map Collection).

Readers may notice the redoubt and the various rifle trenches in Figure 2.

In 1863, the Combahee Ferry was the site of a major raid conducted by the 2nd South Carolina Volunteer Infantry, an African American unit. Union officers were beginning to use African American soldiers, and to supplement their numbers, the Union enlisted freed slaves

as well as free blacks from the North. Colonel James Montgomery and Harriet Tubman, former Underground Railroad conductor, led the Combahee River raid. This was the first time in U.S. history that a woman planned and executed an armed military action. Her intelligence gave the Union troops critical details about the location of Confederate forces.[35] Before this time, Union forces had little information about the location and strength of Confederate troops. Tubman organized and led spy trips into the interior of South Carolina disguised as a field hand or a poor farm wife, often accompanied by former slaves who knew the area. Tubman gathered intelligence and reported it to Montgomery.[36]

As in earlier raids on the St. Mary's and St. John's rivers, Union forces decided to use the Combahee River to transport its men for attacks on the plantations up the river. This move allowed the Union forces to capitalize on their superior naval forces and not utilize the roads of the region. Montgomery's plan called for three landings along the river. The first landing was at Field's Point,

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[35] Kate Clifford Larson, *Bound for the Promised Land: Harriet Tubman, Portrait of an American Hero* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2003), 212-214.

[36] Milton C. Sernett, *Harriet Tubman: Myth, Memory, and History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 87.

where the Confederates had constructed a gun battery. However, at the time of the raid, the Confederates had deserted that earthwork. The next landing, located two miles above Field's Point, was Tar Bluff. The final landing was the Combahee Ferry, six miles farther up the river.

Local and national Union newspapers reported the raid. Union-supporting paper *Free South* described the raid as "brilliant and entirely successful." To a national audience, the Boston *Commonwealth* stated that the raid "was a glorious consummation." In an in-depth article, the *Commonwealth* reporter described the scene of the returning Union forces:

> Col. Montgomery and his gallant band of 300 black soldiers, *under the guidance of a black woman* [Harriet Tubman], dashed into the enemy's country, struck a bold and effective blow, destroying millions of dollars worth of commissary stores, cotton and lordly dwellings, and striking terror into the heart of rebeldom, brought off near 800 slaves and thousands of dollars worth of property, without losing a man or receiving a scratch. It was a glorious consummation. The Colonel was followed by a speech from the black woman, *who led the raid and under whose inspiration it was originated and conducted.* For sound sense and real native eloquence, her address would do honor to any man, and it created a great sensation … Since the rebellion she had devoted herself to her great work of delivering the bondman, with an energy and sagacity that cannot be exceeded. *Many and many times she has penetrated the enemy's lines and discovered their situation and condition, and*

escaped without injury, but not without extreme hazard.[37]

Although their defensive works did not stop the raid, the Confederates continued to staff the earthworks at Combahee Ferry with the primary mission of protecting the Charleston to Savannah Railroad. On July 24, 1863, Company C, 11th South Carolina Infantry (Confederate), left McPhersonville for Green Pond. The company divided into two sections. One section stationed itself at Ashepoo, in charge of a gun in the battery, and the other stationed itself at Combahee with one gun in the battery. The unit continued serving at the two rivers from August to December 1863.[38]

On January 3, 1865, General Sherman prepared for his march into the interior of South Carolina by sending a portion of his troops from Savannah to Beaufort, South Carolina. Three days later, on January 19, 1865, Sherman ordered his entire army to march into South Carolina. As his forces moved into the state, Sherman first sent an expeditionary force toward Charleston in hopes of buttoning

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[37] *The Commonwealth*, July 10, 1863.

[38] United States, *The War of the Rebellion,* Part II, Serial 76:835.

down the forces in the city. Sherman stated in a report to General U. S. Grant:

> On the 25th a demonstration was made against the Combahee Ferry and railroad bridge across the Salkehatchie, merely to amuse the enemy, who had evidently adopted that river as his defensive line against our supposed objective, the city of Charleston. I reconnoitered the line in person, and saw that the heavy rains had swollen the river so that water stood in the swamps for a breadth of more than a mile, at a depth of from one to twenty feet. Not having the remotest intention of approaching Charleston, a comparatively small force was able, by seeming preparations to cross over, to keep in their front a considerable force of the enemy disposed to contest our advance on Charleston.[39]

When that plan became transparent on January 29, 1865, the entire force changed course and headed toward the state capital in Columbia.

Sherman ordered one regiment from the 2nd Brigade, two pieces of artillery (Napoleons), and two companies of the 107th Ohio Volunteers to proceed down the Combahee Ferry road from Garden's Corner and to reconnoiter the Confederate position on the west bank of the Combahee River.[40] Brigadier General J. P. Hatch captured the Combahee

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[39] United States, *The War of the Rebellion,* Part I, Serial 47:18.

[40] United States, *The War of the Rebellion,* Part II, Serial 59:203.

Ferry site on February 4, 1865, without loss to the Union side. On February 5, 1865, the 107th Ohio Infantry marched to Combahee Ferry from Garden's Corner. The five companies of the regiment assisted in removing Confederate skirmishers posted on the north side of the river and began to rebuild the pontoon bridge over the river [41]

On February 8, 1865, Confederate Lieutenant General W. J. Hardee informed President Jefferson Davis that the Union Army had "driven our forces from railroad bridge over Salkehatchie, and are active at Combahee Ferry" [42] The Confederates, fearing a flank attack from the advancing Union forces, evacuated the works at Combahee Ferry on February 11, 1865, and Colonel Marple occupied them at eight o'clock the next morning.[43]

Military Uses of Ferries in the New South

After the Civil War, military and governmental use of ferries quickly declined. While many ferries still

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[41] United States, *The War of the Rebellion,* Part II, Serial 67:182.

[42] United States, *The War of the Rebellion,* Part II, Serial 47:1122.

[43] United States, *The War of the Rebellion,* Part II, Serial 59:402.

possessed post offices and served as voting places, they no longer possessed military importance.[44] However, as World War I approached, the state government decided to prepare for military use once again. The assembly approved a law that stated:

> Any person belonging to the military forces of this State, going to or returning from any parade, drill or meeting shall, together with his conveyance and the military property of the State, be allowed to pass free through all toll gates and over all toll bridges and ferries.[45]

Ferries aided in the early defense of the colony and served as important battlefields and logistics points during the Revolutionary War. By the time of the Civil War, ferries still were defended, but pontoon bridges made the ferry portions of the sites unnecessary.

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[44] South Carolina General Assembly, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1900*, 396.

[45] South Carolina General Assembly, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1917*, 31.

CHAPTER IV

HOW CAN WE MAKE MONEY HERE? THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS AT FERRY SITES IN SOUTH CAROLINA

Ferries were as much economic as transportation institutions. Were patterns in South Carolina of particular significance? How did South Carolina's expansion and reliance on ferries mirror other those of southern states, especially the coastal ones?

This chapter examines these questions and explores in detail the role of ferries in the development of tourism in the Lowcountry. Two case studies provide in-depth examples of communities, taverns, and other economic institutions that developed at ferries in Charleston and the surrounding area.

Scholars have produced several important works on the economic history of the Lowcountry, with particular focus on the development of the plantation and its growth as the prominent economic center of the region.[1] Even after the

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[1] Among the key studies are Converse D. Clowse, *Economic Beginnings of Colonial South Carolina 1670-1730* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1971), Peter A. Coclanis, *The Shadow of a Dream: Economic Life and Death in the South Carolina Low Country 1670-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), Peter A. Coclanis, "The Rise and Fall of the South Carolina Low Country: An Essay

Civil War and emancipation, most plantations remained in production, switching their labor force from slaves to sharecroppers. The cash crops that served as the basis of the plantation system varied from indigo and rice during the colonial period to cotton during the antebellum period. Since plantations were usually located far from the harbors of Charleston, Beaufort, and Georgetown, plantation owners needed infrastructure including communal fairs, markets, public buildings, and most importantly, ferry landings as a means to get their products to market.[2] As shown in Chapter II, the colonial and state government aided in the development of that transportation system as a means to spur economic growth.

Early transportation routes in South Carolina developed from Native American trails. As the English came to the colony, they widened the trails to permit wagon traffic. They then constructed ferries, causeways, and

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in Economic Interpretation," *Southern Studies* 24 (1985), 143-166, S. Max Edelson, "Planting the Lowcountry: Agricultural Enterprise and Economic Experience in the Lower South, 1695-1785" (Ph.D. diss., The Johns Hopkins University, 1998), Joyce E. Chaplin, *Subject Matter: Technology, the Body, and Science on the Anglo-American Frontier, 1500-1676* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

[2] Harris, "Charleston's Colonial Boat Culture, 1668-1775," 81.

bridges.[3] During the 1720s, the colony constructed numerous roads, bridges, and ferries that lowered the cost of transporting rice to the markets. Historian Peter Coclanis argues that the developing transportation network in the southern portion of the colony resulted in the integration of the area into a larger economy and allowed it to shift from cattle grazing to rice production.[4]

By the 1730s, better transportation infrastructure allowed Charleston planters to consolidate their economic advantages. Historian Max Edelson argues that this new centralized trade was dependent on a

> foundation of internal improvements that overlaid a capillary-like network of roads, bridges, ferry crossings, and canals over a natural network of river systems that seemed naturally inclined to promote the decentralized pattern of exchange common to the Chesapeake Tidewater.[5]

Once in possession of an effective transportation system, South Carolina planters did not intend to lose control of

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[3] Ulrich B. Phillips, "Transportation in the Ante-Bellum South: An Economic Analysis," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 19 (May 1905), 443.

[4] Peter A. Coclanis, "Rice Prices in the 1720s and the Evolution of the South Carolina Economy," *The Journal of Southern History* 48, no. 4 (November 1982): 541.

[5] Edelson, "Planting the Lowcountry," 383.

it.[6] In 1760, a British government inspector came to inventory the records at the customhouse in Port Royal. In his report, he commented that political and economic leaders of Charles Town were attempting to prevent the limited construction of roads, bridges, and ferries in the Port Royal area as a means of stopping any threat to their control of the region.[7]

In the early days of the colony, Charlestonians attempted to control market access up and down the coastline. Historian Charles Farmer argues that in the absence of towns, plantations took on many economic services. The plantations became the location of stores, mills, artisan shops, and financial services. Because of their importance as trade centers, ferries also served as centers for similar economic services.[8] In addition, because

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[6] Of course, control of transportation as a means of economic domination lies at the root of capitalism. Fernand Braudel points out that the growth of industry also resulted in the growth of transportation as a separate industry. See Fernand Braudel, *Civilization & Capitalism, 15th-18th Century: The Wheels of Commerce, Volume 2* (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), 349-361.

[7] Spirek and Amer, *The Port Royal Sound Survey, Phase One*, 37.

[8] Charles J. Farmer, *In the Absence of Towns; Settlements and Country Trade in Southside Virginia, 1730-1800* (Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1993).

ferries often were located at plantations, the two shared common services.

The Economic Value of Ferry Ownership

Of course, a ferry's greatest important economic value was its transportation function – a means to get goods to the market. Many private individuals also saw the operation of a ferry to be a profitable venture, because the government set rates favorable for profits. Most early ferry owners were plantation owners who saw another moneymaking opportunity.[9] They established ferries along already important routes to further advance their plantation's products.[10]

In addition to their agriculture pursuits, wealthy Carolinians provided economic services to their neighbors. These services ranged from selling surpluses of corn to neighbors; proving blacksmiths, wheelwrights, and carpenters; and operating gristmills, cotton gins,

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[9] Michael J. Heitzler, *Goose Creek: A Definitive History, Volume One: Planters, Politicians and Patriots* (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2005), 83.

[10] Watson, "The Ferry in Colonial North Carolina," 249; Moore, "Role of Ferryboat Landings in East Tennessee's Economic Development, 1790-1870," 1.

tanneries, brandy stills, and ferries.[11] In many ways, these plantations contained an industrial landscape just as important as the agricultural landscape.[12] This industrial landscape supported the ferry activities.

The growing economic importance of ferries to plantation owners is documented in several wills and inventories during this time. For example, the will of William Waties Jr., owner of Laurel Hill Plantation in present-day Georgetown County, included "123 slaves, 16 horses, 55 head of sheep, one pettiauger, 1 ferry boat, five canoes, 1 set of surveying instruments, half ownership in a sloop."[13] Unfortunately, the will does not provide any other description of the ferryboat.

Having a ferry at a plantation, or easy access to a ferry, added value to the plantation. A sales notice published in the *South Carolina Gazette* in 1739 included

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[11] Jane Turner Censer, *North Carolina Planters and Their Children, 1800-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 12.

[12] For a discussion of the industrial landscape of plantations, see John Michael Vlach, *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 123-134.

[13] Leslie Drucker, *A Cultural Resource Inventory of Selected Areas of the Oaks and Laurel Hill Plantations, Brookgreen Gardens* (Georgetown, SC: Carolina Archaeological Services, 1980), 1.

the plantation's distance from a ferry landing. The notice states that Hugh Ferguson was selling a tract "containing 380 acres, joining on the North side of the Ashley River, three Miles above the Ferry."[14] Also, several plats describe a tract of land near a ferry as the "Ferry Tract."[15]

Both ferry companies and landowners in the area sometimes developed supporting businesses on either side of the ferry landing. Many times people other than the ferry owner would set up wharves, stables, plantations, and taverns near the ferry.[16]

South Carolina residents often attempted to use the government to obtain ferry rights. State government records contain countless petitions of individuals asking for ferries to be established on their lands. Sometimes changes in ownership of ferries resulted in complaints to the General Assembly. For example, when Lydia Chicken took over

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[14] Harris, "Charleston's Colonial Boat Culture, 1668-1775," 79-80. See *South Carolina Gazette*, September 1-8, 1739, *South Carolina Gazette*, August 18-25, 1739.

[15] For example, see the Ferry Tract Plantation along the Ashley River, West Ashley, St Andrew's Parish, Charleston County in Rosina Sottile Kennerty, *Plantations on the South Side of Ashley River* (Charleston, SC: Nelson Printing Corporation, 1983).

[16] Harris, "Charleston's Colonial Boat Culture, 1668-1775," 83.

operation of the Strawberry Ferry after the death of James Child, several locals filed a petition of complaint to the Commons House of Assembly stating that Chicken was charging twice the rates Child had charged. They asked the Assembly to enact a new set of rates.[17]

Taverns and Ferries

Taverns and public houses in South Carolina first opened within coastal communities such as Charleston. By the end of the seventeenth century, these businesses had moved inland. Sites with regular traffic, such as Combahee Ferry, were among the first locations to construct shelter and provide food, lodging, and information to passersby. Regulation and licensing fees for South Carolina taverns/ public houses brought in a healthy profit for the Lords Proprietors and later the Crown governors. Taverns were operated at all levels of society. Rural taverns usually catered to lower- and middling-status patrons, although travelers from all levels of society were welcome. These establishments offered food, drink, stabling and care for horses, and a place to sleep for weary travelers. Taverns maintained by female proprietors often attempted to keep

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[17] Heitzler, *Goose Creek: A Definitive History, Volume One: Planters, Politicians and Patriots*, 83-84.

alcohol consumption to a minimum at their establishments in order to maintain a reputation free from suspicion of more illicit activities.[18]

Although the primary focus of taverns at crossing points was service to travelers, these businesses offered more than just fare and rest. Establishment of a tavern/ store created opportunity for information exchange between locals and travelers. The tavern keeper was expected to be a supplier of news and stories for distribution across the colonies and beyond. Taverns also supplied stores and offered travelers and individuals within the local and regional community the opportunity to interact and sell their wares. They offered a place for secular assembly and were often the site of local meetings, amusements, and conversation for settlers. Sometimes located a great distance from each other, taverns offered succor to all who entered their doors, with little exception.

When taverns combined with ferry crossings, they created a special space for exchanges of all sorts.[19]

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[18] See Sharon V. Salinger, *Taverns and Drinking in Early America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

[19] Barr, "Strawberry Ferry and Childsbury Towne,"; H. Roy Merrens, ed., *Colonial South Carolina Scene:*

Archaeologist William Barr contends, "Ferry crossings are of primary significance to socioeconomic patterns found in settlement."[20] As stated by historian George Terry:

> The planters living in the areas not adjacent to the [Cooper River] who lacked the funds to build or purchase a vessel became more dependent on the roads for transporting their goods to the Charleston market As a result of this growing dependence on overland travel, the ferries in St Johns were rapidly becoming a "vital link in transportation" in the parish.[21]

Barr argues that construction of ferries usually resulted in the establishment of an inn or tavern to serve patrons of the crossing.[22] Also, the expansion of interior roads created the need for inns located along highways and at ferry crossings. The inns provided travelers with food, lodging, stores, and a place to interact socially or conduct business. Although taverns and inns are well documented through historical literature from the colonial period, extant structures at ferry crossings have been

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Contemporary Views, 1697-1774 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1977), 138.

[20] Barr, "Strawberry Ferry and Childsbury Towne," 45.

[21] Terry, "'Champaign Country,'" 190.

[22] Barr, "Strawberry Ferry and Childsbury Towne," 79-80.

difficult to locate. Due to changes in transportation routes, most ferry taverns disappeared as the routes were passed by.[23]

One example of a tavern along a ferry was the How Tavern at Cainhoy, located in the southeastern pineland section of Berkeley County. Robert How built the tavern about 1745 near the site of his ferry established some years before that. The tavern and the ferry formed the nucleus for the village of Cainhoy. Between 1788 and 1801, Lewis Fogartie, who owned much of the surrounding property, began selling off long, narrow lots facing on the Wando River, resulting in a community plan similar to that used by the French in Louisiana. Cainhoy was known for a short time as Lewisville or Louisville, after Fogartie.[24]

How Tavern was a pre-Revolutionary War tavern, constructed circa 1745. It is a one-and-a-half-story frame building set on short brick piers, with a hewn heavy-timber frame. The building has been extensively altered with the

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[23] Rockman and Rothschild, "City Tavern, Country Tavern."

[24] W. David Chamberlain, Suzanne Pickens, and John Wells, "Cainhoy Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, November 28, 1980. On file at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

addition of two wings and large external chimneys at the east and west ends of the building.[25]

James G. Gibb, leader of the Lost Towns Project in Maryland, claims that the "identification and study of submerged ferries and landings could contribute to a clearer understanding of Colonial Period travel and the relationship between ferries and taverns."[26] One additional example of the importance of the close relationship between taverns and ferries is a state legislative proposal that "keepers of ferries and toll bridges be required to keep inns."[27] During the colonial period, inns and taverns were established at ferry crossings by individual owner/ operators and commercial stagecoach companies.

In addition to transportation, taverns, and tourism, ferries also served as the center for other economic pursuits. For example, as part of the Indian Trading Act, the General Assembly established several ferries, including five ferries over the Winyaw River, two over the Santee

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[25] Ibid.

[26] Gibb, "Archaeologists as Storytellers Imaginary, But by No Means Unimaginable," 3.

[27] Michael E. Stevens, *Journals of the House of Representatives 1792-1794* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), 492.

River, one over Sampit Creek, and one over the Cooper River.[28] The assembly saw the need for better transportation to further the Indian trade. In addition, ferries often served as a site for selling slaves. In Charleston, the sale of slaves took place at area wharves, including Stono Landing, Strawberry Ferry, and Ashley Ferry.[29]

Tourism and Ferries

In the nineteenth century, ferries contributed to the development of the Sea Islands for recreational pursuits. One example of a recreational community created by a ferry was Rockville. In *Summer Migrations and Resorts of South Carolina Lowcountry Planters,* Lawrence Fay Brewster describes Rockville as "a pleasant, cool and healthful village with shady walks, possessing an Episcopal Church and a Presbyterian Church."[30] Prior to its development as a

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[28] J. H. Easterby, ed., *The Journal of the Commons House of Assembly November 10, 1736-June 7, 1739* (Columbia: The Historical Commission of South Carolina, 1951), 624.

[29] Kenneth Morgan, "Slave Sales in Colonial Charleston," *The English Historical Review* 113, no. 453 (September 1998): 911.

[30] Lawrence Fay Brewster, *Summer Migrations and Resorts of South Carolina Lowcountry Planters* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1947), quoted in Nancy R. Ruhf, "Village of Rockville Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, January 21,

summer resort, Rockville consisted of a plantation house built by Benjamin Jenkins, who purchased a 496-acre tract in 1776. At Jenkins' death, his will divided the tract between his two sons, Benjamin Jr. and Samuel. Benjamin Jr. constructed a ferry house on his portion. William Seabrook, an Edisto Island planter, acquired the 496-acre tract in 1824. Seabrook set up a landing for the Edisto Island Ferry Company and laid out lots for summer homes for his ten children and many relatives. Rockville was the logical landing for the Edisto Island Ferry Company due to the directness of the land route to Charleston. From here, Sea Island cotton went overland to Charleston for shipment abroad. The village was also a way station for planters going between Charleston and their Sea Island plantations.[31]

According to the National Register nomination for Rockville, only one remaining building is directly associated with the operation of the ferry. The Micah Jenkins House, constructed in 1784, was originally the ferry house for the landing. Architecturally, the house is very similar to other houses from the period. The

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1972. On file at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

[31] Ruhf, "Village of Rockville Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form.

nomination describes the house as a raised cottage covered in clapboard siding over a tabby basement. The main façade has a porch supported by slender columns, one entrance, and three shuttered windows. The side-gable roof has two shed dormers. In the late nineteenth century, the owners reversed the location of the main entrance from the land side to the water side.[32]

Rockville was merely the beginning of a significant tourism industry by the end of the century. A broadside from 1890 promoted Sullivan's Island as a destination for day trips and extended visits at the New Brighton Hotel, with transport services by the Mount Pleasant and Sullivan's Island Ferry Company and by South Carolina Railway Company. The broadside stated that

> surf bathing at Sullivan's Island, as well as a Promenade on the splendid Beach, strewn with beautiful Sea Shells should not be overlooked. The Beach of Sullivan's Island excels any on the Atlantic coast. [33]

Two different steamer ferries, the *Sappho* and the *Pocosin*, operated from the Market Wharf to Sullivan's

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Mount Pleasant and Sullivan's Island Ferry Company, "Excursions to Sullivan's Island, S.C. and return every Saturday and Sunday," Broadside, 1890, South Caroliniana, Columbia, SC.

Island. The *Pocosin* was linked with a railroad to Augusta.[34] Later a bridge and tramline linked Mount Pleasant with Sullivan's Island, but the ferry opened the door. In the novel *Porgy* author DuBose Heyward made the ferry ride to Sullivan's Island part of the drama, a setting further emphasized in the opera *Porgy and Bess* by Heyward and brothers George and Ira Gershwin.[35]

The Economic End of Ferries

After the Civil War, ferries began to lose importance as railroads expanded across the state. In 1898, the state government ceased to regulate ferries. Two years later, the General Assembly authorized the state's County Boards of Commissioners "at their discretion, to discontinue any public road, bridge or ferry."[36]

With the growth of the automobile and bridge construction in the early twentieth century, ferries all

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[34] Ibid.

[35] DuBose Heyward, *Porgy* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2001); George Gershwin, *Porgy and Bess* (New York, Gershwin Pub. Corp. [sole selling agent: Chappell], 1935).

[36] South Carolina General Assembly, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1900*, 286.

but ceased to operate in the state. [37] Geographer Tyrel Moore argues that

> the economic importance of both ferries and steamboats declined dramatically as increased motor vehicle traffic diverted commodity flows away from water transportation in the twentieth century.[38]

Railroads provided the initial impetus for large-scale bridge building in the nineteenth century, but this was soon followed by the demand for bridges for vehicular traffic as well. This development was tied to the Good Roads movement of the Progressive Era.[39] Initially, this development was spurred not by the automobile, which was barely in its infancy, but by the bicycle, which had attained its modern form in the 1890s. By the turn of the century, the bicycle was much more popular than it is today.[40]

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[37] Gilmore, "South Carolina River Ferries," 48.

[38] Moore, "Role of Ferryboat Landings in East Tennessee's Economic Development, 1790-1870," 5.

[39] See Howard L. Preston, *Automobile Age Atlanta: The Making of a Southern Metropolis, 1900-1935* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1979).

[40] Edward Salo and Will Brockenbrough, *Documentation of Shanklin Creek Bridge along S-32 (Structure No. 017003200400), Abbeville County, South Carolina* (Mount Pleasant, SC: Brockington and Associates, 2007), 6.

Because of the automobile and advances in bridge building, the state government began to dismantle the ferry infrastructure. For example, as part of an act to "Empower the County Board of Commissioners of Lexington County to Building Two Steel Bridges Over Saluda River," the General Assembly stated that "upon the completion of the erection of said bridges all public ferries shall be discontinued by the said county at its expense."[41]

Using Ferries to Spur Economic Development in Other States

South Carolina's was not the only government to use ferries as a means to spur economic development. By 1785, the British Empire had a vast infrastructure that included postal coaches and routes, roads, bridges, and ferries, which "incorporated the relatively inaccessible parts of America and Britain into the global trading world."[42] This infrastructure contributed significantly to the British practice of mercantilism.

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[41] General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: The R.L. Bryan Company, 1917), 1071.

[42] David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 387.

In Virginia, the power to regulate ferries rested in the county courts. Thus, the courts became the focal point for political and economic activity in the county. By the mid-1760s, the courts had expanded their powers to include laying out roads, licensing ordinaries, clearing rivers and streams, and building gristmills, bridges, and ferries.[43] Therefore, economic growth was controlled at the county level.

Historians Marvin L. Michael Kay and Lorin Lee Cary have argued that during the period from 1748 to 1775, North Carolinians tried to encourage trade by

> improving roads, bridges, waterways, and harbors, regulating inns and ferries, establishing warehouses to store goods and to facilitate credit and trade, and inspecting commodities to ensure their quality.[44]

Other historians have shown that the transportation network, including ferries, was essential to the development of the economic development of the backcountry.

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[43] Richard R. Beeman, "Social Change and Cultural Conflict in Virginia: Lunenberg County, 1746-1774," *The William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Series* 35, no. 3 (July 1978): 466.

[44] Marvin L. Michael Kay and Lorin Lee Cary, *Slavery in North Carolina, 1748-1775* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 14.

For example, in Rowan County, North Carolina, historian Johanna Lewis discovered that artisans such as hatters, joiners, masons, coopers, turners, wheelwrights, and gunsmiths arrived in the backcountry during their early development. Because of improvements to the road and ferry system, the local trade network grew to include the coastal regions of the colony as well as Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, and of course, England.[45] Historian Charles Steffen argues that by 1720, the population growth of Baltimore County resulted in settlers moving inland along the rivers of the colony, which proved to be an impetus for new roads, bridges, and ferries.[46]

In addition to local taxes, the North Carolina General Assembly levied specific county poll taxes to finance the construction of government offices, such as courthouses, as well as jails, and to finance the construction and

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[45] Johanna Miller Lewis, "Artisans in the Carolina Backcountry: Rowan County, 1753-1770" (Ph.D. diss., The College of William and Mary, 1991), 261.

[46] Charles G. Steffen, "The Rise of the Independent Merchant in the Chesapeake: Baltimore County, 1660-1769," *The Journal of American History* 76, no. 1 (June 1989): 18. It is interesting to note that Steffen argues that this expansion of the transportation infrastructure occurred during an economic recession.

maintenance of the transportation infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and ferries.[47]

In Tennessee, the county courts granted the charters to operate ferries and regulated the tolls. Notably, the Tennessee General Assembly demanded that ferry owners keep "ordinaries," or inns, at their crossings. Tyrel Moore notes that the County Court Minutes Books show that McBee's Ferry, a ferry on the Holston River about twenty miles north of Knoxville, advertised blacksmithing services and liquors, corn, oats, and fodder for travelers.[48]

Criticism of Ferry Travel

While the ferry contributed to the transportation and economic development of South Carolina, not all South Carolinians appreciated the ferry system, and many pointed out the problems of the ferries. For example, Robert Raper sent a letter to John Colleton in December 1759, in which he requested

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[47] Marvin L. Michael Kay, "The Payment of Provincial and Local Taxes in North Carolina, 1748-1771," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series 26, no. 2 (April 1969): 219-220.

[48] Moore, "Role of Ferryboat Landings in East Tennessee's Economic Development, 1790-1870," 3.

> 5 Ordinary Negresses [*sic*] to be settled at Mepshew to plant Corn and partly to keep a Boat to Carry over the River the Manager or Attorneys which is necessary to save ferage [*sic*] at Strawbury [*sic*] which costs near £10 Sterling a year.[49]

Raper did not mind using the Strawberry Ferry for other business, but he wanted to cut costs in operating his plantation. Others did not take the ferries because of the discomfort they sometimes presented. Henry Laurens advised one individual to travel an extra seventeen miles on his journey from Georgetown to Charleston via Mepkin Plantation,

> because the entertainment is surer and better and you avoid the excessive Charge of Ferriage. The abuse of Horses, sometimes Loss of them, besides the Risque of being an hour or two upon the water in an open Boat exposed to bleak Winds.[50]

While the use of ferries allowed ease of travel in the colony, they offered several problems. For example, in his account of travels in the Carolinas in 1733-34, an unnamed young man wrote that, while crossing a ferry near the

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[49] Alison McCann, "The Letterbook of Robert Raper," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 82, no. 2 (1981): 113.

[50] George C. Rogers Jr., David R. Chesnutt, and Peggy J. Clark, eds., *The Papers of Henry Laurens, Volume 6: Aug 1, 1768-July 31, 1769* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1978), 181-182.

French Santee on the Santee River, the ferryboat had to travel two miles through a large cypress swamp before landing at Le Breys because the river was overflowing.[51]

In 1825, A. Blanding, superintendent of public works, stated in a report on the Santee River that the river:

> Presents great obstacles to travelers from the whole country to the north and east of it on their way to Charleston. There is not a bridge over it, not is there a ferry but what is troublesome to sometimes dangerous and always attended with delay. The swamp at each of these ferries is very wide, leading nowhere less than three, and at some of them seven miles wide following the course boats are compelled to take in high water[52]

During a tour of the South in 1833, Samuel Eastman Crocker commented that he had to cross four ferries from Georgetown to Charleston and that it was "extremely inconvenient when these are high, to transport the mail or passengers across; which accounts in some measure for the delays and irregularities of the southern mail."[53]

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[51] Merrens, ed., *Colonial South Carolina Scene*, 113.

[52] Leroy H. Gilmore, "State Ferries Nearly Thing of Past," *The News and Courier*, December 14, 1958.

[53] Caroline S. Davies, "A Yankee in the South in 1833," *The New England Quarterly* 10, no. 1 (March 1937): 72-73.

While ferries were important to the transportation network, they also served as the center of other economic activities including taverns, stores, and wharves. They aided the development of early tourism in the state by opening up the beaches of the Sea Islands. They also offered planters another source of income.

CHAPTER V

ADAPTING THE BOAT TO THE JOB: THE DEVELOPMENT OF FERRY TECHNOLOGY IN SOUTH CAROLINA

The ferryboat is a significant vessel in South Carolina's maritime history. It illustrates the adaption by the English of Native American, African, and other European boat styles into a transportation form suited for the rivers of the Carolina Lowcountry.[1] The basic ferryboat type remained fairly unchanged until the introduction of the steamboat in mid-nineteenth century. Then larger steam boats plowed the ferry routes in Charleston harbor, while the basic flat ferryboat remained the staple for most of the rest of the Lowcountry crossings.[2]

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[1] The most detailed study of small craft in South Carolina is Rusty Fleetwood, *Tidecraft: An Introductory Look at the Boats of Lower South Carolina, Georgia, and Northeastern Florida, 1650-1950* (Savannah, GA: Coastal Heritage Society, 1982). Also see Rhet Wilson, "Down to the Sea in Ships: A History of South Carolina Tidecraft," *Coastal Heritage Magazine* 7 (1983). Other studies of ferryboats in the South include S. Bayard Dod, *The Evolution of the Ferry-boat* (Leonia, NJ: Railroadians of America, 1988), Tony Holmes, "The Last Eight Ferry Boats in Tennessee — Frontier Mainstay Rapidly Disappearing," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 46 (1987), 65-78, 129-140, and Gene Wilhem, "Pioneer Boats and Transportation on the Upper James River," *Pioneer America* 3 (1971), 39-47.

[2] Watson, "The Ferry in Colonial North Carolina," 250. Watson states that in North Carolina, people used canoes,

In addition to the boat, the ferry property included other elements such as a landing, causeway, and sometimes shelter for the travelers and ferrymen. Again, the English adapted standard colonial wharf construction for the landing, and this remained the model for ferries until the introduction of concrete boat landings. The causeway was usually a standard design based on dikes and other rice-culture-related structures, and shelters ranged from lean-tos to vernacular-style houses.

While the basic elements of ferryboats and sites did not change in design or construction during Carolina's history, they did adapt to the changing needs of ferry clients. Boats and landings grew in size to meet the larger vehicles. Boats changed from pole propulsion to rope ferries to steam-powered and later gasoline-powered engines.

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piraguas, flats, and scows for ferriage. One can assume that people in similar geographical portions of South Carolina used similar boat types for ferries.

The Development of the Ferryboat

There are several paths to study the development of the ferryboat in South Carolina.[3] The first way is through an examination of the archaeological record of ferryboats. The other is through the archival records, including newspaper advertisements, charters, and other sources. However, both sources have inherent flaws. First, for several reasons, including cost and lack of promising sites, archaeologists have not excavated many ferryboats in South Carolina. South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology (SCIAA) archaeologists have examined several similar types of boats, but there is not a good example of a ferryboat in the state.[4] Archaeologists and public

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[3] As of 2008, there has been very little historical study of ferry sites in South Carolina. The penultimate study of a Lowcountry ferry site is Barr, "Strawberry Ferry and Childsbury Towne." Another recent study of ferry sites is the data recovery at the Combahee Ferry site by Brockington and Associates. Finally, the standard study of ferryboat types in the state is Newell, "The Historic Working Craft of South Carolina: A General Typology with a Study of Adaptations of Flatboat Design." Newell's typology is also presented in other SCIAA works, including Amer et al., *The Malcolm Boat (38CH803): Discovery, Stabilization, Excavation, and Preservation of an Historic Sea Going Small Craft in the Ashley River, Charleston County, South Carolina*.

[4]Examples of SCIAA investigations of small river craft similar to ferries in South Carolina include Amer et al., *The Malcolm Boat (38CH803): Discovery, Stabilization, Excavation, and Preservation of an Historic Sea Going Small*

historians agree that material cultural offers an avenue for the understanding of the technical development of ferryboats and landings. Underwater archaeologist and maritime historian Lynn Harris states that there is little doubt that early colonists established ferry services; however, there "is scant evidence in these early years of ferry operation about construction of the actual boats that provided the service … One can only speculate from later evidence."[5]

In addition to the problem of the small archaeological sample of ferryboats, the archival record offers

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Craft in the Ashley River, Charleston County, South Carolina, Christopher Amer, "The Biggin Creek Vessel (38BK887)," in *The Santee Canal Sanctuary, Part 1* (Columbia: South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, 1989), Christopher Amer, "The Hunting Island Vessel: Preliminary Excavation of a Nineteenth-Century Fishing Boat," in *Underwater Archaeology Proceedings from the Society for Historical Archaeology Conference* (None Given: Society for Historical Archaeology, 1992), 14-19, Christopher F. Amer, Suzanne Linder, William Barr, and Mark Newell *The Ingram Vessel, 38CT204: Intensive Survey and Excavation of an Upland Rivercraft at Cheraw, South Carolina,* Research Manuscript Series No. 220 (Columbia: South Carolina Institute of Anthropology and Archaeology, 1995). The best example of a ferryboat investigated in the Carolinas is Watts and Hall, *An Investigation of Blossom's Ferry on the Northeast Cape Fear River*. While the investigations at Combahee Ferry identified the ferry landing as part of the intertidal portion of the investigation, the underwater investigation located a barge that was probably part of the Civil War-era pontoon bridge.

[5] Harris, "Charleston's Colonial Boat Culture, 1668-1775," 82.

challenges. Many of the travel narratives from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries only mention crossing a ferry and provide no other details. Most likely, ferryboats were common enough that no one felt the need to describe them. While travelers or residents mentioned ferryboats, their descriptions are cursory at best. To find descriptions of ferries, one must examine many records and use the data to gain generalities regarding the ferryboats. This lack of information is understandable; even today we barely pay attention to the bridges that we cross unless they are unique. Indeed, most of the time the only mention of a ferry in the records is when one was substandard.

Even with the small archaeological sample, archaeologists from SCIAA have prepared a preliminary vessel typology for South Carolina. SCIAA personnel suggest that the ferry craft is a member of the flatboat-form category and dates from the 1690s to the 1970s. The basic description of the typical flatboat-form ferryboat is a

> basic flat design adapted for use on ferry crossings, typically 20 m [meters] in length and approximately 5 m in width. Constructed with cypress chine-girder sides (usually earlier craft) or planked with 2-3 strakes. Designs featured low ramp angle, approximately 20°, and two stanchions on one side containing pulleys to

hold a rope which ran across the river. Craft were built of cypress, pine, and live oak.[6]

Figures 3 and 4 provide drawings of the Blossom's Ferry boat from North Carolina, which is similar in design to the flatboat-form ferry described above.

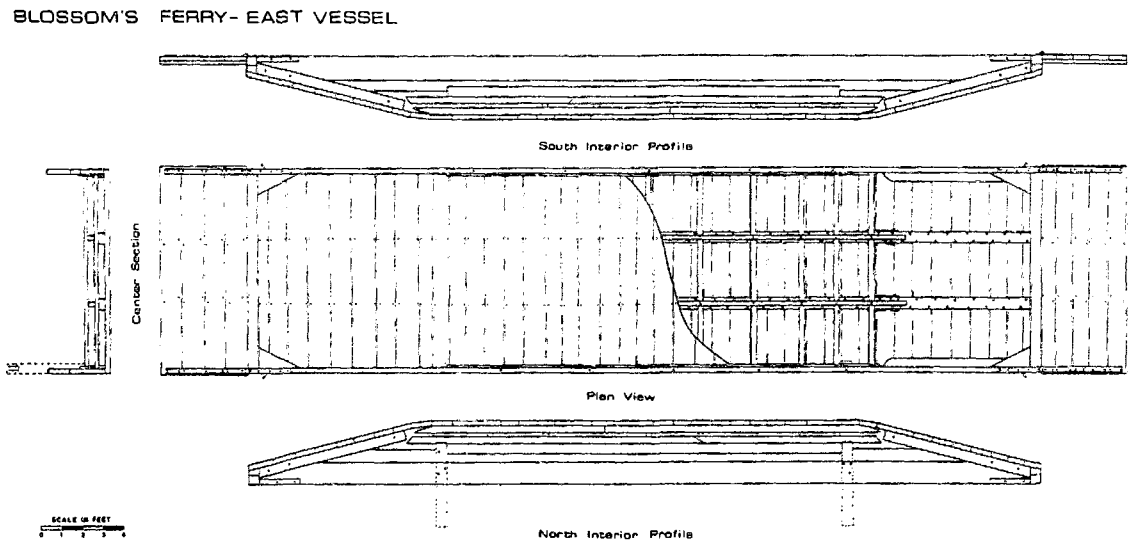

Figure 3. East vessel from Blossom's Ferry on the northeast Cape Fear River above Wilmington (drawing by G. Watts).

[6] Amer et al., *The Malcolm Boat (38CH803)*, 18.

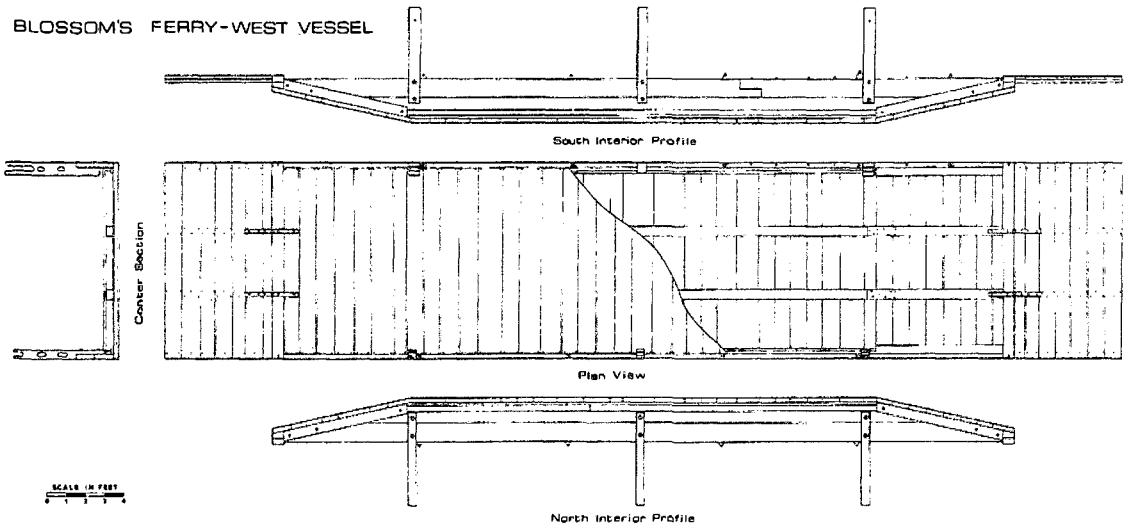

Figure 4. West vessel from Blossom's Ferry on the northeast Cape Fear River above Wilmington (drawing by G. Watts).

While the flatboat-form ferry was the dominant ferryboat type, the dugout or canoe was the first boat used in South Carolina to ferry people across rivers. The early colonists followed Native American traditions for craft to cross the colony's many rivers and streams.

The SCIAA boat typology defines a dugout as an adaption of the prehistoric dugout used by Native Americans since approximately 4500 B.P. The dugout was primarily used for riverine travel and most likely had an African crew.[7] Most European dugouts were made of bald cypress, and were

[7] See Chapter VII for a discussion of African slaves used as ferrymen.

> easily distinguishable from prehistoric craft by "Europeanization" of design including carving of European shell forms with shaped bow, transom stems, wash strakes, and keel. Workmanship shows use of metal tools.[8]

A 1585 drawing by John White showed how Native Americans manufactured canoes by burning and carving them from large trees. Harris speculates that the Indians used the abundant cypress of the Lowcountry to make their canoes. White also showed that Native Americans used a poling method to propel their canoes as they transported goods and people across rivers.[9]

Canoes for ferrying appeared at the beginning of European contact. Explorers such as Hernado de Soto utilized the dugout canoe during their Southeast travels. Archaeologists postulated that the dugout canoes constructed in South Carolina after contact, typically made from a single hollowed-out cypress log, were influenced by Native Americans, the British, other Europeans, and West

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[8] Amer et al., *The Malcolm Boat (38CH803)*, 16.

[9] Paul Hulton, ed., *America, 1585: The Complete Drawings of John White* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 118, in Harris, "Charleston's Colonial Boat Culture, 1668-1775," 32.

Africans, because the canoes contained elements from all of these cultures.[10]

These long, slender dugout canoes were the central means of transportation during the first two generations of the colony. Native Americans, African slaves, or white servants would propel the boats through the waterways by means of pole, rowing, or paddle. Sometimes boat builders would connect two trees and construct a pettiauger. This larger boat allowed for a substantial increase in the amount of cargo. Also, many boatmen would rig a pettiauger with portable masts to allow sailing in the larger waterways of the Lowcountry.[11] However, the introduction of the African-derived pirogue provided the first step in the evolution of the ferryboat.[12]

Historical records indicate that both Africans and Native Americans favored the pirogue for riverine travel.

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[10] Newell, "The Historic Working Craft of South Carolina: A General Typology with a Study of Adaptations of Flatboat Design," 10, 12; Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 Through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), 124; Watson, "The Ferry in Colonial North Carolina," 250.

[11] Wood, *Black Majority*, 124.

[12] For an examination of African American maritime tradition, see John Michael Vlach, *The Afro-American Tradition in Decorative Arts* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990), 97-107.

Comparative archaeology shows that the pirogue was similar in design to boats used in rice fields of the Niger Delta, possibly explaining the source of the boat in South Carolina. Like the flat-bottom ferry, the pirogue was a flat-bottomed, transom-sterned ship usually carved from logs. The boat was built up from a keel that was usually of cypress, with planking of pine and a frame of live oak. The forests of the Lowcountry contained plentiful amounts of all three of these types of trees. Most pirogues were twenty meters long with a five-meter beam. Figure 5 reproduces a 1797 engraving showing a pirogue. Like the dugout, the pirogue could operate in the rivers and rice fields of the Lowcountry, but because of its size, it was also able to travel in the ocean.[13]

As English settlement grew, the need for a stronger, more reliable ferryboat arose in South Carolina. Neither dugouts nor pirogues could easily carry horses or other large livestock. This limited their effectiveness for plantation owners. The planters soon developed "split-log" or "ile" barges, which Newell noted were probably the earliest specific ferry craft in South Carolina, and later

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[13] Amer et al., *The Malcolm Boat (38CH803)*, 17.

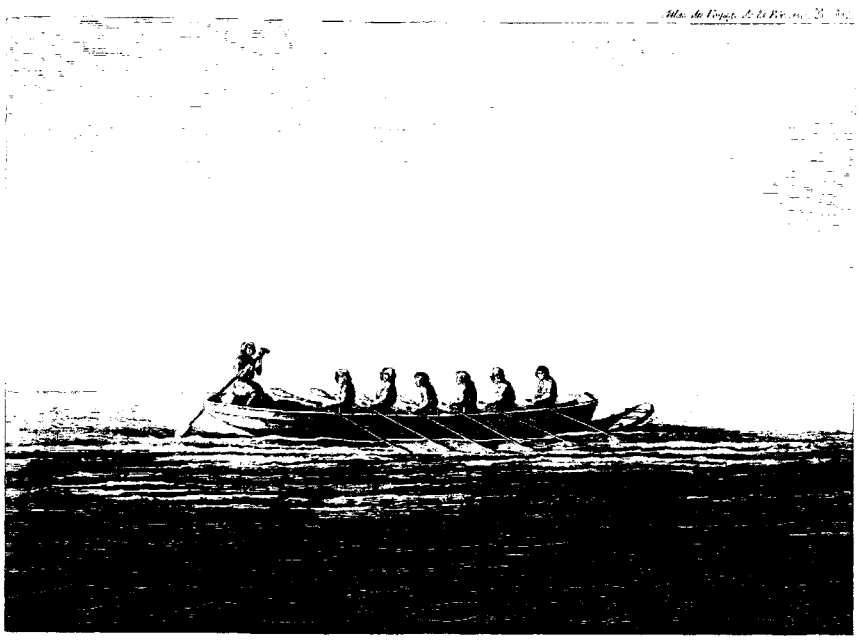

Figure 5. View of a pirogue in *Pirogue de des Orotchys. Pirogue des Bitchys. Dessine par Blondela. Grave par Le Pagelet. L. Aubert scrip. Atlas du Voyage de la Perouse, no. 62* (Paris: L'Imprimerie de la Republique, An V, 1797).

planters adapted the flatboat-form barge design for use in the tidal rice plantations. Based on archaeological investigations of a handful of these flats in South Carolina, SCIAA described the split-log ferry as a rectangular-shaped, flatboat-form craft that had a shallow draft and minimal freeboard. Because of the nature of the rivers of the coastal area, the ferries could be propelled by hand or by the tides. The flat design required that

these ferryboats be used primarily in the calmer waters of the rivers.[14]

It is interesting to note that plantation owners adapted the split-log ferryboat design for use as rice flats and other barges along the coast, and the design became one of the major vessel types on South Carolina rice plantations and "a classic example of the way in which function and environment dictated design."[15]

The split-log ferryboat remained an important boat type in the Lowcountry, because two other important industries in South Carolina – rice cultivation and phosphate mining – adapted it for use. After the development of rice as a major cash crop, planters converted the split-log ferryboat into the Carolina rice flat, which Newell describes as an "adaptation of European barge designs melded with log boat construction techniques."[16] Figure 6 shows an illustration of a rice flat. The flat allowed planters to transport their rice from their plantations either to economic centers such as

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[14] Ibid., 23-24.

[15] Ibid., 23.

[16] Ibid., 8.

Figure 6. Loading a rice flat for a trip to the mill (June 1847 *Scribner's Monthly*).

Radnor, which had a dock for larger ships, or directly to large market towns such as Charleston or Georgetown.

In addition to the rice flat, the ferryboat also served as the basis for the phosphate-mining barge. This boat took the basic rice-flat form and adapted it for heavier loads, such as machinery and phosphate rock from the marine phosphate beds of the Coastal Plain. The hurricanes that battered South Carolina during the 1890s destroyed most if not all phosphate-mining barges.[17]

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[17] Ibid. For a discussion of the use of barges in phosphate mining, see Helen Florilla Mappus, "The Phosphate

River geography also influenced the development of the Lowcountry ferryboat. Underwater archaeologist Lynn Harris argues that in many of the rivers of the Lowcountry, a flatboat form was the only practical vessel. Harris found that these "basically flat, rectangular platforms of shallow draft, and minimal freeboard, propelled by hand or tide" could efficiently navigate "calmer waters" of local waterways.[18]

Archival evidence also highlights the use of the flatboat form for ferries. An advertisement from 1750 described "a new large flat boat such as for a ferry" for sale at Pon Pon on the Edisto River.[19]

Early ferries had two methods of propulsion. In calm, shallow or relatively shallow water, a ferryman could use a pole to push the boat and cargo across the river. In deeper water, the ferryman used a rope-and-pulley method called a rope ferry. As with many topics related to ferries, one has to look to unconventional sources for information about the rope ferry, which, due to its simple construction and

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Industry of South Carolina" (Master's thesis, University of South Carolina, 1935).

[18] Harris, "Charleston's Colonial Boat Culture, 1668-1775," 82.

[19] *South Carolina Gazette*, September 1750.

installation, served as a standard ferry type across the country for most of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[20] The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' manual on crossing rivers provides a detailed description of a rope ferry:

> A rope ferry, which is used in streams with sluggish currents, consists of a floating support, either a raft or a suitable boat. It is drawn by hand along a rope or chain stretched from bank to bank. To facilitate a grip on the rope a handle may advantageously be employed. A rope ferry may be constructed by laying a cable or chain across the stream, anchoring its ends, and taking three or four turns around a windlass mounted on the side of the barge … The safety of a ferry, especially when transporting animals, is materially increased by the construction of guardrails and end gates.[21]

Figure 7 shows a rope ferry on the Ocklawaha River in Florida in 1902. Figure 8 shows a detailed drawing of a rope ferry from the *Ponton Manual: Professional Papers of the Corps of Engineers U.S. Army* (1917). These boats are

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[20] Department of Engineering, United States Infantry and Cavalry School, *Manual of Military Field Engineering for the Use of Officers and Troops on the Line* (Kansas City, MO: The Hudson-Kimberly Publishing Co., 1902), 148.

[21] Office of Chief Engineer, *Ponton Manual: Professional Papers of the Corps of Engineers U.S. Army* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1917), 21.

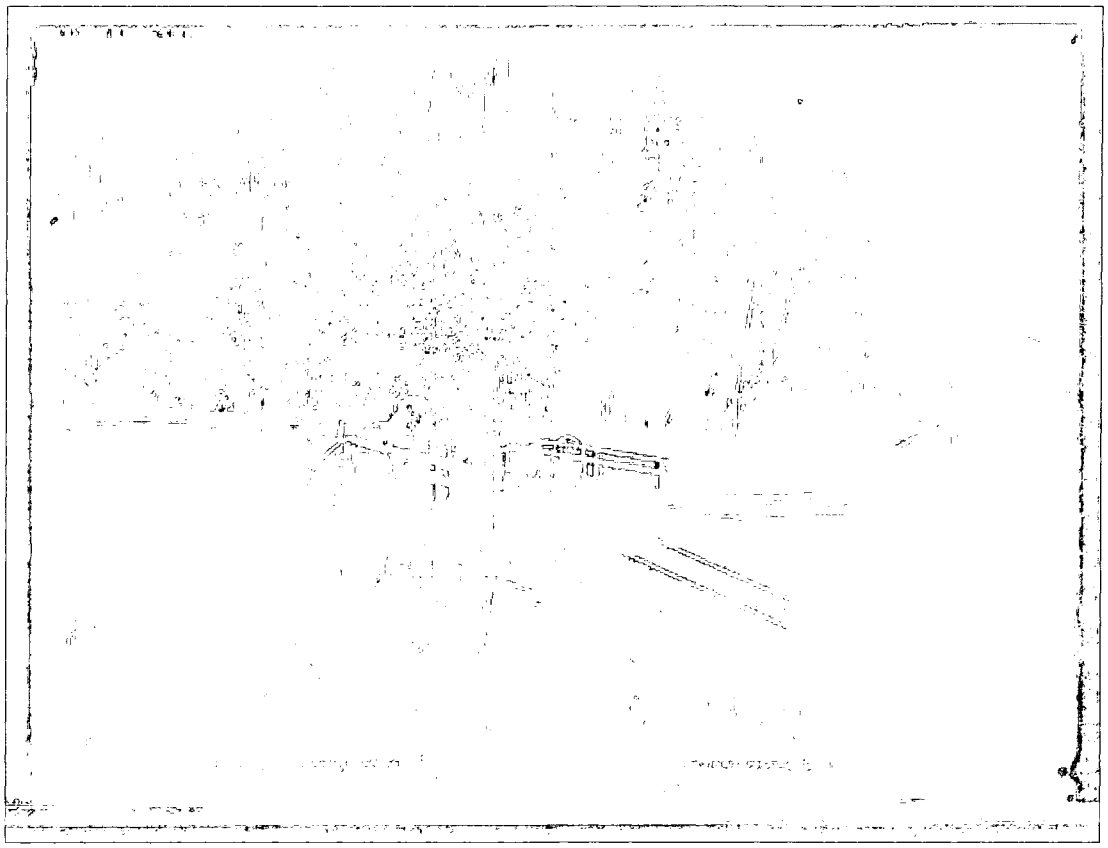

Figure 7. View of a rope ferry on the Ocklawaha, Florida, 1902 (LC-D4-9095, Detroit Publishing Company Photograph Collection, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA).

very similar to the descriptions of South Carolina ferryboats.

Another common element to South Carolina ferries was the used of transverse planking for the decking, a choice that reflected English boatbuilding traditions.[22] Orders to the Military Director of Carpenters on July 21, 1760, at

[22] Amer et al., *The Malcolm Boat (38CH803)*, 27.

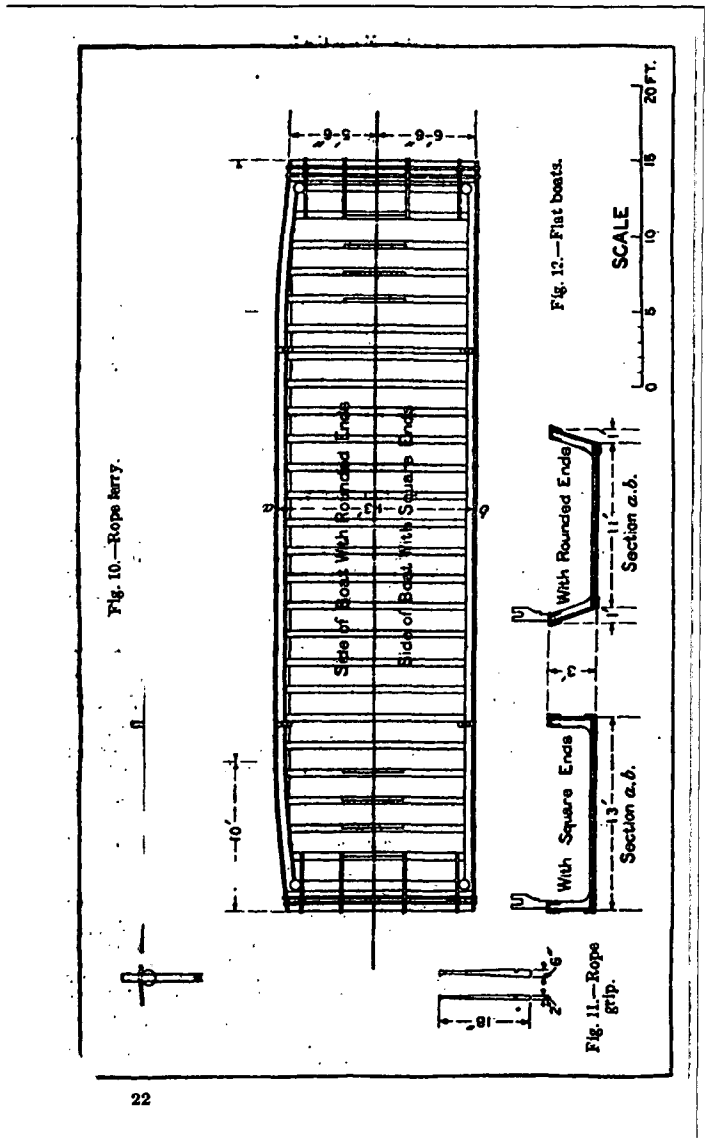

Figure 8. Detailed drawing of a rope ferry (*Ponton Manual: Professional Papers of the Corps of Engineers U.S. Army*, 1917).

Oswego, New York, describe the construction of plank-built ferries. The orders state that each boat was to be

> Thirty feet long by twelve feet wide, her waste [*sic*] to be two feet deep, the Bottom to be made of Timber hew'd five Inches thick and as broad as they'll work; the joints to be made close enough to be Caulked, about six floor timbers, Six Inches Square to be let into the bottom two Inches; the Sides to be made of Pine, if to be had, She must be flamed off, fore and aft, that Cattle may be easily got in and out, the Blocks on which she is built to be high enough to be Caulked underneath.[23]

The archival record adds significantly to the scant archaeological record about the size and types of boats that plied the rivers of the state. Besides detailing the costs and operations of ferries, early ferry charters also offer some descriptions of the size of ferryboats. Many times the charters were ambiguous, stipulating merely that the owner was to "build and keep in good repair, a sufficient ferry boat for the transportation of man and horse from one side of [the] … river to the other."[24]

Other times the charter would specify ferry size by requiring a certain number of horses or men that could be

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[23] Ibid., 26.

[24] McCord, ed., *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. IX,* 12, 61, 81, 122, 227, 259, 281, 317, 322.

transported at a time. For example, the 1725 charter of the ferryboat over the Pon Pon River required it to be able to carry at least four horses. A later, different charter required the Pon Pon River ferryboat to be a "good and substantial ferry boat; which ferry boat shall be able to carry over three horses at the least."[25] This "three-horse ferry" seems to be the prevalent size of ferryboats.[26]

For unknown reasons, other charters state different sizes for the boats. For example, the chartering of the ferryboats on the Winyaw River, Santee River, Sampit Creek, and Cooper River in 1726 required a "good and substantial ferry boat; which ferry boat shall be able to carry over four horses at the least."[27] However, the ferry chartered over the Ashley River to James Island only required a boat that could carry at least two horses.[28] This difference is unexpected as one would expect that the ferry to James Island would be busier than the one across the Winyaw

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[25] Ibid., 61, 68. Note that not all charters specified the size of the ferryboat. Some charters required that the owner provide a boat, and others do not mention the size of boat.

[26] Ibid., 68.

[27] Ibid., 70.

[28] Ibid., 79.

River; however, rural areas may have needed larger boats to transport large carts and wagons, while more urban areas may have needed ferries just large enough to transport people and their horses.

As the population and needs for transportation grew, the requirements for ferry size also expanded. In the 1740s, the assembly required the Strawberry Ferry operator to provide

> a good, large, sound, tight and sufficient ferryboat or boats, with a stage or entering-board for the convenience of horses passing in and out, for transporting men, horses, cattle, chaises, chairs and carts.[29]

This charter required that the owner keep more than one boat, probably one on either landing, to ensure that travel was not impeded. In the 1770s, many charters required operators to maintain two ferryboats at a landing.[30] One boat probably stayed at each side of the crossing to ensure that a boat was always ready for service.

In 1762, the assembly inserted more requirements for ferryboats. At the Ashley Ferry, a very busy ferry in the

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[29] Easterby, ed., *The Journal of the Commons House of Assembly, January 19, 1748-June 29, 1748,* 112.

[30] McCord, ed., *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. IX,* 215, 257-259, 263.

Charleston area, it indicated that the owner should have "a good substantial ferry boat or boats, with a stage or entering board, also a capstan and a sufficient rope across the river."[31] The stage or entering board would aid passengers in entering and leaving the ferry, and the mention of the capstan and rope indicates that the ferry was a rope ferry. The requirement for ease in entering and exiting the ferry resulted in other changes in ferry legislation. In the 1790s, charters included language requiring owners to employ an entry and exit apron, "or not having such aprons, [owners] shall keep at each and every landing place a good and sufficient abutment or inclined plane for the same."[32]

The apron fit the curved nature of many of the ferries. For example, the Potato Ferry craft, on the Black River, had a bow and stem slope of seven degrees, and the

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[31] Ibid., 198. A capstan is "a rotating spindle or shaft, powered by an electric motor, that transports magnetic tape past the heads of a tape recorder at a constant speed" (http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/capstan, accessed December 22, 2008).

[32] Ibid., 544.

two ferry craft found at Brown's Ferry, also on the Black River, have a slope of nine degrees.[33]

The nineteenth-century archival record is sparse regarding the size of ferryboats. The basic flatboat-form ferry remained the basic style for most river crossings. However, in 1873, the General Assembly required the operator of the ferry over the Beaufort River, which crossed from the town of Beaufort to Lady's Island, to "keep a large, safe, sea-worthy boat and flat to run on said ferry."[34] Additionally, the Pringle Ferry charter specified that the flat was to be "made of prime cypress timber, not be less than forty feet long, twelve feet wide, and two feet six inches deep."[35]

In addition to the flatboat-form ferries operating across the rivers of the Lowcountry, new steam ferries

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[33] William Barr, "Ferry Crossings as Transportation Systems: Their Political, Economic, and Social Role in South Carolina's Historical Development," in *Underwater Archaeology Proceedings form the Society for Historical Archaeology Conference* (Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada: Society for Historical Archaeology, 1994), 83.

[34] General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Special Session of 1873 and Regular Session of 1873-74*, 523.

[35] South Carolina General Assembly, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1893* (Columbia, SC: Charles A. Calvo Jr., State Printers, 1893), 637.

appeared in the Charleston Harbor during the nineteenth century. Steam ferries operated from the Charleston wharves to Cainhoy, Mount Pleasant, and Sullivan's Island. The new metal boats reflected dramatic changes in technology. They were much larger and resembled riverboats of the period more than the riverine craft of colonial times. Because of the size of the rivers near Charleston and the large number of people who used these ferries, the General Assembly required ferry operators there to use steam-powered vessels.[36]

At the turn of the century, the General Assembly passed new regulations to ensure ferry safety. In 1892, it passed a law that allowed ferry owners to erect a gate or gates across the road leading to the ferry; however, there was to be no toll for the gate. In 1914, legislators passed a law that required all ferry operators to "place and

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[36] General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1879 and Extra Session of 1880*, 146. When establishing the Charleston and Cainhoy Ferry Company, the General Assembly stated that "a public ferry to be run by Steam" was required. General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1884* (Columbia, SC: Charles A. Calvo Jr., State Printers, 1885), 821.

provide guards or railing around the same so as to protect the lives and property of those using them."[37]

By 1953, the South Carolina Department of Transportation still operated three ferries: one in Georgetown County, one across the Catawba River at York, and one near Barnwell. In 1963, only the South Island Ferry remained, which carried vehicles and passengers across the Intracoastal Waterway. T. R. Fulton and Ervin Long, who lived in houses on the island, operated the ferry.[38] Their sixteen-foot-wide, forty-foot-long, creosoted timber boats drew only eight inches of water and could carry up to three cars.[39] The ferry had railings on the sides to prevent cars from sliding off the sides.

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[37] South Carolina General Assembly, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1892* (Columbia, SC: Charles A. Calvo Jr., State Printers, 1892), 246; South Carolina General Assembly, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1914* (Columbia, SC: Gonzales and Bryan, State Printers, 1914), 590-591. To enforce the law, the assembly also stated that there was a fine not less than $25 and no more than $100 or 30 days in jail.

[38] Walter McDonald, "Ancient Mode of Travel Still Used in Georgetown," *The News and Courier*, October 21, 1963, 8-A.

[39] Ibid.

This last remaining ferry continued the long tradition of the rope ferries that had operated since the early 1700s. The early ferry had a

> single cable stretched across the "Government Cut" on reels and could be lowered to allow boats to pass. The only other "machinery" used was a stout oak limb about four inches in diameter with a notch cut near the end. The operator would hook this notch on the cable and twist it enough to gripe the wire. Then he would walk backward in the direction he wished to propel the ferry.[40]

The crossing took up to thirty minutes, depending on the currents and weather patterns. In the 1950s, the ferry received a new seven-and-a-half-horsepower gasoline engine that operated the three cables. One cable, played in and out by the engine, prevented drift. A second cable also prevented drift, and a third cable with reflectorized metallic ribbons extended across the waterway to warn approaching watercraft that the ferry was in operation.[41]

The Development of Ferry Landings

The landing or slip was a defining element of the ferry site. To operate effectively, ferries required

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[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

landing sites on either bank of the river where the boat would land. Due to shifting currents, some ferries had more than one landing on either side, and the ferryman used the landing appropriate for the time of day or weather conditions. In most cases, a ferry landing looked like a standard boat landing. As ferries became larger and operated in more developed harbors, such as Charleston and Beaufort, charters required ferry operators to maintain slips and wharves like those for regular boats.[42]

Culture and tradition shaped the design and construction of ferry landings. Because enslaved Africans and Native Americans built most early landings, their construction traditions were found well into the modern era.[43] Archaeological investigations of the Ashley, Combahee, and Strawberry ferries, as well as other Lowcountry ferry landings, provide a general understanding of the design and building materials of ferry landings.

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[42] General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1884*, 907.

[43] James R. Errante, "Waterscape Archaeology: A Survey for 18th Century Boat Landings" (Master's thesis, University of South Carolina, 1993), 34-35.

David Beard concludes that a crib-like structure, similar to those found in early colonial docks, characterized colonial ferry landings.[44] Crib docks were usually constructed of round or squared timbers, in a manner reminiscent of Lincoln Logs®. The docks were built with alternating rows of lengthwise "stretchers" and widthwise "headers" based on a floor of stone, brick, or other fill. The approximate overall length of the wharf was sixteen meters and the width four meters. Archaeologists agree that the crib dock and wharf complex accounted for the heavy artifact recovery at archaeological site 38BU1216 (Combahee Ferry, Beaufort County, South Carolina).[45]

Archaeologists found similar crib-like structures at the dock at Fort Dorchester, on the Ashley River, and at Mepkin Abbey, on the west branch of the Cooper River. Historian Andrea J. Heintzelman states,

> Wharf design and composition [was] related to the socioeconomic conditions of the individual wharf

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[44] David V. Beard, "'Good Wharves and Other Conveniences': An Archaeological Study of Riverine Adaption in the South Carolina Lowcountry," in *Carolina's Historical Landscapes: Archaeological Perspectives*, ed. Linda F. Stine, Martha Zierden, Lesley Drucker, and Christopher Judge (Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 1998), 69.

[45] Emily Jateff, *Results of the Intertidal Investigations at 38BU1216* [Draft] (Mount Pleasant: Brockington and Associates, 2008): 13.

> owner and of the community … availability of raw materials; and the environment at the time the wharf was built.[46]

Beard agrees, adding that a landing's primary function also contributed to its form.[47]

From the colonial period through the early republic, most plantations and farms along a body of water possessed a boat landing. Only large towns had wharves and public warehouses.[48] Archaeologists have investigated several sites in the Lowcountry that illustrate the use of cribs for wharves and landings to support economic activities other than ferries. For example, the Lexington Kiln site (38CH1086) and Medway Plantation (38BK56), both brick-kiln sites, have log-cribbing boat landings packed with brick rubble.[49]

Archaeologists also have found that Lowcountry landings typically follow a set pattern. The landings at Strawberry Ferry are approximately 2.5 meters wide and have

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[46] Andrea J. Heintzelman, "Colonial Wharf Construction: Uncovering the Untold Past," *The Log of Mystic Seaport* (Winter 1986), 124.

[47] Beard, ""Good Wharves and Other Conveniences", 69.

[48] Watson, "The Ferry in Colonial North Carolina," 252.

[49] Errante, "Waterscape Archaeology," 74.

a slope of seven degrees. The main structural members of Strawberry Ferry extended three timbers deep, with each timber approximately twenty centimeters square. Cross members were located approximately every 6.5 meters. A patterned brick floor rests between the timbers, with puncheon stakes and planed timbers supporting the side walls of the brick. The brick floor of the landing is at least three courses or layers deep. Data suggest that originally there were probably five courses, with two courses, along with one layer of timbers, missing due to either environmental factors or human interaction.

The Ashley Ferry site contained round and square logs stacked upon each other and contained brick rubble in the enclosed space.[50] Bonneau's Ferry had disarticulated timbers that included round base-support logs and a few five-by-twenty-centimeter planks. Barr argues that the presence of

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[50] William Barr, "38CH1506 Site Inventory Record," South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, Columbia, South Carolina. During the survey of 38CH1506, Barr found that the Ashley Ferry contained moderate damage including inundation and erosion. He recommended survey, testing, archival research, and excavation of the site. As of 2009, none of this work has been completed.

the planks confirms the use of board-and-puncheon technology in the construction of the ferry landing.[51]

The landing at Combahee Ferry also uses the crib system. As part of the investigation of Combahee Ferry, Brockington archaeologists identified remains of a collapsed pile of timbers, brick, and ballast, approximately three meters south of the interpreted pier. Exposed timbers primarily consisted of twenty-by-twenty-centimeter round logs with brick and ballast rubble stacked parallel to the shoreline. They recorded three twenty-by-ten-centimeter timbers running perpendicular to the shoreline, abutting the collapsed pile to the east. No fasteners were exposed during the documentation of surface features. Brockington staff interpreted these features as the remains of a crib dock and associated wharf.

In Charleston, where ferries later operated from wharves, the landings were standard ship wharves that were no different from other docks and wharves, except that the size of the wharf corresponded to the size of the boat.

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[51] Barr, "Strawberry Ferry and Childsbury Towne," 102. Puncheons are boards made by hewing instead of sawing. They were used when sawmills were not available. "Puncheon," *The Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition,* 2008, *Encyclopedia.com* (July 8, 2009), available at http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1E1-puncheon.html.

Ferry companies that operated in the Charleston Harbor were responsible for maintaining their wharves.

The Ferry Causeway

In addition to the boat and landing, many ferries also had a causeway that was considered part of the ferry complex. Since many ferry crossings were located in areas where one or both sides of the river had a large amount of marsh, the owner often needed a causeway to connect the ferry to the mainland. The causeway to the Combahee Ferry is an example. The Commons House of Assembly viewed the causeway as an integral part of the ferry. For example, as part of the charter for the Ashley Ferry, it required the owner to maintain the causeway.[52]

The size of the causeway was related to the size of the roads that led to it. For example, as part of the rechartering of the Ashley Ferry in 1750, the Assembly required that owners Edmund and George Bellinger keep the causeway

> at least always twelve feet wide at top, with a stand at the middle part of the said causey, at least eighteen feet wide and forty feet long … so

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[52] McCord, ed., *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Volume IX*, 82-83.

> that no passengers, horses, cattle or carriages may be impeded in passing.[53]

The construction of causeways was fairly standard in the Lowcountry. The causeway at the Lind's Shipyard site (38CH444) contains a "heavily built timber cribbing filled primarily with ballast stone."[54] While it was not a ferry landing, the general-purpose plantation causeway/landing at Cedar Grove Plantation (38DR155) provides a good description of what may have existed at a typical ferry landing:

> The causeway fill is packed and consists mostly of soil, but includes some shell, gravel, and a small amount of brick rubble. The pier/wharf structure at the causeway terminus seems to have been relatively lightly built, consisting of a series of small pilings and finished timbers, probably representing a fixed pierhead. A possible canal running along side of the causeway may have been used as a staging area for loaded or empty barges or other vessels.[55]

The major changes to causeways dealt with size and material. As the roads grew larger, the causeways sometimes widened.

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[53] Ibid., 155.

[54] Beard, "'Good Wharves and Other Conveniences,'" 65.

[55] Ibid., 69.

Shelter for the Travelers at the Ferry

Many ferries offered travelers temporary and permanent shelter ranging from lean-tos to vernacular-style taverns and public houses. Taverns and other economic pursuits at ferries are discussed in Chapter V.

The ferryboat was an integral part of South Carolina's maritime history. The boats, landings, and associated buildings illustrate how the maritime traditions of the English, Native Americans, Africans, and other Europeans blended to create a transportation form suited for the rivers of the Carolina Lowcountry. While the basic ferryboat type remained mostly unchanged until the introduction of the steamboat in mid-nineteenth century, the basic flat ferryboat remained the staple for the Lowcountry ferry crossing.

While the basic elements of ferryboats and sites changed little in design or construction during Carolina's history, they did adapt to the changing needs of their clients. Boats and landings increased in size to meet the needs of larger vehicles. The boats changed from pole propulsion to rope ferries to steam and later gasoline power.

CHAPTER VI

THEY CAN RUN THE BOAT, BUT NOT RIDE: SLAVERY, SEGREGATION, AND FERRIES

Race is a dominant theme in South Carolina history.[1] African Americans played a dual role in the history of South Carolina ferries. On one hand, they operated the ferries, first as slaves and later as freedmen; on the other hand, laws restricted their use of the ferries. Operating ferries was a skilled position that brought esteem, yet ferries also were places where slaves could attempt to escape. During the Jim Crow era, African Americans continued to work on ferries, but when they rode as passengers, they did so in separate sections of the boats. Segregation did not dissuade African Americans from

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[1] For a discussion of control of slaves in South Carolina, see Howell M. Henry, *The Police Control of the Slave in South Carolina* (New York: Negro Universities, 1968), Robert Olwell, *Masters, Slaves, and Subjects: The Culture of Power in a Colonial Slave Society: The South Carolina Lowcountry, 1740-1790* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), and M. Eugene Sirmans, "Legal Status of the Slave in South Carolina, 1670-1740," *Journal of Southern History* 28 (November 1962), 462-473. For a discussion of Jim Crow, see Grace E. Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998), George Tindall, *South Carolina Negroes, 1877-1900* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), and C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford, 1974).

using ferries to connect their worlds to wider ones, however. In the Progressive Era, for example, modern ferries opened travel to the Sea Islands, integrating the largely isolated Gullah culture into the larger state.

Early Regulation of Slaves and Ferry Transportation

Even before the founding of South Carolina, British colonists in Bermuda had legislated the movement of slaves on colonial ferries. The Bermuda precedents served as models for South Carolina's legislation to control the use of ferries by slaves. In 1623, lawmakers in Bermuda approved rules that restricted "boyes [*sic*] and negroes" from traveling on the ferry that connected the main island with St. George's Island without written permission from their masters.[2] Later, in the mid-1700s, the colonies of Virginia and Rhode Island passed similar laws that forbade the carrying of slaves on ferries without the owners' permission.[3] White officials and slave owners understood

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[2] Virginia Bernhard, "Beyond the Chesapeake: The Contrasting Status of Blacks in Bermuda, 1616-1663," *The Journal of Southern History* 54, no. 4 (November 1988): 554.

[3] William M. Wiecek, "The Statutory Law of Slavery and Race in the Thirteen Mainland Colonies of British America," *The William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Series* 34, no. 2 (April 1977): 271.

that ferries offered an avenue for unsupervised African mobility that could easily encourage runaways or even aid possible slave uprisings.

African Slave Ferryman

Slaves worked as ferrymen, but their travel on ferries slowly became more controlled by their white owners, who feared the freedom ferries offered. In fact, slaves operated and managed most Lowcountry ferries, and they integrated their own experiences and traditions to make the ferries work.[4]

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[4] Robert S. Starobin, "Industrial Slavery in the Old South, 1790-1861: A Study in Political Economy" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1968), 31. The interaction between Africans, Native Americans, and the English is an important theme in South Carolina's colonial history. The interaction between the three groups resulted in the creation of the plantation landscape. The English used Native Americans as early slaves, but later changed to Africans for a variety of reasons. Native Americans provided knowledge regarding the environment of the Lowcountry. Africans provided expertise in rice culture, architecture for warmer climates, and some boat technology. For a discussion of the interaction between the English and slaves in regard to rice, see Daniel C. Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves: Ethnicity and the Slave Trade in Colonial South Carolina* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981). For a similar examination of the architectural diffusion, see John Michael Vlach, *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery,* The Fred W. Morrison Series in Southern Studies (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

While the number of Native Americans in the Carolina Lowcountry declined in the late 1600s, they already had imparted their knowledge of the geography of the area to generations of whites and blacks. Historian Peter Wood mentions that by 1701, African slaves operated various forms of boats along the Savannah River to transport skins from the Native American tribes upriver to trading posts in Savannah. One can assume that the slaves and Native Americans exchanged knowledge of trade routes and of how to navigate the rivers of the region. Also, the Africans used their boatbuilding expertise to adapt colonial boats for the needs of trade and travel. Slaves proved to be good pilots for boats that carried goods from the plantations to the markets of Charleston, Beaufort, and Georgetown.[5] Again, knowledge of the rivers and Native American paths would have been necessary for the Africans to accomplish their mission of transporting goods from plantation to marketplace. Also, Africans continued to adapt the river flats and other plantation watercraft to reflect their maritime traditions.[6]

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[5] Wood, *Black Majority*, 114-115, 117.

[6] Vlach, *The Afro-American Tradition in Decorative Arts*, 97-107.

With the rise of cash crops in the Lowcountry, planters relied more and more on Africans for both skilled and unskilled labor, including in the maritime realm. For example, during the 1720s and 1730s many ethnic Congo-Angolan slaves were members of boat crews. Because they had already learned boating skills in their home country, they translated those skills to the rivers of the Lowcountry. Historian Lynn Harris argues that the role of a skilled boatman was a "superior one amongst the slave community and in the eyes of the planter" compared to other skilled and unskilled positions at the plantation.[7]

Peter Wood counts hundreds of African boatmen, of various skill levels, working the waterways of the colony. The levels of ability ran from unskilled oarsmen to skilled navigators and captains. Slaves even operated the boats that ferried people from ships in Charleston Harbor to the port.[8]

The archival record also indicates that, from the earliest ferry charters, slaves staffed several Lowcountry ferries. In 1725, the Pon Pon Ferry charter required that

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[7] Harris, "Charleston's Colonial Boat Culture, 1668-1775," 103.

[8] Wood, *Black Majority*, 230.

commissioners find "two able servants or slaves" to operate the ferry twenty-four hours a day.[9] Several other ferry charters through approximately 1733 stated that the owner could operate the ferry with slaves or servants.

Using slaves as ferrymen was standard practice in the other British American colonies and even some of the British island colonies. For example, the British used slaves on ferries that cross the "wide estuaries" of their Caribbean colonies. Also, records indicate that a twenty-two-year-old mulatto slave named York stated that he worked at Burwell's Ferry in Virginia for several years before 1769.[10] Among the large slave owners in Philadelphia was a ferry owner who operated ferries between Philadelphia and Burlington, New Jersey; historical records seem to

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[9] McCord, ed., *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. IX*, 61.

[10] B. W. Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 175; Lorena Seebach Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove: The History of a Virginia Slave Community,* Colonial Williamsburg Studies in Chesapeake History and Culture (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001), 48. David S. Cecelski, *The Waterman's Song: Slavery and Freedom in Maritime North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001) provides the history of Moses Grandy, who operated ferries in Camden County, North Carolina, before the Civil War.

indicate that the ferryman used his slaves to operate the ferries.[11]

Being allowed to operate ferries represented a level of freedom for slaves. For example, African slaves who worked at ferries were exempt from working on road projects.[12] If no direct overseer were present, the slaves were responsible for collecting the ferriage and ensuring that the ferryboat and equipment were in working order. Since ferries operated twenty-four hours a day, these slaves most likely lived at the ferry site, away from the larger slave community on the main plantation. This added freedom might also include a garden space at the ferry. In addition to the tangible aspects of freedom, slave ferrymen also gained direct contact with travelers from outside their normal social realm. They might meet famous politicians, religious leaders, or ordinary citizens from other colonies who used the ferry. Like slaves who worked in town as skilled artisans, slaves who operated ferries gained opportunities that most field slaves lacked. While

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[11] Gary B. Nash, "Slaves and Slave Owners in Colonial Philadelphia," *The William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Series* 30, no. 2 (April 1973): 250.

[12] McCord, ed., *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. IX*, 515.

this freedom was refreshing, events outside Charleston soon altered the colony's view of the growing African population.

Controlling the Slave Patronage of Ferries

In September 1739, a slave revolt known as the Stono Rebellion disrupted the Lowcountry. Approximately twenty slaves owned by Andrew Percival gathered at Hutchinson's Store, where they looted the shop and killed the storekeepers. Equipped with guns, the slaves moved south.[13] Slaves from nearby plantations joined them, and the rebellion reached approximately 100 slaves. However, the South Carolina militia quickly attacked the slaves and defeated them. The rebellion was the largest slave revolt to occur anywhere on the mainland during the colonial period, and given its magnitude, the threat of future insurrection lingered in the region throughout the colonial period.[14]

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[13] Wood, *Black Majority*, 312-315.

[14] Weir, *Colonial South Carolina*, 193-194. A comprehensive study of the Stono Rebellion is Mark M. Smith, ed., *Stono: Documenting and Interpreting a Southern Slave Revolt* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2005).

Faced with possible revolt by their labor force, whites reacted in unison; within months, in 1740, the Commons House of Assembly had passed the "Bill for the better ordering and governing of Negroes and other Slaves in this Province" (also known as the Negro Act), which instituted more restrictive controls on slaves.[15] Ferry charters, for instance, contained the new requirement for "two able and sufficient persons … with one white man, who shall constantly attend the said ferry."[16] The new charters forbade slaves to operate ferries without white supervision. The expertise and labor of the African slaves could be utilized; however, whites had to be physically present, ensuring that slaves stayed "in their place" and did not use the ferry for their own means.

Additionally, the Commons House of Assembly gave ferrymen more authority to control the movement of Africans. In 1740, it revised an existing law to now require that

> at every Ferry in this Province a free white Man shall be employed to attend it. And that every such free white man shall be impowered to examine all suspected Persons who shall attempt to cross

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[15] Jennings, "Slave Codes," 873.

[16] McCord, ed., *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. IX,* 114-115.

> such Ferry; and if he shall see Cause, to command Persons to his Aid and Assistance in order to send any such suspected Person to the next Justice of the peace to be dealt with according to Law.[17]

Also, if a ferry operator carried over any servants without passes or slaves without tickets, or any person charged with or convicted of any criminal offense, he was subject to a penalty.[18]

These new laws, and paranoia about a potential race-based rebellion, resulted in ferry crossings becoming, as historian George C. Rogers Jr. suggests, little more than checkpoints where white governmental officials could apprehend runaway slaves, indentured servants, or deserting seamen. In the eyes of some officials, desertion was as much an issue as controlling slaves. To counter these problems, the Commons House of Assembly ordered that Charleston-area ferry operators could not carry a person unless

> he has a certificate from a justice of the peace [and if] it shall so happen, that any person

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[17] J. H. Easterby, ed., *The Journal of the Commons House of Assembly September 12, 1739-March 26, 1741* (Columbia: The Historical Commission of South Carolina, 1952), 465-466.

[18] Ibid., 466.

> shall come to the ferry, in order to go to the northward, not having any certificate, not being personally known to the said ferryman as fore said, that the said ferryman shall apprehend all such person, and carry them before the next justice of the peace.[19]

If challenged, the justice of the peace would determine if the person was free or in some form of bondage.[20] The new laws and regulations were not just a draconian response to the threat of slave rebellion; they also recognized how unregulated ferries offered slaves, and other suspect groups, mobility and an opportunity to escape. For example, Alexander Moon advertised in the *South Carolina Gazette* that a slave ran away from him at the Combahee Ferry, and he offered a £20 reward for the slave's return. To control the desertion of sailors to the northern colonies, the Commons House of Assembly passed a bill in 1743 that established penalties for ferrymen transporting sailors who lacked a certificate of discharge.[21]

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[19] McCord, ed., *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. IX,* 72.

[20] Rogers, *The History of Georgetown County, South Carolina,* 44.

[21] J. H. Easterby, ed., *The Journal of the Commons House of Assembly September 14, 1742-January 27, 1744* (Columbia: The Historical Commission of South Carolina, 1954), 229.

Since ferries were public spaces, used by many, they also were ideal places to send political messages to the entire population regarding retribution for escaped slaves. In 1732, before the Stono Rebellion, local officials allowed Charlie Jones, who had killed a runaway slave who allegedly robbed him, to cut off the slave's head, impale it on a pole, and place it at the crossroads near Ashley Ferry.[22] The runaway slave was treated like captured pirates, whose heads Charleston leaders placed at the Battery as a warning to other pirates of the price of their crimes.

Using fear and random checks, the assembly hoped through its 1740s laws to stop slaves from using ferries as a means of escape. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, South Carolina officials wanted tougher laws to control slave mobility. In 1801, the General Assembly passed legislation forbidding the transportation of slaves on ferries without the written permission of their owners. That same year, the General Assembly required all ferry keepers to swear an oath "to prevent negro slaves and other

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[22] Daniel Meaders, "South Carolina Fugitives as Viewed Through Local Colonial Newspapers with Emphasis on Runaway Notices 1732-1801," *The Journal of Negro History* 60 (April 1975), 295.

persons of colour from being brought into or entering this State." [23] These laws further isolated the slave community from travel and outside interaction, and increasingly made ferries a "white-only" space.

Many other slave states passed laws to control slaves' travel on ferries. In 1831, the Kentucky State Assembly forbade ferry operators along the Ohio River from transporting slaves without the written consent of their owners. To ensure that ferry operators followed the law, the operators had to post a $3,000 bond and pay a $200 fine for every violation.[24] In Mississippi, the General Assembly outlawed slaves from crossing at ferries and toll bridges without the permission of their owners. In 1839, Virginia passed a special penalty against ferrymen who allowed slaves to cross the rivers that bordered the state.[25] Like South Carolina's statutes, these laws intended to exert greater control on slave travel as part of a legal system

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[23] Gilmore, "South Carolina River Ferries," 48; McCord, ed., *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. IX,* 445, 515.

[24] Ivan E. McDougle, "The Legal Status of Slaves," *The Journal of Negro History* 3, no. 3 (July 1918): 263.

[25] Henry W. Farnam and Clive Day, *Chapters in the History of Social Legislation in the United States to 1860* (Union, NJ: Lawbook Exchange, 2000), 187.

that curtailed African American mobility at every possible avenue.

Jim Crow and the Ferries

The Civil War and Reconstruction opened a brief window of opportunity for African Americans to use South Carolina's ferries at some basic level of equality with whites. After the election of Wade Hampton III as "Redemption" governor in 1876, South Carolina took serious steps toward becoming a formally segregated state. Politicians from the upstate, including Martin Gary, advocated the Mississippi Plan of disfranchisement of African Americans by extralegal means. By 1890, the election of Benjamin Tillman as governor ended any racial moderation in the state. The turn of the century ushered in many laws and ordinances to segregate the races. For example, in 1903, Columbia ordered its streetcars segregated.[26] As part of the growing Jim Crow society in South Carolina, the General Assembly passed laws to establish separate facilities on ferries. In February 1904, the General Assembly changed Section 2158 of the Code of

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[26] Cleveland L. Sellers Jr., "Segregation," in *South Carolina Encyclopedia*, ed. Walter Edgar (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 854-856.

Laws of South Carolina to require steam ferries to have segregated facilities:

> All railroads and steam ferries, and railroad companies engaged in this State as common carriers of passengers for the accommodation of white and colored passengers: Provided, Equal accommodations shall be supplied to all persons, without distinction of race, color or previous condition, in such coaches or cabins.[27]

Political scientist Franklin Johnson argues that this segregation requirement was for all boats carrying passengers in the state, not just steam ferries. What happened in South Carolina could be found throughout the South. For example, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina passed similar laws to separate the races on ferries.[28] Segregation on ferries would remain standard in South Carolina until the 1960s, when the state finally ended its law-enforced racial separation.

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[27] South Carolina General Assembly, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1904* (Columbia, SC: The State Company, 1904), 488-489.

[28] Franklin Johnson, "The Development of State Legislation Concerning the Free Negro" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1918), 19.

Ferries and the Tenant-Farming System

Although the state was undergoing a transportation revolution after the Civil War, ferries were still important to the economic development of the state's coastal areas. Ferries were key transportation cogs in the larger landscape of tenant faming that defined the Lowcountry for decades after the Civil War.[29] Because of the tenant-farming system, African American men often traveled extensively within the region to provide income for their families. Then, at the end of the century, men traveled away from their homes to participate in the phosphate-mining and fertilizer-production boom. By the turn of the century, many other laborers took jobs with the Charleston-based commercial lumber operations exploiting the area's rich abundance of pine forest. Cut timber was traditionally transported by water; therefore, the lumber camps typically were set up close to navigable waterways. One such camp appears to be represented at archaeological sites 38CH1406 and 38CH1407 in Charleston County. Ferry systems provided

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[29] Charles Aiken, *The Cotton Plantation South since the Civil War* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

access to these waterways and transportation to employment opportunities.[30]

Even into the 1930s, ferries still remained an important means of transport for African American workers. For example, in Port Royal in Beaufort County, many African Americans worked in the local oyster canneries. To get from their neighborhoods to the plants, African American women either walked or rowed their own boats to the canneries. Other workers rode in ferry bateaux.[31]

African American-Operated Ferries

Owning and/or operating a ferry became a limited means of advancement for African Americans in the 1910s and 1920s. The state highway department established ferries to connect the coastal islands, where high concentrations of African Americans had lived for decades, to mainland South Carolina. The coastal islands are the cultural center of the Gullah people. The new ferries allowed them to explore

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[30] Eric C. Poplin, Kristrina Shuler, Emily Jateff, Jason Ellerbee, Edward Salo, and Charles F. Philips, *Archaeological Data Recovery at 38BK815, Daniel Island, South Carolina* (Mount Pleasant, SC: Brockington and Associates, 2006), 7.

[31] Spirek and Amer, *The Port Royal Sound Survey, Phase One*, 57.

the larger white world. Sociologist Lee Brooks suggests that the connection of the islands to the mainland resulted in the development of "freedom of movement [that was] … important in considering the various aspects of community health in particular and of community organization in general."[32] However, some islands remained isolated even into the late twentieth century.[33]

The operation of ferries to the islands also provided economic opportunities for African Americans. In 1959, the Coosaw Island Improvement Association, an African American group, started a ferry service between Coosaw Island and Beaufort. Subscriptions paid by Coosaw Islanders and Beaufort County funds financed the automobile ferry. A newspaper article described the ferry as "bringing a new era of progress and improvements in community life on the picturesque sea island."[34]

The operation of Coosaw Island Ferry illustrates the duality of ferry history for African Americans in South

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[32] Lee M. Brooks, "The New Mobility and the Coastal Island," *Social Forces* 9 (October 1930), 99.

[33] See Pat Conroy, *The Water is Wide* (New York: Bantam Dell Publishing Group, 2002) for a discussion of the isolation of Gullah population on Daufuskie Island.

[34] "Coosaw Island Ferry Dedicated By Beaufort Negro Group," *News and Courier*, September 12, 1959.

Carolina. As stated above, African Americans operated the ferries, first as slaves and later as freedmen; however, laws restricted their use of the ferries prior to the Civil War. During the Jim Crow era, African Americans continued to work on ferries but had to ride in separate sections of the boats. In spite of the segregation, ferries in the Progressive Era opened travel to the Sea Islands, integrating the previously isolated Gullah culture into the larger state. Then, in the 1950s, African Americans developed a ferry service as a means to bring social mobility to their communities.

CHAPTER VII

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FERRY NEAR CHARLESTON: A CASE STUDY OF FERRIES IN MOUNT PLEASANT, SOUTH CAROLINA

In addition to the major ferries, many smaller ferries operated across the Lowcountry. Though small, these ferries still played an important role in the development of the transportation network of the Lowcountry.[1]

Rather than examining all these ferries, my focus is on a string of ferries that operated across the Cooper River and connected Charleston with the nearby town of Mount Pleasant. These ferries operated within the sphere of influence of Charleston and were somewhat urban in their traffic and market orientation compared to ferries in the hinterlands. Like their rural counterparts, however, these ferry landings contained taverns and served as economic hubs. The sociopolitical leaders of the community owned and operated them before investors formed a corporation to run the ferry, followed later by the local government. They kept in operation until the 1930s, when the construction of the Grace Memorial Bridge connecting Charleston and the

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[1] See Barr, "Strawberry Ferry and Childsbury Towne," Terry, "'Champaign Country.'"

lands east of the Cooper River made ferry service unnecessary.

In 1748, the Commons House of Assembly established the first regulated ferry to cross the Cooper River. Henry Gray received a charter to operate a ferry from his plantation in Christ Church Parish to Charleston. In 1765, Clement Lempriere received another charter to run a ferry from Charleston to Hobcaw Point, north of present-day Mount Pleasant, then known as Hobcaw Ferry.[2] Both of these ferries allowed people to travel from Charleston to lands east of the Cooper River, yet transportation from Charleston to Mount Pleasant was not formalized until the creation of another ferry.

In 1770, the Assembly granted Andrew Hibben a ferry charter from

> Charlestown to Scott's ferry, in the parish of Saint Thomas and Saint Dennis, and to a bank or ridge of Oyster shells, lying to the southward of the house, commonly called the Point House, of Clement Lempriere, at Hobcaw, in the parish of Christ Church.[3]

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[2] McCord, ed., *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. IX*, 147-148, 208-210.

[3] Ibid., 235.

The Assembly acknowledged that Lempriere's and Scott's ferries crossed the Cooper River, but it made a legal distinction since neither operator kept ferries in Charleston for that purpose. The assembly members set the new ferry's rates as "the same rates and ferriage as are respectively allowed for ferriage from Lempriere's ferry to Charlestown and from Scott's ferry to Charlestown."[4]

Like many other ferry operators, Hibben was already a successful man. He had emigrated from England in 1715 and purchased the Sea Side Plantation as well as other large tracts of land east of the Cooper River.[5] After Hibben's death in 1784, the ferry passed to his son, James. A plat made by George Barksdale in 1793 shows Hibben's lands and the ferry location. The plat also shows land owned by Jonathan Scott, who operated Scott's Tavern near Hibben Ferry to serve travelers.[6]

In addition to the ferry, James Hibben inherited Sea Side Plantation. He expanded his economic pursuits

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[4] Ibid.

[5] Suzannah Smith Miles, *A Gazetteer Containing a Concise History of the People, Places & Events of the Area Known as East of the Cooper* (Charleston, SC: Charleston Lithographing Company, 1993), 37.

[6] Petrona McIver, "Early Taverns on the Georgetown Road," *Names in South Carolina* XIV (Winter 1967), 33.

including the development of the village of Mount Pleasant after he purchased the Mount Pleasant Plantation from Jacob Motte in 1803. In addition to his economic pursuits, Hibben served as a house member of the Eleventh through Thirteenth General Assemblies, in which he served on the committees on roads, bridges, causeways, and ferries. He also served from 1800 to 1817 in the state senate, where he also served on the senate committee on high roads, bridges, and ferries.[7].

In 1798, the General Assembly reauthorized the ferry and granted the charter to James Hibben for five years. The new charter banned other ferries from operating within three miles of Hibben Ferry. Table 8 provides rates for Hibben Ferry in 1798.[8]

Ten to twelve men manned the barges for the Hibben ferryboats. Later the operators used mule boats, on which two mules walked around a central pole to power a propeller.[9]

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[7] N. Louise Bailey, *Directory of the South Carolina House of Representatives, Volume IV, 1791-1815* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1986); Miles, *A Gazetteer*, 37.

[8] McCord, ed., *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. IX*, 389

[9] McIver, *History of Mount Pleasant South Carolina*, 12.

Table 8. Ferriage Rates for Hibben Ferry in 1798[10]

Items Transported	**Ferriage**
Single passenger	Thirty-three cents
Single horse	Seventy cents
Four-wheeled carriage	One hundred and seventy-five cents
Two-wheeled carriage	Seventy-five cents
Horned cattle	Twenty-one cents per head
Hogs, goats, and sheep	Eight cents per head

In 1799, Clement L. Prince petitioned to reestablish a ferry at Lempriere's Point. Hibben complained, claiming that the new ferry would be within three miles of Hibben Ferry. The General Assembly authorized Hibben and Prince each to appoint a freeholder to measure the distance and report back to the General Assembly.[11] No record of the freeholder's decision could be located.

Hibben continued to operate the ferry until his death in 1835. Thomas Quinby then leased the ferry from the Hibben family and continued to operate it. In 1840, Quinby placed an advertisement in the local newspaper describing the ferry. He stated that he had "leased the Ferry known as Hibben's [and it is] … prepared to convey Passengers to

[10] Ibid.

[11] McCord, ed., *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. IX*, 396.

and fro from the City."[12] The advertisement stated that the ferry ran from the ferry site in Mount Pleasant to a wharf on Queen Street in Charleston. Also, the property contained a hotel, a grocery, and a dry-goods store.

William Mathews was an important competitor to Quinby. Mathew's Ferry, located north of Mount Pleasant, dated to a legislative charter in 1821. Eight years later, the General Assembly rechartered the ferry.[13] This newer ferry connected Mount Pleasant to Charleston by a considerably shorter distance than Hibben Ferry. A public notice from an 1824 newspaper described Mathew's Ferry:

> The public are respectfully informed that the above ferry is now the most complete order in every respect. The Distance across is only one mile and a half mostly on a canal cut at great labor and expense through the marsh. At the ferry there is an excellent two story house fitted up in handsome style for the convenience of travelers, with stables and carriage houses on a very extensive scale so that those who wish to patronize this establishment will be sure of better accommodation and expedition in crossing than can be generally met with in the low country.[14]

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[12] *Charleston Courier*, March 12, 1840.

[13] McCord, ed., *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. IX*, 516, 585.

[14] *Charleston Courier*, October 1824, quoted in Elsie I. Eubanks, Ralph Bailey, and Eric C. Poplin, *Cultural Resources Survey of the Silverman Tract, Charleston County,*

Another competitor was the Milton Ferry, which had a stable and accommodations for travelers.[15] In 1849, the assembly rechartered the ferry and named William Mathews Hunt, Benjamin F. Hunt, and George B. Hunt as the Mount Pleasant Ferry Company.[16]

Archaeological investigations conducted at Mathew's Ferry by Brockington and Associates in 1993 reveal the physical outlines of the ferry operation. The archaeologists identified archaeological site 38CH1495, which contains two structures, one represented by a brick foundation and the other by a brick chimney box. The site boundary measures approximately 75 meters north-south by 135 meters east-west. Using ceramics from the site, investigators produced a mean ceramic date of 1835 using a large amount of bottle glass and liquor bottle glass that would indicate the presence of a tavern at the site.[17]

South Carolina (Mount Pleasant, SC: Brockington and Associates, 1993).

[15] *Charleston Courier*, November 28, 1832.

[16] South Carolina General Assembly, *Acts of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed in December 1849*, 581.

[17] Eubanks, Bailey, and Poplin, *Cultural Resources Survey of the Silverman Tract, Charleston County, South Carolina*, 37.

The size and architectural characteristics of the structures, together with the high frequencies of kitchen-related artifacts, indicate that Structures 1 and 2 at 38CH1495 probably represent the early tavern and a support building that were part of the ferry complex.

The operation of ferries to Mount Pleasant changed in 1847 when Charles Jugnot and Oliver Hilliard formed the Mount Pleasant Ferry Company. They purchased Shell Hall, the summerhouse of the Snee family, and constructed the first Alhambra Hall as a recreation site for locals. In 1856, Jugnot, Hilliard, and C. D. Carr purchased the Barksdale Point Plantation and created the McCants Ferry Company. In 1856, the General Assembly rechartered the ferry as the Mount Pleasant Ferry Company, and the assembly renewed the ferry in 1865.[18] During the late 1800s, the owners renamed the company the Mount Pleasant and Sullivan's Island Ferry Service.

The ferry continued to operate until 1898 when fire damaged the ferry house, wharf, and bridge of Hibben's Ferry. That same year, J. S. Lawrence, Philip H. Gadsden,

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[18] General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, *Acts of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Sessions of 1864-65*, 362; Jason Annan and Pamela Gabriel, *The Great Cooper River Bridge* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2002), 6, 8.

and W. W. Lawton purchased the Mount Pleasant and Sullivan's Island Ferry Service and rechartered it as the Charleston and Seashore Railroad Company. The new ferry company also constructed a series of bridges and trolley cars to transport people from Mount Pleasant to Sullivan's Island.[19]

In 1924, the Cooper River Ferry Commission undertook cross-Cooper River ferries. The commission constructed new roads, bridges, and ferry wharves. It also started operating a new ferryboat. The new boat, the *Palmetto*, was built in Charleston and served until completion of the Cooper River (Grace Memorial) Bridge made ferry service impracticable. [20]

The 1918 U.S. Geological Survey *Charleston, SC* quadrangle map shows three structures at the ferry site. Coleman Boulevard had not been built at that time. An overlay of Coleman Boulevard connecting Mount Pleasant to

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[19] General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1898* (Columbia, SC: The Columbia Register Printer, for State Printer, 1898), 939-940; Annan and Gabriel, *The Great Cooper River Bridge*, 8.

[20] McIver, *History of Mount Pleasant South Carolina*, 125; Annan and Gabriel, *The Great Cooper River Bridge*, 18-19.

the Grace Memorial Bridge shows that the new highway construction obliterated two of the buildings. The two buildings were destroyed between 1918 and 1932, most likely during construction of Grace Memorial Bridge in 1927-29.

On August 1, 1930, Charleston County's ferryboat, the *Palmetto*, ceased operation between Charleston and Mount Pleasant. The previous General Assembly had passed legislation that called for liquidation of the Cooper River Ferry Commission and ordered the group to sell all of the commission's property for cash. In addition to losing the equipment, approximately twenty persons lost their jobs. Captain S. E. Baitary, pilot of the *Palmetto*, began to operate a private ferry across the Cooper River later in August. He purchased the *Mary G. Moorehead* (a passenger yacht) and the *Water Lily* from the lighthouse service.[21] It is not known if Baitary's ferry service was profitable or how long it operated.

With the construction of the Progressive Era bridge, ferry service to Mount Pleasant was no longer needed. The ferries along the east bank of the Cooper River illustrated many historical themes. They were owned and operated by the

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[21] "Ferry Palmetto Lies Idle in Dock," *News and Courier*, August 1, 1930.

wealthy, they were economic hubs, and they transformed with the introduction of new technology.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FERRY OUTSIDE CHARLESTON: A CASE STUDY OF THE COMBAHEE FERRY, BEAUFORT AND COLLETON COUNTIES, SOUTH CAROLINA

Ferries were integral in the transportation and economic development of Charleston. The Combahee Ferry, the first ferry established in the southern parishes of the Lowcountry, is an effective case study of how ferries developed outside the Charleston region.[1] The establishment of Beaufort (and later Savannah) created a need for lines of communication and travel between 1680s Charles Town and these locales and beyond. The modern route from Charleston to Savannah (via U.S. Highway 17) closely follows the colonial-period road. Travel from Charleston deviated at Parker's Ferry. Those traveling to the north would travel by the Saltketcher Bridge, a crossing point farther north

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[1] This chapter is taken from a data recovery report Brockington and Associates prepared for the South Carolina Department of Transportation as mitigation for construction of a new bridge at the Combahee River along U.S. Highway 17. The author would like to thank Wayne Roberts and the rest of the staff at the South Carolina Department of Transportation for allowing the author to use the information prepared for that report in this dissertation. I would also like to thank Eric Poplin for assisting in the preparation of this chapter.

on the Combahee, where the river is known as the Salkehatchie River. Those en route to points south (Port Royal, Beaufort, and Savannah) would cross at Combahee Ferry. The topography of the area containing the Ashepoo, Combahee, and Edisto rivers creates a broad, marshy wetlands difficult to navigate by overland travel. The route from Charleston via Parker's Ferry to Combahee Ferry, Pocotaligo, and beyond was the swiftest way to travel south through the coastal lowlands while avoiding the broad swamps to seaward and to the interior.

As the colony expanded from Charleston to points south, the Commons House of Assembly authorized on November 10, 1711, the establishment of a road from the south side of the Edisto River to the islands of Port Royal and Saint Helena to provide for "more easy conjunction of the forces of this colony in times of war and danger, and for conveicney [*sic*] of business and commerce."[2] The act also directed that ferries be established along the road charging each passenger a ferriage of one-half royal and a man and horse a ferriage of one royal; however, the act did

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[2] McCord, ed., The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. IX, 14.

not specify any of the ferries or operators.[3] As was standard with authorizing roads, the act established five commissioners to oversee the construction and maintenance of the road, bridges, and ferries along the route. A 1711 map of Carolina does not indicate any prior ferry operating at the Combahee River (Figure 9).

Although the previous act authorized the establishment of the ferry at Combahee, the earliest archival evidence of the Combahee Ferry was a General Assembly Act of 1715. It authorized Joseph Bryan, the keeper of the Combahee Ferry, to charge an additional "half a rial for a man, and one rial for a man and horse" to pay for the maintenance of the Combahee River causeway for the next three years.[4] On January 12, 1705, Joseph Bryan had received a grant of 550 acres on the Combahee River from the Lords Proprietors.[5] Bryan was originally from Hereford County, England, and after migrating to the Carolina colony, he acquired lands along the Pocotaligo River. His granddaughter married Stephen Bull, head of one of the largest and wealthiest families in the colony, which illustrates the Bryan

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[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid., 37.

[5] Charleston County Deed Book S, 55. On file at the Charleston RMC office, Charleston, South Carolina.

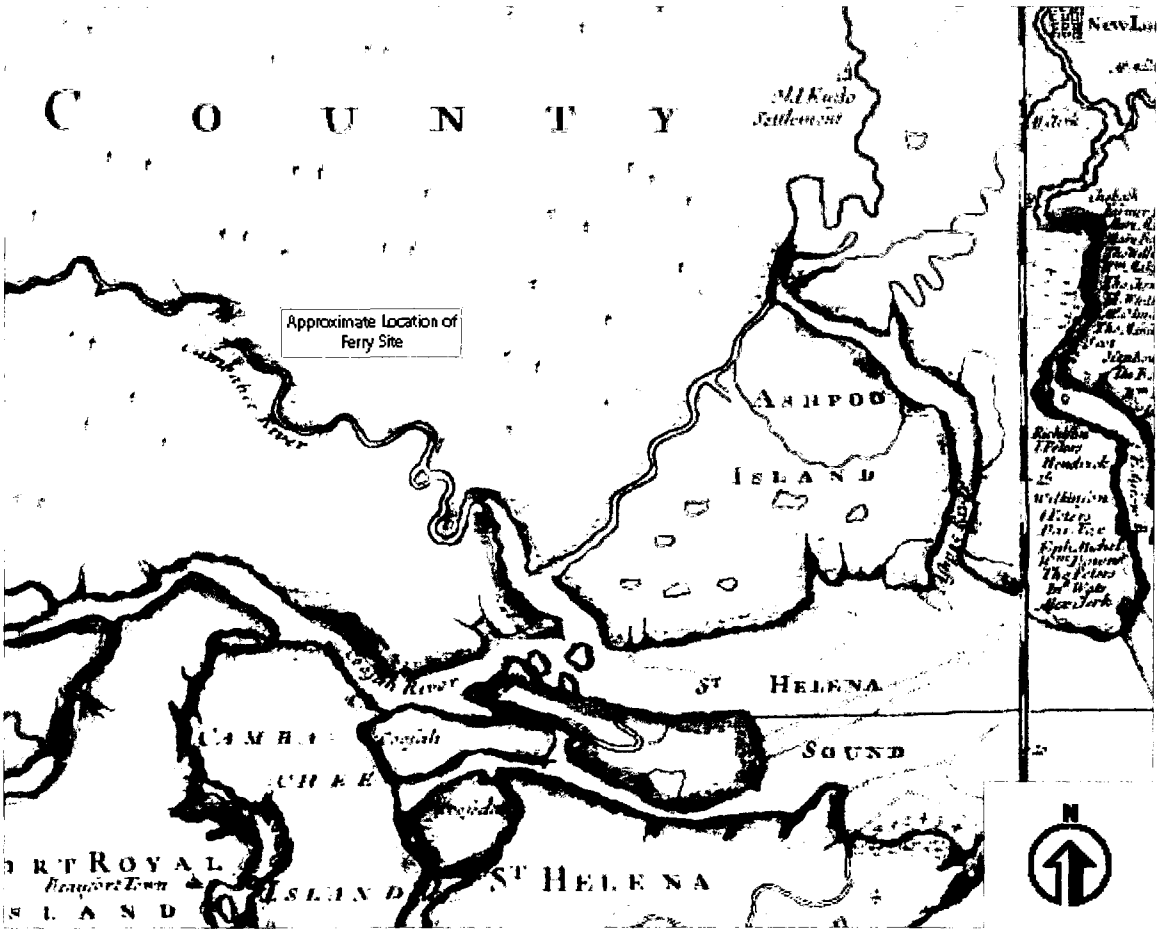

Figure 9. Portion of *A compleat [sic] description of the province of Carolina in 3 parts: 1st, the improved part from the surveys of Maurice Mathews & Mr. John Love: 2ly, the west part by Capt. Tho. Nairn: 3ly, a chart of the coast from Virginia to Cape Florida*, showing no development at the Combahee Ferry site (Crisp 1711).

family's integration into the larger South Carolina sociopolitical scene.[6]

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[6] Edgar and Bailey, eds., Biographical Directory of the South Carolina House of Representatives: The Commons House of Assembly, 1692-1775, 110.

Bryan was authorized to confer any excess ferriage to the commissioners on October 1 of each year, and the commissioners would use the surplus money to repair the causeway. The act details the penalties that Bryan would face if he did not provide the extra ferriage. As a medium of exchange, the Colonial Assembly accepted Spanish currency (the rial).

In addition to the operation of the Combahee Ferry, the Bryan family was active in the development of the region's transportation infrastructure. Joseph Bryan's brother Hugh served as road and ferry commissioner for various projects in St. Helena Parish and received ferry rights in 1737 to operate the ferry from Cochran's Point on Port Royal. Joseph's other brother, Jonathan, served as a road commissioner in 1736; Joseph himself had held the office in 1721.[7] Prominent landowners such as the Bryan family viewed participation in the development of the transportation network in this part of the colony as an important contribution to their economic success.

The Combahee Ferry next appears in the legislative record in a 1733 charter authorizing a ferry over the Combahee River from the plantation of John Jackson to

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[7] Ibid., 108-110.

Robert Heele's bluff for fifteen years. The charter sets ferry rates as two shillings and six pence for a single person; five shillings for a man and horse; fifteen pence per head for horses and cattle; and seven pence, half penny per head for hogs and sheep.[8] It also required the operator to

> keep and maintain a good and sufficient ferry boat, and two able servants or slaves, who shall constantly attended the said ferry, as well by night, as by day, for the transportation of all persons, their slaves, horses and cattle.[9]

Archival research could not link this charter with the Combahee Ferry along U.S. Highway 17; however, historic maps from the period show no other ferries operating nearby.

As the century passed, the significance of the Combahee Ferry would extend beyond its role in regional transportation to its role in the greater economic orbits of later owners, especially as the powerful Bull family and later the Middletons gained economic and political influence.

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[8] McCord, ed., The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. IX, 81.

[9] Ibid.

The Creation of Radnor at Combahee Ferry

With the success of the Combahee Ferry, Stephen Bull established the town of Radnor in 1734 on his father William Bull's Newbury Plantation. It was not uncommon for large planters to branch out of the agricultural business to provide transportation and other services for their neighbors. Many owned gristmills and sawmills, and a few owned stores. Sometimes they dreamed of elaborate, planned towns. Bull planned Radnor to be a port of entry for loading and unloading ships because of its location between Charleston and Port Royal. During the colonial period, navigation on the Combahee River centered on transportation for the rice industry.[10] To aid in the development of the community as an economic center, and because of the growing importance of rice to the plantations nearby, the Bulls also constructed a wharf at Radnor.[11]

Historian Robert Weir describes the geographical layout of Radnor as resembling "a New England village" with

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[10] Gordon P. Watts Jr., Underwater Archaeological Remote Sensing Survey, Proposed US 17 Bridge Widening and Replacement Corridor, Beaufort and Colleton Counties, South Carolina (Washington, NC: Tidewater Atlantic Research, Inc., 2005), 17.

[11] George Winston Lane Jr., "The Middletons of Eighteenth-Century South Carolina: A Colonial Dynasty, 1678-1787" (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1990), 369.

a church, school, and commons.[12] Figure 10 provides a copy of a plat of Radnor prepared in the early twentieth century by H. A. M. Smith. In addition to Radnor's being a local economic center, an act of the Commons House of Assembly on March 11, 1737, established Radnor as a market town.

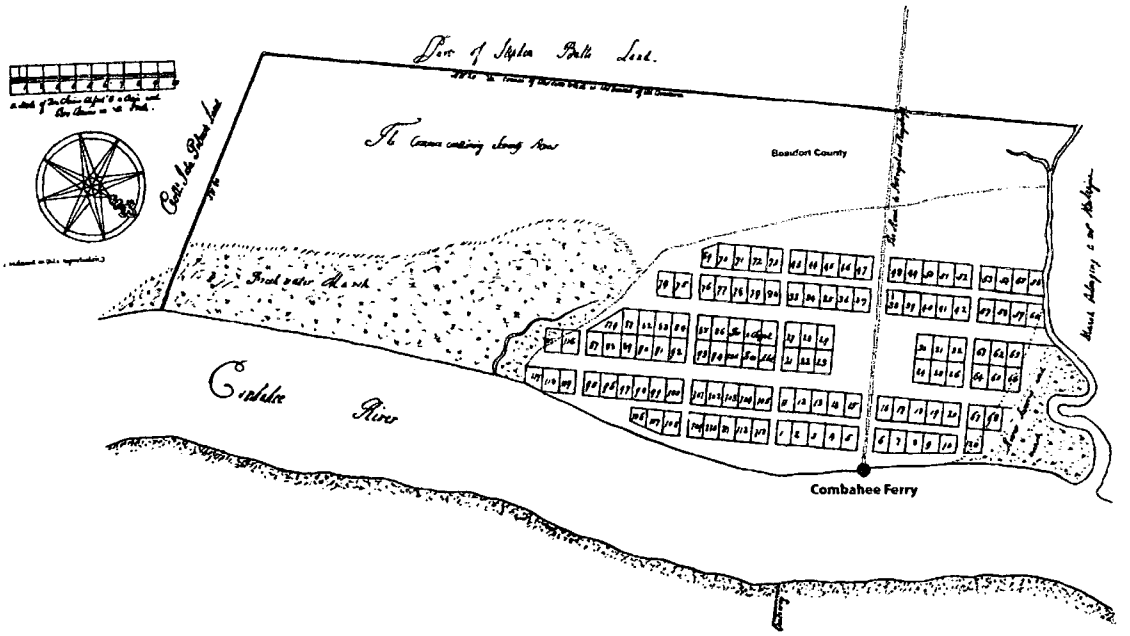

Figure 10. A plat of Radnor showing the location of the settlement and the Combahee Ferry (adapted from Smith 1988).

[12] Weir, *Colonial South Carolina: A History*, 153.

Records indicate that the town consisted of several buildings; however, the town never grew beyond that. In 1741, as a means to aid travel and secure the southern parts of the colony, the Commons House of Assembly authorized the construction of a bridge over the Combahee River from the causeway to the town of Radnor.

Operation of the Combahee Bridge

To fund the construction of the bridge over the Combahee, the assembly levied a tax on all males from 16 to 60 years old (free or slave) in St. Helena and Saint Bartholomew's parishes. The act authorizing the bridge also appointed Stephen Bull, Peter Girardeau, Thomas Stocks, David Godin, John Greene, and John Mullryne as the commissioners to oversee its construction and declared that the bridge would be a public conveyance, meaning that there would be no toll charged to pass. The assembly members justified the bridge at Combahee as necessary to provide "security of the southern parts of this Province, as well as to the convenience of travelers passing this way."[13] It is probably most accurate to conclude that the bridge was built to provide easier travel for individuals to and from

[13] McCord, ed., The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. IX, 116.

Radnor. At the time of the bridge's authorization, Native American and Spanish threats in the southern portions of the colony had long since vanished or were minimal.

By 1754, the bridge had gone into serious disrepair, and most of the original commissioners were either dead or had moved from the area. In May 1754, the Commons House of Assembly appointed Daniel Wilshuysen, Stephen Bull, William Simmons, Thomas Hutchinson, and Joseph Ladson commissioners for repairing and maintaining the bridge over the Combahee River. The new commissioners were required to repair the bridge within six months or face a £50 penalty.[14]

The Tavern at Radnor

With the success of the Combahee Ferry and the creation of Radnor, Colonel John Mullryne of Beaufort constructed a combination store, lodging house, and public house in Radnor.[15] Taverns were among the most important social, political, and economic institutions in American colonial life and often were located at ferry sites.[16] The

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[14] Ibid., 173.

[15] Rowland, Moore, and Rogers, The History of Beaufort County, South Carolina: Volume 1, 1514-1861, 116.

[16] Rockman and Rothschild, "City Tavern, Country Tavern: An Analysis of Four Colonial Sites," 112; Moore,

July 11, 1754, issue of the *South Carolina Gazette* contained an advertisement by Katherine Wyerhysen, the tavern keeper, for:

> private lodging and entertainment for man and horse and also to ferry travelers over the said river, at the rate formally established by act of assembly: One shillings and three pence for a foot passage; Two shillings and five pence for man and horse; Five shillings for a chair and horse.[17]

Reemergence of the Combahee Ferry

By 1766, the bridge at the former Combahee Ferry had completely collapsed, and the residents of Saint Bartholomew's Parish requested several transportation improvements, including a new bridge over the Saltketcher River where M'Kewn's Ferry operated (north of the Combahee Ferry) and the establishment of a new ferry at Combahee. Stephen Bull, Esquire, petitioned the Commons House of Assembly, and on July 2, 1766, he received authorization to operate the Combahee Ferry for fourteen years. The act authorized many categories of tolls that did not exist in prior charters. Table 9 provides a list of the tolls from

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"Role of Ferryboat Landings in East Tennessee's Economic Development, 1790-1870," 5.

[17] The *South Carolina Gazette*, July 11, 1754.

Table 9. Tolls from the 1766 Combahee Ferry Charter[18]

Cargo	**Ferriage**
Single person	Fifteen pence
Empty cart	Seven shillings and six pence
Loaded cart, wagon, or coach	Fifteen shillings
Head of cattle	Fifteen pence
Horse	Fifteen pence
Hog, sheep, or calf	Seven pence half penny

the 1766 charter.[19] The charter exempted those attending worship, the royal governor and his entourage, ministers, men headed to militia muster, governmental messengers, and free Indians from the ferriage.

In addition to the new tolls, the Bull charter also specified the exact physical requirements that the ferry operator was required to provide. These included:

> Good and substantial ferry boat or boats, with a stage or entering boards; and also, a capstan and a sufficient rope across the river; and also, a canoe and two able men to attend the said ferry, for transporting passengers … as well by night as by day. And for the conveniency and shelter of person coming down the said causey from inclemency of the weather … Bull shall be obligated … to build, and to keep constantly in repair, a shed, sufficient to shelter travelers from sun and rain, thirty feet long and twenty

[18] Ibid.

[19] McCord, ed., The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. IX, 217.

> feet wide, on the causey near the side of the said river.[20]

From this description, we see that the Commons House of Assembly required the ferry operator to provide adequate equipment to transport people and their horses, as well as to provide shelter on the Colleton County side of ferry for travelers as they waited for the ferry. The tavern was on the Beaufort County side. The charter also stated that Bull would have to pay a penalty of forty shillings for the first hour and £10 every hour after that to anyone that experienced an "unreasonable delay."[21]

By the end of the colonial period, Combahee Ferry served as the principal crossing of the lower Combahee River.[22] Several historic maps from the 1770s and 1780s present conflicting views of the Combahee Ferry area. The *Map of South Carolina from the Savannah Sound to St. Helena's Sound, with the several plantations, their proper boundary lines, their names, and the names of the proprietors included and the grants of lands belonging to Landgrave William Hodgson* shows Radnor but does not show

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[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Rowland, Moore, and Rogers, The History of Beaufort County, South Carolina, 116, 122.

the ferry at the site (Figure 11). Henry Mouzon's 1775 map shows Combahee Ferry (Figure 12). Interestingly, a 1780 map of South Carolina and parts of Georgia shows the bridge over the Combahee River and Radnor; however, this map was composed from earlier surveys, presumably prepared during the time of the bridge and likely explaining why the ferry is not shown (Figure 13).

At the same time that Bull was rechartering the ferry, James Gowen and his brother Buck settled at Combahee Ferry, and James married Mary "Polly" Keating from Beaufort. Based on family history, Polly owned and operated the tavern and store located at the ferry independently of her husband. It was uncommon in colonial South Carolina for a woman to own property, let alone a tavern and store. The tavern was known as Haymarket Tavern. It can be assumed that Haymarket Tavern was a successor of the Mullryne tavern, but we do not know the size of the tavern building.[23]

In 1779, Bull's fourteen-year charter expired and the ferry passed to new owners. The next two Combahee Ferry operators in the 1770s were Charlestonians, as well as

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[23] "GOWEN RESEARCH FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER" Volume 3, No. 10, June 1992. Available at http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~gowenrf/nl199206.htm.

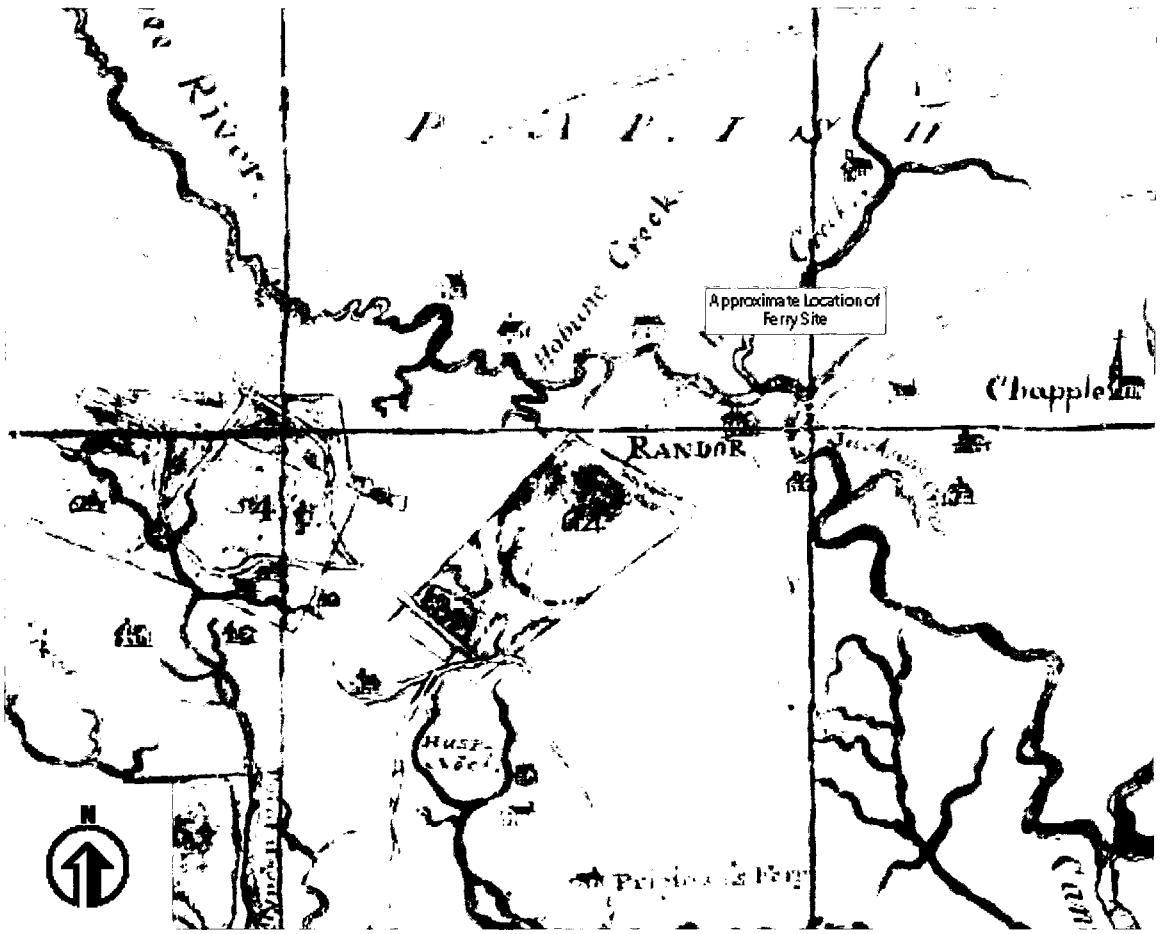

Figure 11. Portion of the *Map of South Carolina from the Savannah Sound to St. Helena's Sound, with the several plantations, their proper boundary lines, their names, and the names of the proprietors included and the grants of lands belonging to Landgrave William Hodgson,* showing the Combahee Ferry area (Boss 1771).

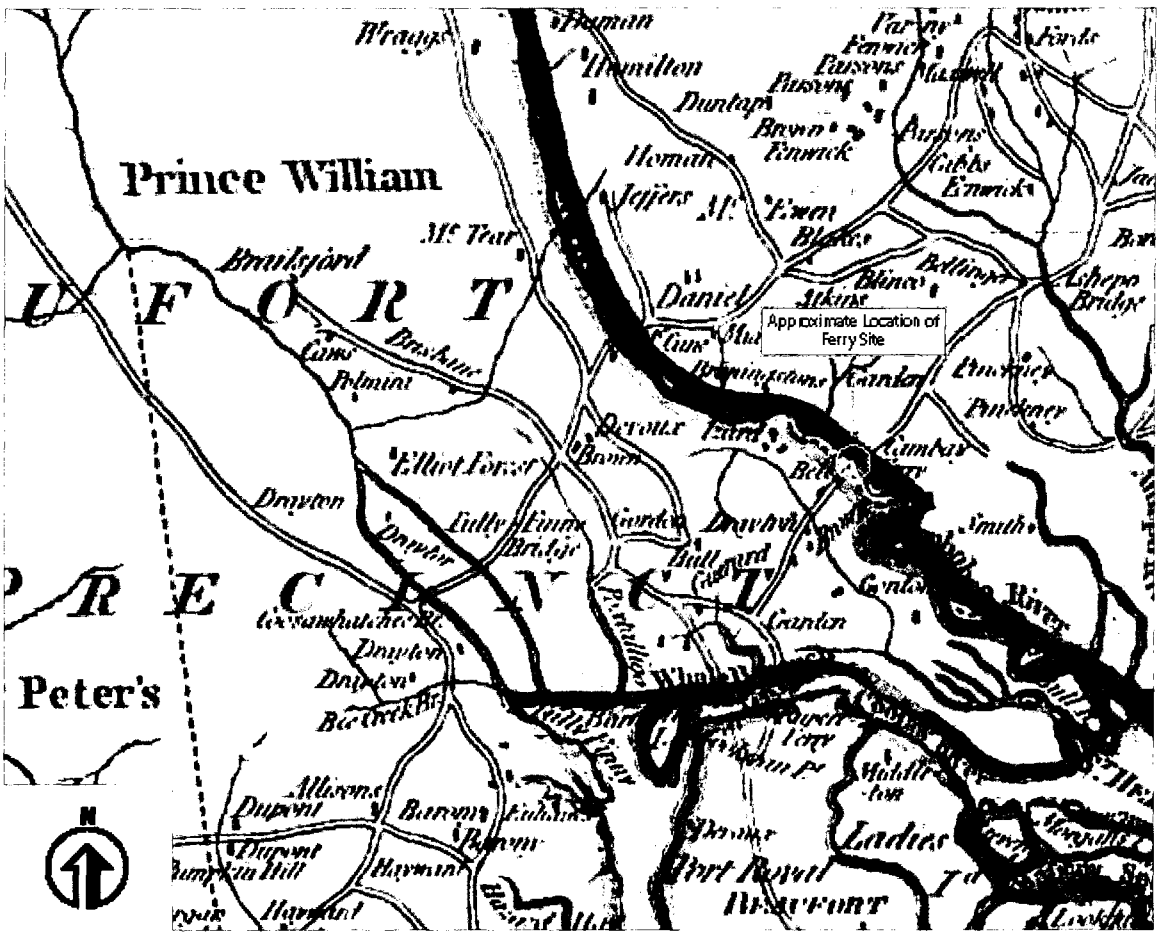

Figure 12. Portion of *An accurate map of North and South Carolina, from actual surveys by Henry Mouzon and others,* showing the Combahee Ferry.

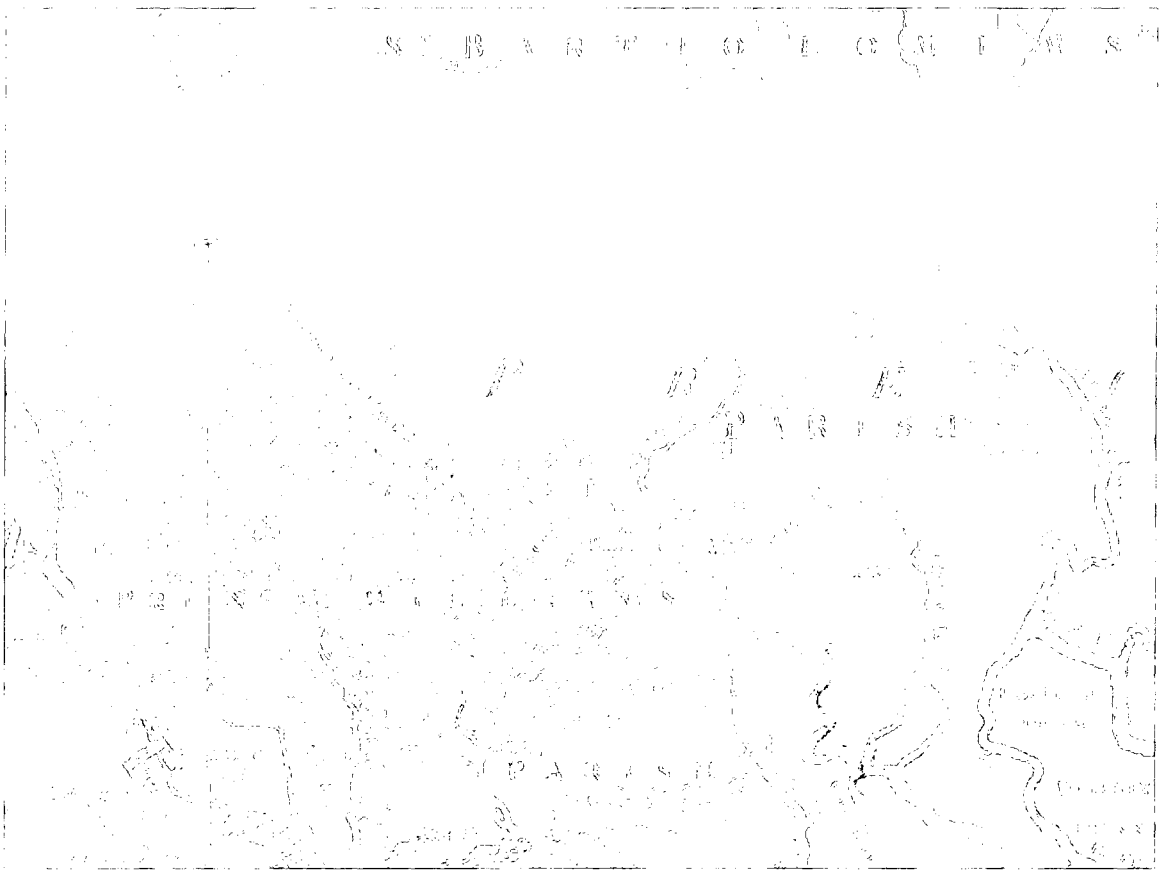

Figure 13. Portion of the 1780 *Map of South Carolina and a part of Georgia,* showing the bridge over the Combahee River and Radnor (Faden 1780).

furniture makers. Richard Magrath, a famous cabinetmaker and importer of furniture in Charleston, operated the ferry, probably alongside the Gowens' tavern, until he returned to London in 1777. In 1779, John Packrow, another cabinetmaker, was granted the authority to operate the ferry for one year.[24]

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[24] McCord, ed., The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. IX, 270.

Richard Magrath (1763?-1777) was a London cabinetmaker who came to Charleston by way of Philadelphia. From a 1771 announcement in the *South Carolina Gazette,* it appears Magrath operated a shop on King Street near Tradd Street. Based on legal records, Magrath was not a good businessman. In September 1773, he was indebted to William Luyten, a fellow cabinetmaker, for the sum of 166 pounds, and as a result, Luyten brought suit against Magrath. The next year, William Neall also sued Magrath for food, drink, room, board, and work done between 1771 and 1774.[25]

In the July 21, 1777, *Gazette of the State of South Carolina*, Magrath placed an advertisement that he

> has taken Combahee Ferry and proved every necessary to render it agreeable to the passengers. He hopes all gentlemen and others who travel to and from the southward, will convince themselves of the improvements at his ferry, as that will be the only means to support the dependence that will attend keeping of it in his present improved state, particularly as it is the nearest and best traveling road. He assures the public it shall be his constant duty to merit their favors by diligent attendance and good accommodations.[26]

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[25] Bradford L. Rauschenberg and John Bivins, *The Furniture of Charleston, 1680-1820*, The Frank L. Horton Series (Winston-Salem, NC: Old Salem Inc, 2003), 1103-1105.

[26] Gazette of the State of South Carolina, July 21, 1777.

Magrath's assurances of reliability may indicate problems with the previous ferry operator, or Magrath may have feared he had a bad reputation with Charlestonians. Another announcement that "the cross way which leads to the ferry is now completely repaired" told readers that one key component of a ferry operation — its causeway — was no longer an impediment. According to the *Statutes at Large*, Magrath did not hold the charter to operate the ferry. It can be assumed that he rented operation of the ferry from Bull.

Within a year, cabinetmaker John Packrow assumed the ferry's operation. In the August 7, 1778, issue of the *Gazette of the State of South Carolina*, Packrow announced that he was

> determined to put the ferry in good condition, as soon as he can get a flat built and a new pole made. He also informs the public, that the causey is in so good order, that travellers may gallop from one end of it to the other; and if the Commissioners are careful to throw up the other side as well as that they have already done, any person may pass at any time, without the least difficulty; besides, it will enable him to keep the causey always in good repairs, and save the inhabitants a deal of work, trouble, and expense. His friends, who have publicly expressed their appreciation of his taking the Ferry, and who express thereby to have its character retrieved

> may depend on his using every endeavors fully to satisfy their expectations.[27]

Either Magrath did not repair the ferry as promised, or matters had gotten worse in this year. Packrow felt it necessary to conduct many repairs to reassure the public that he took his responsibilities very seriously. By the end of November, according to the *Gazette of the State of South Carolina,* Packrow operated two boats, "one that is fixed with oars, the other with a rope."[28]

Nevertheless, improvements did not grow Packrow's business. In the *Gazette of the State of South Carolina* of February 3, 1779, Packrow reported his intention to sell the ferry and the house there in "June next." He did not sell the property, however, and successfully sought legislative relief. In September 1779, the General Assembly passed an act that allowed Packrow to raise his rates for one year as the existing rates were "inadequate to the expense and trouble of keeping and attending" to the

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[27] Gazette of the State of South Carolina, August 7, 1778.

[28] Gazette of the State of South Carolina, November 25, 1778.

ferry.[29] Table 10 records the new rates of Combahee Ferry in 1779.

Table 10. Rates for the Combahee Ferry in 1779[30]

Cargo	**Ferriage**
Single person	Five shillings
Single hourse	Five shillings
Chaise or cart	Thirty shillings
Coach or wagon	Three pounds
Head of neat cattle (ferried or swam)	Two shillings and six pence
Head of sheep or calves (ferried or swam)	Two shillings and six pence

In addition to the ferry's physical problems, Packrow faced dishonest competitors. In the November announcements, Packrow offered a £100 reward "to find the wretch, who through prejudice, has sent gentlemen at least eight miles out of their way … by telling them there was no boat at the ferry."[31]

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[29] McCord, ed., The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. IX, 270.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Gazette of the State of South Carolina, November 25, 1778.

Combahee Ferry during the Antebellum Period, 1806-1850s

The early 1800s was a period of great growth for ferries in the state. The 1825 *Mills' Atlas* shows 107 ferries in operation.[32] In 1806, the General Assembly rechartered the Combahee Ferry to William Keating Gowen and his heirs for seven years. The charter stated that the ferry had formerly been vested in Mrs. Gowen, but it did not indicate when that charter was established. Table 11 provides the rates for the Combahee Ferry in 1806. Seven years later, in 1815, the General Assembly granted a seven-year charter for the Combahee Ferry to John Ulmer and Mary E. Sharp, who was the executor of Mary Gowen's estate. As part of the charter, the General Assembly required that Ulmer and Sharp construct a ferry slip on the northeast side of the river where the causeway was located.[33] Family records indicate that Mary Gowen died in 1813, and the Gowen family remained at Combahee Ferry through the mid-1800s. Table 12 shows the ferry rates in 1815.

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[32] Gilmore, "South Carolina River Ferries," 48.

[33] McCord, ed., The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. IX, 479.

Table 11. Rates for the Combahee Ferry in 1806[34]

Cargo	**Ferriage**
Man and horse	11 cents
Foot passenger or led horse	6.25 cents
Four-wheel carriage	43 cents
Chair and horse	21.5 cents
Loaded horse cart	43 cents
Empty horse cart	21.5 cents
Loaded ox cart	62.25 cents
Empty wagon	43 cents
Head of cattle, sheep, or hog	6.25 cents

Table 12. Rates for the Combahee Ferry in 1815[35]

Cargo	**Ferriage**
Foot passenger	6.25 cents
Man and horse	12.5 cents
Two-wheel carriage	25 cents
Carriage	50 cents
Led horse	6.25 cents
Head of cattle, goat, sheep, or hog	3 cents

After seven more years of ownership of the Combahee Ferry by Ulmer and Sharp, in 1831 the General Assembly granted the charter to the Combahee Ferry to Arthur Middleton Jr. for a period of seven years.[36] This made sense as Middleton owned the surrounding Newport Plantation.

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[34] Ibid., 424.

[35] Ibid., 479.

[36] Ibid., 527, 592-593.

By the 1830s, the built environment of the ferry had changed markedly from the revolutionary era. The 1795 *Plat of a Plantation of Henry Middleton, Called the 'Ferry Tract' Surveyed by John Goddard* shows two buildings at the ferry site; one building is directly across the road from the ferry, and the other is on the north end of the road as it turns from its general east-west alignment and heads to the presumed ferry landing, directly opposite the causeway on the Colleton bank of the river (Figure 14). A 1811-1812 plat showing Christopher Williamson's plan of 400 acres near the Combahee Ferry primarily shows the land across the river from the Middleton property, but it does show one building at the ferry (Figure 15). However, because the surveyor's focus was not the Middleton land, he may not have drawn the building to scale, or he may have merely depicted the building as a placeholder.

The 1837 plat of Newport Plantation shows only one building at the end of the road, and no building on the dogleg (Figure 16). The antebellum look of the ferry remained constant up to the Civil War years. The 1856 map by Walker Evans and Company showing the location of the Charleston and Savannah Railroad depicted one building at

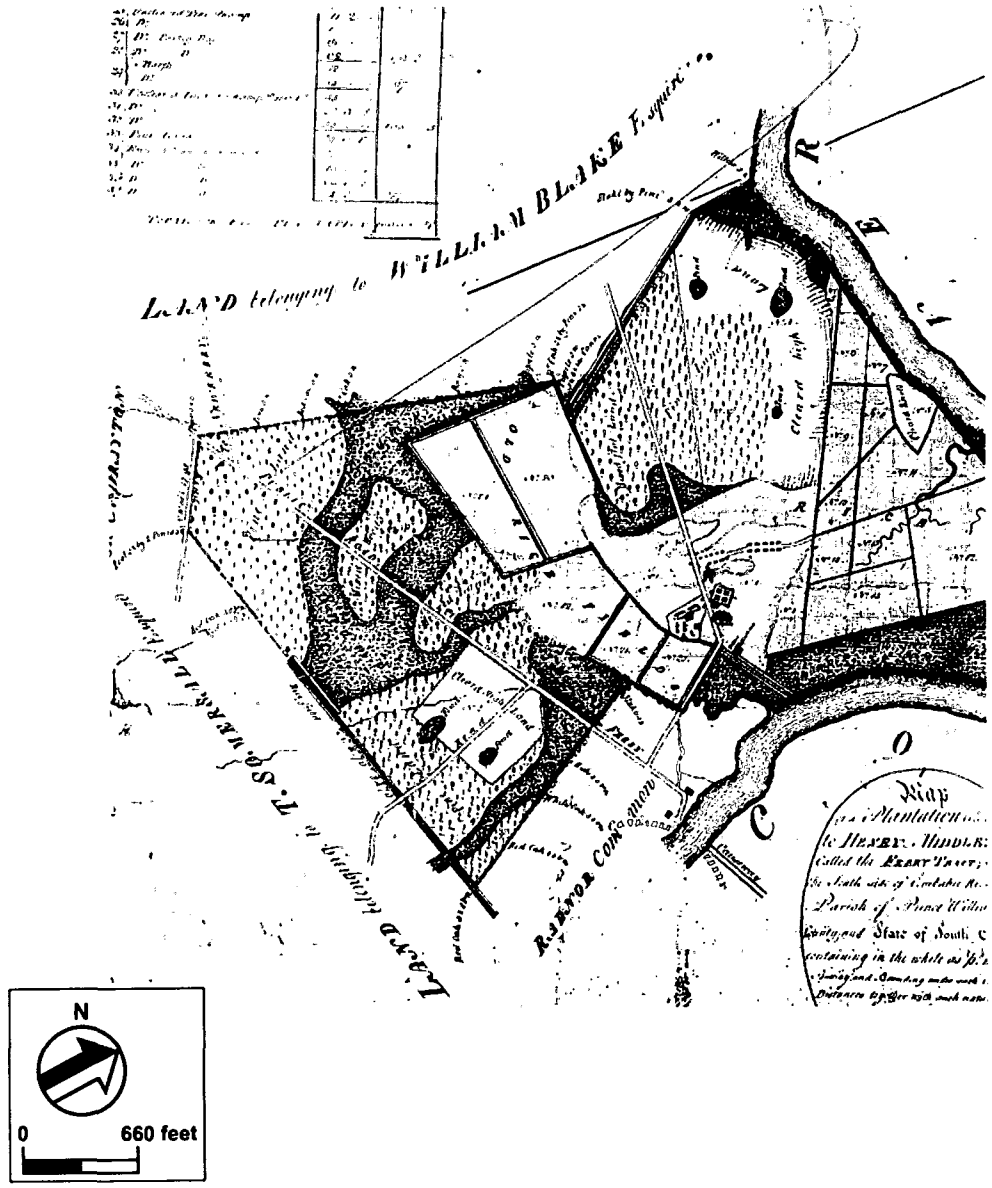

Figure 14. *Plat of a Plantation of Henry Middleton, Called the 'Ferry Tract,' Surveyed by John Goddard,* 1795 (courtesy of South Carolina Historical Society, Call No. 32-39-14).

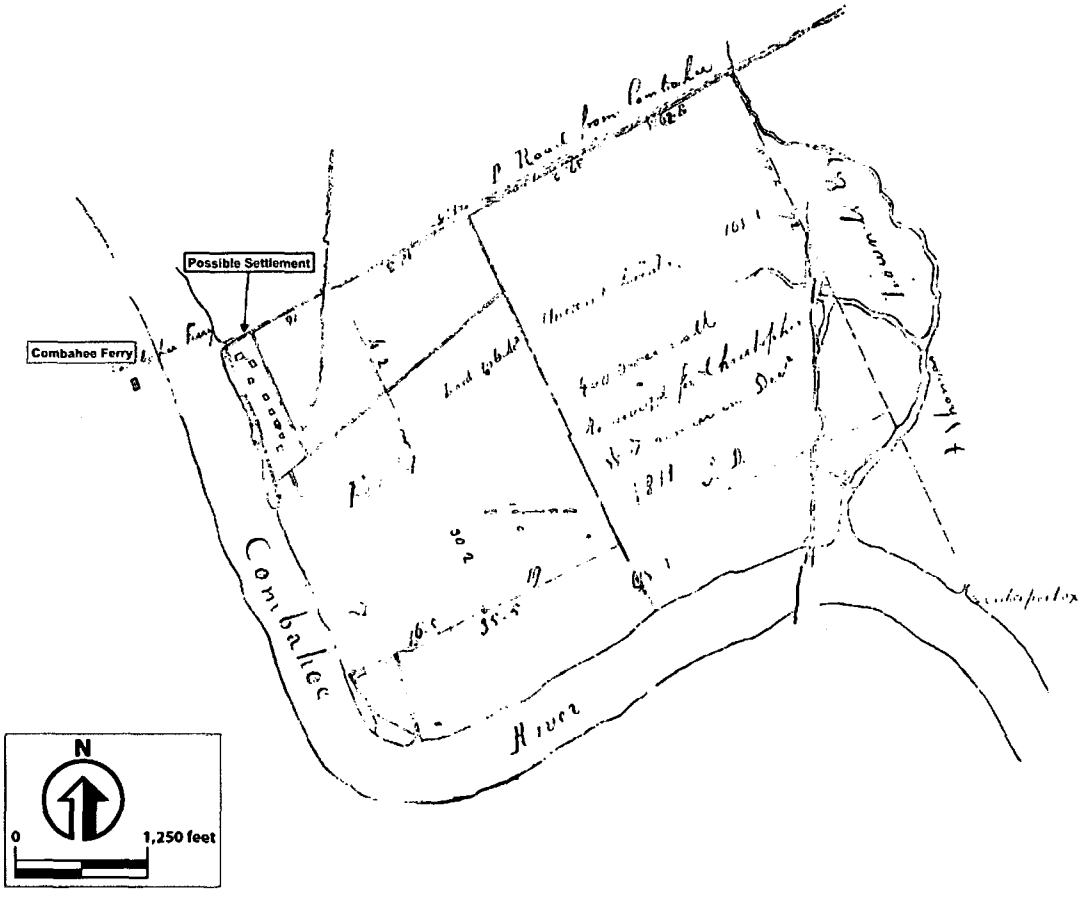

Figure 15. 1811/1812 plat showing Christopher Williamson's plan of 400 acres near the Combahee Ferry (McCrady Plat 6246).

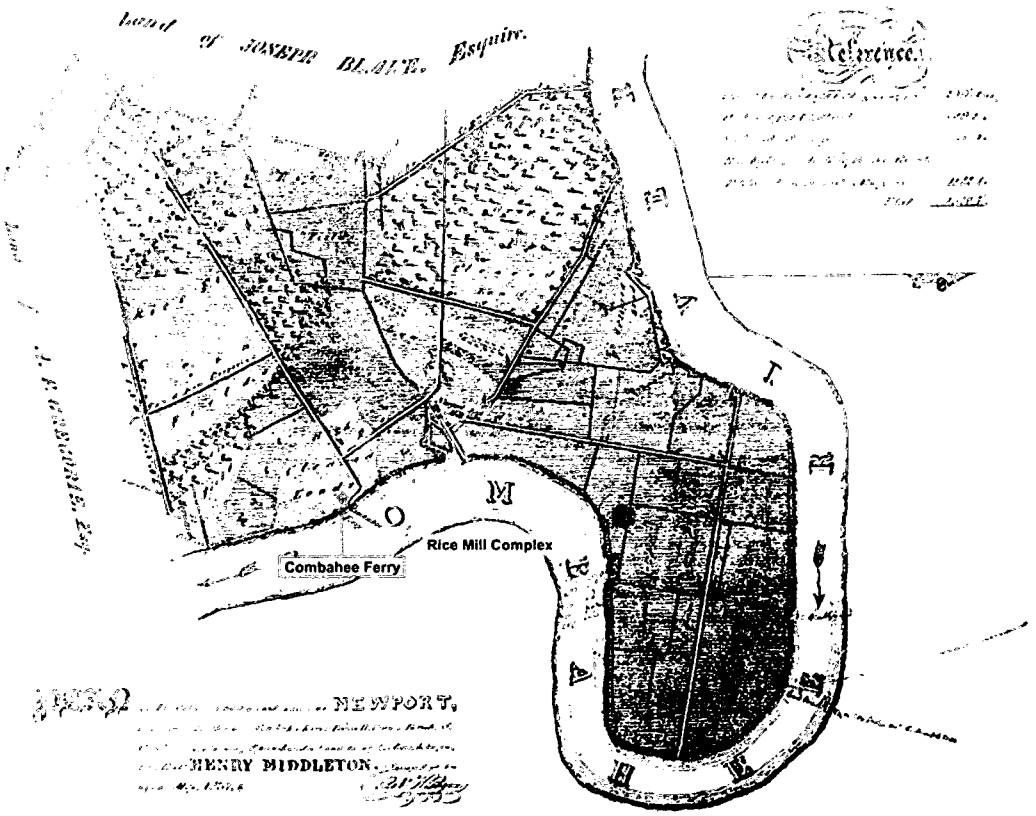

Figure 16. 1837 plat of Newport Plantation (courtesy of SCDAH, Series: L10005, Reel: 0008, Plat: 0530).

the ferry site. However, because of the scale of this map, it is impossible to determine the building's exact location.

During the establishment of the Charleston & Savannah Railroad in the 1850s, one of the options for the laying of the tracks was along an alignment now covered by U.S. Highway 17 and across the Combahee Ferry. Figure 17

presents an 1856 map showing the location of the Charleston & Savannah Railroad. Of interest is the blue line that represents some of the principal experimental lines. Also, the map shows what appear to be rice fields in the project area and settlements of Newport and other plantations.

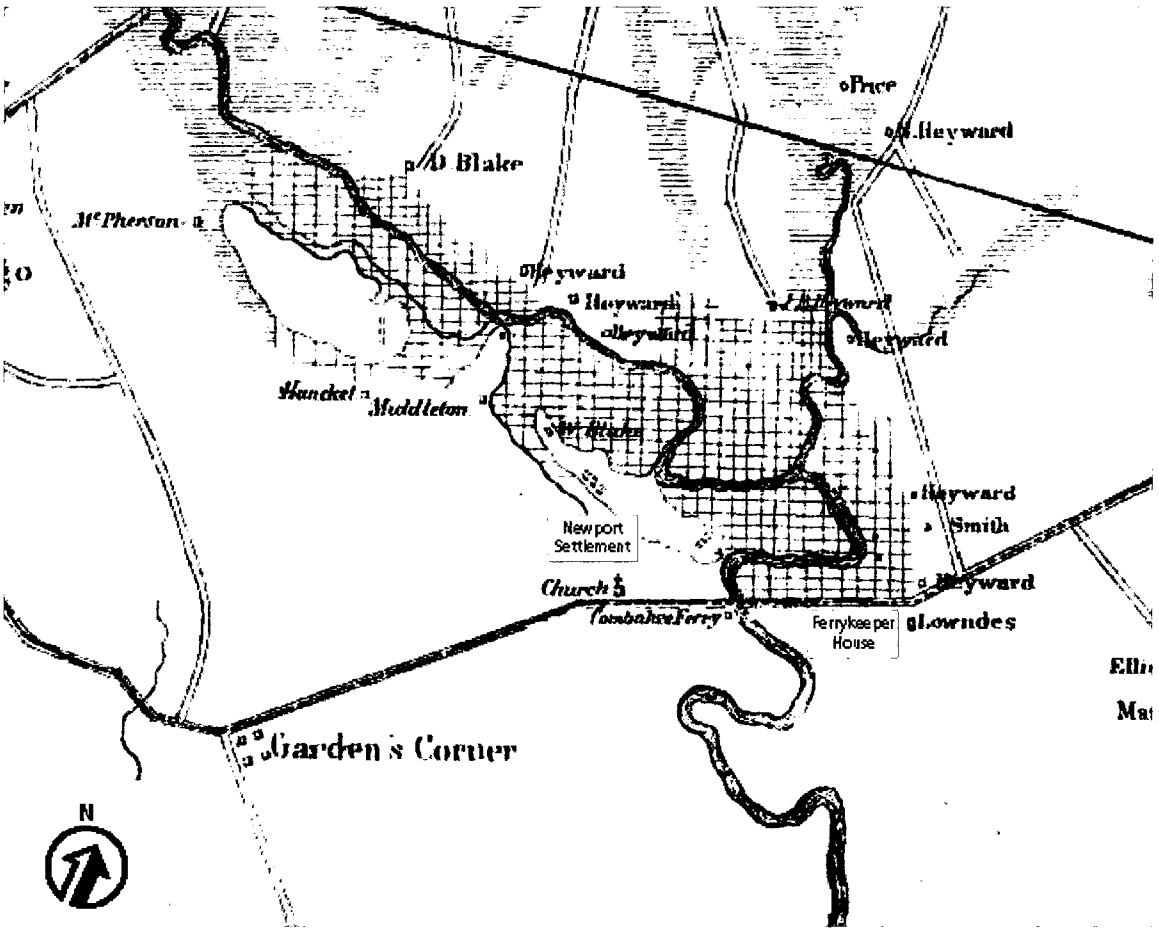

Figure 17. A portion of the *Map showing the location of the Charleston & Savannah R.R. May, 1856* (Walker, Evans & Co. 1856), showing the Combahee Ferry and neighboring plantations.

The Last Chapter in the Saga of a Historic Ferry, 1872-1954

In 1872, the General Assembly granted a fourteen-year charter for the Combahee Ferry to Arthur Middleton and his heirs and assigns. The tolls for the charter also required that Arthur Middleton (and his heirs or assigns) maintain "one or more good, substantial ferry boats, together with a suitable rope or chain" at the ferry site (Table 13). In addition, the charter required that children attending school and voters traveling to and from the polls on election day were not required to pay ferriage. In March 1874, the General Assembly changed the charter by striking out Arthur Middleton's name wherever it occurred and inserting in its place the name of Henry A. Middleton.[37]

In 1917, the General Assembly passed local laws to continue the operation of the Combahee Ferry. The highway commissioner of Colleton County was required to provide a free ferry over the Combahee River, where a Mr. Jaycock had operated a toll ferry. The General Assembly appropriated

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[37] South Carolina General Assembly, *Acts and Joints Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1871-'72* (Columbia, SC: Republican Printing Company, State Printers, 1872), 71; South Carolina General Assembly, *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Special Session of 1873 and Regular Session of 1873-74* (Columbia, SC: Republican Printing Company, State Printers, 1874), 729.

Table 13. Rates for the Combahee Ferry in 1873[38]

Item Transported	**Ferriage**
For man and horse	Ten cents
For each horse, led, for each head of cattle, for each foot passenger	Five cents
For each wagon, drawn by four horses	Seventy-five cents
For each wagon and carriage, drawn by two horses	Fifty cents
For each wagon, drawn by one horse, for each gig or sulky, for each cart and horse	Twenty-five cents
For each hog, sheep, or goat	Three cents
For long or double ferriage[39]	Double the amount of the above rates

$200 for construction of a new flat and $150 to pay the ferryman's salary. The law required that Beaufort County raise the same amount of money and that the ferry would be the joint property of Colleton and Beaufort counties.[40]

On November 8, 1924, the South Carolina Highway Department began construction of a concrete and steel bridge over the Combahee River. Sanford & Brooks and Roanoke Iron & Bridge Company served as the contractors for

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[38] South Carolina General Assembly, Acts and Joints Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1871-'72, 71.

[39]Double ferriage was used when the tide was in and the river was wider.

[40] South Carolina General Assembly, Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1917, 426.

the construction of the bridge. According to the annual reports, the contractors completed two percent of the work in 1924, eighty-eight percent of the work in 1925, and eight percent of the work in 1926, and completed the final two percent of the work on April 5, 1927. The highway department had estimated the construction cost of the bridge at $161,789.39; however, the actual construction cost was only $146,896.01.[41] This bridge brought an end to the long history of ferry operations at the site.

With the expansion of the highways in the state after World War II, the highway department constructed a new bridge over the Combahee Ferry in the mid-1950s. In 1954, McMeekin Construction Company received a contract to

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[41] South Carolina State Highway Department, Annual Report of the South Carolina State Highway Department to the General Assembly for the Fiscal Year Ending 31 December 1925 (Columbia, SC: None Given, 1926); South Carolina State Highway Department, Annual Report of the South Carolina State Highway Department to the General Assembly for the Fiscal Year Ending 31 December 1926 (Columbia, SC: None Given, 1927); South Carolina State Highway Department, Annual Report of the South Carolina State Highway Department to the General Assembly for the Fiscal Year Ending 31 December 1927 (Columbia, SC: None Given, 1928).

replace the earlier bridge. The company completed the bridge in 1956 for a cost of $103,797.69.[42]

[42] South Carolina State Highway Department, Annual Report of the South Carolina State Highway Department to the General Assembly for July 1, 1954-June 30, 1955 (Columbia, SC: None Given, 1955); South Carolina State Highway Department, Annual Report of the South Carolina State Highway Department to the General Assembly for July 1, 1955-June 30, 1956 (Columbia, SC: None Given, 1956).

CHAPTER IX

SOUTH CAROLINA'S LAST FERRIES, 1949-1979

Following the Great Depression and World War II, the Lowcountry of South Carolina, and the rest of the South, had dramatically changed. Historian David Goldfield credits the influx of federal spending in the South especially during the New Deal and World War II with the transformation and integration of the South into the national economy.[1] This transformation was apparent in the Lowcountry with the expansion of the Charleston Naval Base, the creation of the city of North Charleston to house workers at the base during World War II, and the development of Myrtle Beach and the rest of the Grand Strand as a tourist destination.[2] These changes included the

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[1] David R. Goldfield, *Cotton Fields and Skyscrapers: Southern City and Region* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

[2] Fritz P. Hamer, "A Southern City Enters the Twentieth Century: Charleston, Its Navy Yard, and World War II, 1940-1948" (Ph.D. diss., University of South Carolina, 1998); Dean Thrift Sinclair, "'A New Town Will Appear on Charleston Neck': North Charleston and the Creation of the New South Garden City" (Ph.D. diss., Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 2001); Barbara F. Stokes, *Myrtle Beach: A History, 1900-1980* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2007). The military buildup for World War II also expanded the Marine

expansion of the transportation network for the region. However, even with all of the new steel and concrete bridges across the many rivers of the Lowcountry, two ferries were still present.

In 1949, the South Carolina State Highway Department still operated two ferries in Georgetown County. The cable-powered ferries remained almost unchanged from the technology of the 1700s. The ferryboats were described as "a barge with hinged approaches on either end. When the flat noses into its slip, these hinged platforms rise or fall … to make a runway for vehicles."[3]

As during the early 1700s, African American laborers operated the Georgetown ferries; however, they now worked for the highway department rather than plantation masters. Because of the need to continually operate the ferry, the ferrymen worked 12-hour shifts and lived at the site in quarters provided by the highway department. Their pay was $126 a month.[4]

Corps base at Parris Island, near Beaufort, South Carolina, and created the Myrtle Beach Air Force Base.

[3] Walter S. McDonald, "2 of 3 Hand Powered Cable 'Flats' in State Are in Georgetown County," *The News and Courier*, April 4, 1949. On file, South Carolina Room, Charleston County Public Library, Charleston, South Carolina.

By 1953, the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) operated three ferries statewide: one in Georgetown County, one across the Catawba River at York, and one near Barnwell. The highway department took over operation of the Catawba Ferry after World War II, and Early B. M. Brown, a Catawba Indian, served as the ferryman. As in other examples, the state highway department provided Brown a small house at the landing. The Catawba Ferry did not have a regular schedule and operated only as needed. Based on an interview, it appears that Brown also sold small pottery pieces at the ferry site as a means to supplement his income.[5] Even in modern times, ferries remained places where ferry operators could sell items to travelers.

By 1963, only the South Island Ferry in Georgetown County, which carried vehicles and passengers across the Intracoastal Waterway, remained in operation. T. R. Fulton and Ervin Long, who lived in houses on the island, operated the ferry.[6] The last remaining ferry continued the long

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[4] Ibid.

[5] "Bridge to Replace Old Catawba Ferry," *The News and Courier*, November 12, 1956. On file, South Carolina Room, Charleston County Public Library, Charleston, South Carolina.

tradition of rope ferries begun in the early 1700s. The South Island ferry had a

> single cable stretched across the "Government Cut" on reels and could be lowered to allow boats to pass. The only other "machinery" used was a stout oak limb about four inches in diameter with a notch cut near the end. The operator would hook this notch on the cable and twist it enough to grip the wire. Then he would walk backward in the friction he wished to propel the ferry.[7]

The crossing took up to thirty minutes, depending on the currents and weather patterns.

Like the change from rope ferries to steam ferries in the 1800s, the South Island Ferry adapted to new technology and received a new seven-and-a-half-horsepower gasoline engine to operate the cables. As SCDOT operated the South Island Ferry, it made many improvements out of safety concerns. For example, it installed warning lights and

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[6] Walter McDonald, "Ancient Mode of Travel Still Used in Georgetown," *The News and Courier*, October 21, 1963, 8-A; "Bridge to Replace Old Catawba Ferry," *The News and Courier*, November 12, 1956. On file, South Carolina Room, Charleston County Public Library, Charleston, South Carolina.

[7] McDonald, "Ancient Mode of Travel Still Used in Georgetown," 8-A.

sirens approximately half a mile from either end of the ferry along the river to alert small craft of the ferry.[8]

In 1977, SCDOT, which operated the ferry, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which oversees the Intracoastal Waterway, decided to close the South Island Ferry after a Maryland man, John W. Fulton, was beheaded by the cables that ran the ferry while he was traveling the Intracoastal Waterway in 1974. Georgetown County Sheriff Woodrow Carter commented that the ferry also had several minor accidents, although none were life-threatening. In December 1977, cables from the ferry resulted in the death of a Florence County man, Charles L. Faust.[9] By February 1978, the Corps of Engineers ordered the South Island Ferry to cease operations, thus ending the last state-operated ferry in South Carolina.[10]

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[8] Luke West, "Last State-Owned Ferry Stills Runs at Georgetown," *The State*, August 23, 1970. On file, South Carolina Room, Charleston County Public Library, Charleston, South Carolina.

[9] W. Clark Surratt, "Suit Likely Will Cause Closing of South Island Ferry," *The State*, September 26, 1977. On file, South Carolina Room, Charleston County Public Library, Charleston, South Carolina; W. Clark Surratt, "Second Fatality May Prompt Officials to Discontinue Ferry," *The State*, December 13, 1977, 1-B.

[10] Jack Leland, "South Island Ferry," *The Post*, February 20, 1978. On file, South Carolina Room, Charleston County Public Library, Charleston, South Carolina.

CHAPTER X

THE IDENTIFICATION, PRESERVATION, AND COMMEMORATION OF FERRY SITES IN SOUTH CAROLINA

Ferries played an important role in the development of South Carolina; however, until recently, preservationists have all but ignored ferries in the preparation of National Register nominations and state historic markers, two indicators of the perceived importance of a historical resource in South Carolina. Compared to those in neighboring states, South Carolina's preservation community has been slow to identify ferries and ferry-related resources in the state. Many of the important ferry sites in South Carolina do not have a historical marker to illustrate their importance. Many plantations that included ferries in their operations do not have the landings listed in their National Register nominations.

South Carolinians have remembered historic ferries and their contributions to the state's transportation history in other ways, including the naming of roads and businesses after historic ferries. Also, current cultural resources management work at the Combahee Ferry in Beaufort County

illustrates a new emphasis on the identification and preservation of a ferry site.

Using examples from South Carolina and other states, this chapter explores issues related to the identification, preservation, and commemoration of ferry sites in South Carolina.

Identification of Ferries in South Carolina

Like that of many other historic resources, the identification of ferry sites usually occurs as part of the Section 106 review process or a SCIAA-sponsored research project. Based on cartographical and archival records, archaeologists have located hundreds of landings on aerial photographs, terrain analyses, and historic property plats, yet archaeologists have only conducted archaeological investigations on a handful of those sites.[1] Archaeologists have studied several of the few extant significant ferry

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[1] Beard, "Good Wharves and Other Conveniences", 65; Errante, "Waterscape Archaeology," 33. Leland Ferguson and David Babson, *Survey of Plantation Sites along the East Branch of Cooper River: A Model for Predicting Archaeological Site Location* (Columbia: South Carolina Institute of Anthropology and Archaeology, 1986) presented a predictive model for the Cooper River and identified several possible ferry sites.

sites in the Lowcountry.[2] The major ferries investigated in the Lowcountry include Milton Ferry in Mount Pleasant, Strawberry Ferry in rural Berkeley County, Bonneau's Ferry and Ashley Ferry in Charleston, and Combahee Ferry in Beaufort County.

In 1993, Brockington and Associates investigated Milton Ferry in Mount Pleasant as part of a compliance survey. The company did not investigate any of the underwater or intertidal resources, and because the owner did not go forward with development, no data recovery occurred at the site.[3] The survey revealed that the site had a tavern and stables; however, Brockington did not examine any of the landings to determine if they were used for a ferry.

Two years later, William Barr prepared his extensive study of Strawberry Ferry in Berkeley County.[4]

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[2] Barr, "Strawberry Ferry and Childsbury Towne," 92-93.

[3] Eubanks, Bailey, and Poplin, *Cultural Resources Survey of the Silverman Tract, Charleston County, South Carolina;* Ralph Bailey Jr., "Milton's Ferry: Mount Pleasant's First Connector," in *Mount Pleasant's Archaeological Heritage; Proceedings of a Symposium Held at Lynch Hall, Dunes West, Mount Pleasant, September 21, 1996,* ed. Amy Thompson McCandless (Mount Pleasant, SC: City of Mount Pleasant, 1996), 1-4.

[4] Barr, "Strawberry Ferry and Childsbury Towne."

Archaeologists have also studied the Ashley Ferry (38CH1506), established in 1711 on the Ashley River, and Bonneau's Ferry (38BK1267), established in 1712 on the eastern branch of the Cooper River. Neither of these sites is well preserved. The two landings associated with Ashley Ferry are in poor condition. Phosphate mining operations destroyed the southeastern landing of Ashley Ferry. Also, the landing and the ridge location of the Ashley Ferry town were subdivided into a residential housing development known as Ashley Town Village. Interestingly, during the survey of the Ashley River, SCIAA archaeologists contacted the developers, who indicated they had no knowledge of the historic ferry site.[5] The site of Bonneau's Ferry also is in poor condition, with both the northeastern and southwestern landings poorly preserved.[6]

In addition to the actual ferry sites, several abandoned ferryboats lie at the Brown's Ferry site (38GE57), and five wooden plantation barges, one possibly a large ferryboat, lie at the Laurel Hill Plantation landing

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[5] Michael O. Hartley, *The Ashley River: A Survey of Seventeenth Century Sites,* Research Manuscript Series 192 (Columbia: South Carolina Institute of Anthropology and Archaeology, 1984), 62-63, 84; Barr, "Strawberry Ferry and Childsbury Towne," 99.

[6] Barr, "Strawberry Ferry and Childsbury Towne ," 99.

(38GE251) on the Waccamaw River.[7] These boats offer underwater archaeologists opportunities for future studies of ferryboats.

Since the 1980s, new bridge projects eliminated several opportunities to study former ferry sites. For example, as part of the cultural resources survey of the replacement of the U.S. Highway 21 bridge, SCIAA recommended an underwater survey for the right-of-way and surrounding environs due to the potential for abandoned watercraft associated with the Port Royal Ferry. For unknown reasons, that plan was never implemented.[8]

As part of intensive cultural resources survey and archaeological testing of 38BU1216, part of the U.S. Highway 17 Widening Project in Beaufort and Colleton counties, Brockington and Associates staff identified the Combahee Ferry Historic District. While the project included the point at which U.S. Highway 17 crosses the

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[7] Beard, "Good Wharves and Other Conveniences," 66.

[8] Spirek and Amer, *The Port Royal Sound Survey,* 137; Joseph L. Tippett and Wayne D. Roberts, "Archaeological Survey of U.S. Route 21 Whale Branch Bridge Replacement, Beaufort County, South Carolina," letter report, 1988, South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina, Columbia, 11.

Ashepoo River, the site of the ferry, the archaeologists did not locate any remains of the ferry at the site.[9]

Development of Underwater Site Database

During the early 1990s, the SCIAA Underwater Archaeology Division (UAD) prepared a database that included site types such as ferry landings, plantation landings, forts, mills, and shipyards. By the late 1990s, this database contained 859 total shipwrecks, plantation landings, ferry landings, bridges, artifact scatters, causeways, wharves, mills, shipyards, and forts. Based on the chart, ferries were approximately one to two percent of the database but represented approximately sixteen percent of the total underwater sites in the database.[10]

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[9] Kristrina A. Shuler, Eric C. Poplin, Edward Salo, Suzanne Johnson, Jason Ellerbee, Eric D. Sipes, and Emily Jateff, *Intensive Cultural Resources Survey and Archaeological Testing of Site 38BU1216, US Highway 17 Widening Project, Gardens Corner to Jacksonboro, Beaufort and Colleton Counties, South Carolina* (Mount Pleasant, SC: Brockington and Associates, 2007).

[10] Lynn Harris, *Database Management Report on the South Carolina Hobby Diver Licensing System and Submerged Site Inventory, 1996 Management Report: Part II,* Research Manuscript Series No. 223 (Columbia: South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, 1996), np, 6, 12.

SCIAA originally designed the site database as a compliance tool to assist its staff in more systematic management of known and potential submerged sites. The database has evolved over time and can be effectively utilized and refined to answer the UAD's specific management questions. A useful exercise might be to take a cross section of sites, which were entered using historical information and maps, to test the predictive ability of the database.[11]

Identification of Ferries in Nearby States

South Carolina is not the only southern state to under-study ferry sites. Georgia has a similar historic pattern of ferry development, but researchers have not conducted adequate study of its ferries. Archaeologists from New South Associates, Inc., commented that Georgia's

> transportation systems were integral to the development of Georgia and are prevalent throughout the state. Not surprisingly, transportation was an element of virtually every site which has been discussed to date in this context.[12]

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[11] Ibid., 12.

[12] J. W. Joseph, Theresa M. Hamby, and Catherine S. Long, *Historical Archaeology in Georgia* (Stone Mountain, GA: New South Associates, 2004), 173.

In a recent study of archaeological sites in Georgia, New South Associates identified 231 transportation-related sites recorded in the state, and of that number, only four sites were river-ferry sites.[13] Needless to say, the state archaeologist argued that ferries and causeways were "transportation site types that have not yet been considered in the historical archaeology of Georgia."[14] New South Associates archaeologists suggested that other sites may contain elements of ferries. For example, shoals, often the sites of mills, frequently supported other activities such as ferries, bridges, taverns, stores, and towns.[15] Both of these recommendations are probably appropriate for South Carolina as well.

The states in the Chesapeake region have also investigated ferries in the area. Like their South Carolina counterparts, plantation owners and merchants along the

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[13] Ibid., 216. The remaining transportation-related sites in the state included one airport/airstrip, three barges, one boatyard, sixty-nine bridges, two causeways, twenty-five canals or ditches, two culverts, one dredge spoil pile, one jetty, thirty-five piers/landings/pilings or docks, thirty-four railroad stations or tracks, four river ferries, thirty roads, eighteen ships or boats, two stagecoach depots, one trolley, and two walkways.

[14] Ibid., 172. They also advocated the study of shipyards and railroad depots.

[15] Ibid., 113.

rivers of Maryland used ferries and barges to transport their raw materials to the major cities. During the 1994 Maryland Maritime Archeology Program survey of shipwrecks, archaeologists identified two ferries: Wayman's Wharf Barge #1 (18CA104) and Wayman's Wharf Barge #2 (18CA105). Both were ferries that operated between 1860 and 1900.[16]

In 1993 and 1994, the state of North Carolina and the Wilmington District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conducted the Cape Fear-Northeast Cape Fear Rivers Comprehensive Study. Though a review of cartographic references, project historians examined over 145 maps and added them to a computer-generated AutoCAD base map of the project area. In addition to accounts of numerous ship losses, the maps illustrated six ferry crossings, twenty-three fortifications, thirty-five plantations, fifty-four shipyards, and a wide range of related maritime activities.[17]

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[16] Bruce F. Thompson, *The Martinak Boat (CAR-254, 18CA54), Caroline County, Maryland* (Crownsville: Maryland Historical Trust, Office of Archeology, 2005), 5.

[17] Claude Jackson, "The Cape Fear River Comprehensive Survey: Historical and Cartographic Research in Southeastern North Carolina," in *Underwater Archaeology Proceedings from the Society for Historical Archaeology Conference*, ed. Paul Forsythe Johnston (Washington, DC: The Society for Historical Archaeology, 1995), 13.

National Register Nominations of Ferries

A survey of the NRHP-listed properties in South Carolina indicates the scant attention that ferry sites and boats have received. Former Keeper of the Register Carol D. Schull comments that the NRHP "should help us understand and appreciate out heritage and what specific places mean in American history."[18] If that is true, the number of NRHP-listed ferry sites in the state should illustrate their importance to the state's history.[19]

But that is not the case in South Carolina. Granted, several ferry-related properties are listed in South Carolina. The first so designated was the Strawberry Chapel and Town of Childsbury, a former town and ferry site located at the "T" of the Cooper River. According to the nomination, the Town of Childsbury was "an important ferry site," but the statement of significance provides no other

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[18] Carol D. Schull, "Using the National Register of Historic Places," *CRM* 17 (1994), 1.

[19] For a discussion of the online mission of the NRHP, see Beth L. Savage, "Spreading the Word: Fulfilling the National Register's Mission Online," *CRM* 25 (2002): 41-43. As of 2008, SCDAH has digitized all of the NRHP nominations in South Carolina. It also provides examples of photographs and copies of the maps of districts.

discussion of the ferry operations at the site.[20] Also, the nomination neither identified nor discussed the archaeological remains within the ferry district.

At the same time that the state prepared the Strawberry Chapel and Town of Childsbury nomination, SCDAH was preparing the Village of Rockville Historic District nomination. The village of Rockville was an early summer resort in Charleston County. The nomination mentions that the district was "important architecturally, agriculturally, militarily and in the areas of transportation and recreation."[21] William Seabrook, an Edisto Island planter, acquired the tract, established a landing for the Edisto Island Ferry Company, and laid out lots for summerhouses. The nomination highlights the social history of Rockville but also states that "Rockville was one of the main landings for the Edisto Island Ferry Company due to the directness of the land route to Charleston."[22] While the nomination details the importance

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[20] Elias B. Bull, "Strawberry Chapel and Site of Town of Childsbury," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 1972.

[21] Nancy R. Ruhf, "Village of Rockville Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 1972.

[22] Ibid.

of the Edisto Island Ferry Company, the only resource in the nomination related to the ferry operation was the Micah Jenkins House, the ferry house for the Rock Landing and the oldest house in the area. There was no mention of the actual ferry landing or any remains from the ferry in the district.

The Cainhoy Historic District nomination, prepared in 1980, presents the history of a village that developed from a "ferry landing to a small but thriving river port."[23] The authors of the nomination state that the significance of the district is "in its role as an early transportation link between Berkeley County and Charleston."[24] The nominated district includes the How Tavern, which operated in association with the ferry and several buildings in the village. However, like that of the Strawberry Chapel and the Town of Childsbury Historic District, the nomination has no discussion or inclusion of ferry-related archaeological resources.

Gallivants Ferry Historic District in Horry County was placed on the National Register in 2001. The nomination

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[23] W. David Chamberlain, Suzanne Pickens, and John Wells, "Cainhoy Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 1980.

[24] Ibid.

does not include any specific ferry structures but focuses on the Holiday family's tobacco farming.[25]

In the 1990s, SCDAH began work on several large National Register nominations in the Lowcountry, including the areas around the Ashley and Cooper rivers. The nomination for the Ashley River Historic District mentions the importance of bridges and ferries to the development of the area as a means to improve the local economy; however, there are no ferries listed as contributing elements.[26]

A handful of archaeological remains of ferries are listed on the NRHP. For example, Jill Hanson, a National Park Service historian, nominated four pairs of earthen bridge abutments along a road trace at the Congaree Swamp National Monument because of their association with "roads and ferries [built] across the swamp to provide a means of

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[25] Ian Burrow, William Liebeknecht, Damon Tvaryanas, and Cheryl Hendry, *Archaeological Investigations, Replacement of Woodlands Ferry and Facility Improvements, Woodland, Broad Creek and Seaford Hundreds, Sussex County, Delaware* (Trenton, NJ: Hunter Research, 2008), 4-3.

[26] J. Tracy Power, Ian D. Hill, and J. Lee Tippett, "Ashley River Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 1994, 8-8.

transporting produce and livestock to markets in cities such as Charleston."[27]

The documentation of several transportation-related NRHP-listed properties historically associated with ferries does not discuss or list the ferry. For example, the nomination for Ashley River Road, listed on November 22, 1983, states that the resource includes an 11.5-mile section of SC Route 61. The nomination mentions that the road historically terminated at the Ashley River ferry, but the ferry site was not included in the nomination.[28]

The Combahee Ferry Historic District includes eighteen resources: eleven terrestrial and underwater archaeological sites and seven aboveground architectural or landscape features. Elements south of the Combahee River lie on lands owned by Nemours Wildlife Foundation beyond the U.S. Highway 17 right-of-way or the public boat ramp owned by Beaufort County; elements north of the Combahee River are now part of the modern Laurel Spring Plantation. The period of significance for this district is from circa 1700

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[27] Jill Hanson, "Bridge Abutments," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 1996.

[28] Suzanne Pickens Wylie and Norman McCorkle, "Ashley River Road National Register of Historic Places Nomination."

to circa 1930; this represents the period of operation of the ferry. The historic district contains resources associated with four major themes: (1) the development of South Carolina's transportation network, (2) military activities during the Revolutionary War and Civil War, (3) the development of rice plantations, and (4) development of local economic institutions (e.g., taverns/stores).

The Combahee River Historic District, which is a section of the region centered along both sides of the Combahee River, is a remarkably intact landscape. Many historic structures and objects from the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries are still standing, and archaeological remains of settlements, fortifications, and other structures that supported agricultural activity are generally intact. In addition, landscape features such as rice fields, banks, canals, a causeway, roads, and a cemetery, many of them documented on eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century plats and maps, are extant and marked on U.S. Geological Survey topographic maps and aerial photographs. Although the cultural landscape has evolved with changing land uses, the district retains its historic rural setting of banked and ditched marshes and swamps,

upland pine and hardwood forests, narrow tree-lined roads, and river views largely unobstructed by modern development.

Several resources contribute to the development of South Carolina's transportation network at the Combahee Ferry site. Site 38CN256 is the submerged remains of the ferry crossing. Also present near the ferry site is the possible remains of a vessel (38CN255) and several scatters of archaeological materials related to maritime activities or the construction of a historic bridge (38CN19, 38BU2137, and 38BU2138). These sites illustrate the transportation activities that occurred here.

Commemoration of Ferries in South Carolina

While ferries may be identified during CRM surveys, the general public rarely learns of the information. When a survey leads to a historic marker, however, the public typically learns that a significant property is nearby. James B. Jones Jr. of the Tennessee Historical Commission argues that roadside markers and National Register listings are two of the "most visible and easily recognized components of … public history."[29]

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[29] Jones, "An Analysis of National Register Listings and Roadside Historic Markers in Tennessee: A Study of Two History Programs," 19. James W. Loewen, *Lies Across*

As of 2006, South Carolina officials have memorialized very few historic ferry sites with highway markers. A review of the *South Carolina Highway Historical Marker Guide* lists only a handful of markers that highlight important ferries in the Lowcountry. Several of the markers were the efforts of local historical groups. The Dr. Henry Woodward Chapter of the South Carolina Society Daughters of the American Colonists erected the Britton's Ferry marker in 1971. The Three Rivers Historical Society erected the Witherspoon's Ferry marker in 1979 and the Potato Ferry marker in 1989.[30]

Historic place names often document the prior existence of a ferry. Names are important archaeological clues.[31] On a superficial level, place names can provide evidence of the possible location of archaeological sites. Archaeologist Jane McIntosh states, "A name may show the

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America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999), 25-28 provides a good survey of the importance of historical markers.

[30] Alexia Jones Helsley, *South Carolina Highway Historical Marker Guide* (Columbia: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1992): 75, 124, 193.

[31] See Christer Westerdahl, "On Oral Tradition and Place Names," *The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 9 (1980), 311-329.

purpose of a feature was remembered … long after it fell into disuse."[32]

Several important modern roads in the Lowcountry maintain their links to the ferries of the past through their names. For example, Clements Ferry Road ended at the ferry on Daniel Island and was one of the principal routes to the north from Charleston. Mathis Ferry and Bee's Ferry roads also are in Charleston County. Some commercial enterprises use the old ferry names as well. Hibben Ferry Apartments is located near the site of the old ferry in Mount Pleasant.

While ferries have played an important role in the development of South Carolina, preservationists have all but ignored them in terms of National Register nominations and state historic markers. The preservation communities in Virginia and Georgia have also been slow to act, while Tennessee has done a better job in identification and commemoration. South Carolinians should do more to identify these significant properties. Chapter XI provides a plan for expanding the identification and commemoration of ferries in the Palmetto State.

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[32] Jane McIntosh, *The Practical Archaeologist: How We Know What We Know About the Past* (New York: Facts on File, 1999), 40.

CHAPTER XI

PRESERVATION PLAN FOR FERRIES IN SOUTH CAROLINA

The history of ferries in South Carolina is extensive and contributes to the political, economic, social, transportation, and military history of the Palmetto State. Despite the significance of ferry sites, only a few examples of preservation and interpretation plans for maritime-related resources exist.[1]

To adequately identify, assess, preserve, and interpret ferries and ferry-related resources, I am proposing a multi-phase program that will use the existing historic preservation infrastructure of the state, but focus on ferry-related resources in a way that will allow professionals to better understand ferries and the public to better appreciate their significance.

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[1] For examples of maritime-related preservation plans, see Robin Hubbell, "Historic Georgia Lighthouses: A Study of Their History and an Examination of Their Present Physical State for Historic Preservation Purposes" (Master's thesis, University of Georgia, 1988), Eric James Fournier, "The Renewal of River Street: A Geographic Examination of Waterfront Revitalization Efforts in Savannah, Georgia" (Ph.D. diss., University of Georgia, 1995), and Stefan Claesson, "Sustainable Development of Maritime Cultural Heritage in the Gulf of Maine" (Ph.D. diss., University of New Hampshire, 2008).

Phase I: Identification of Ferries in South Carolina

The first step is to identify what ferry sites remain. The first resource in the identification of ferries is cartographic information, which can locate the sites of former ferries. Based on previous studies in other states, historians and archaeologists have demonstrated that maps show the layout of waterways, as well as the

> location of landings, plantations, ferries, docks and wharves, forts, navigation routes, and of course, geographical features of the surrounding islands, and submerged components of channels, sandbars, and shoals."[2]

In addition to larger maps, plats of individual properties and associated deeds sometimes contain the locations of mills, dams, ferries, and other water-related sites.[3] The South Caroliniana Library, South Carolina Department of Archives and History Search Room, South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, South Carolina Historical Society, College of Charleston Library, South Carolina State Library, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill Library, University of Michigan Library, New

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[2] Spirek and Amer, *The Port Royal Sound Survey, Phase One*, 84.

[3] Elliott, *Georgia's Inland Waters*, 69.

York City Public Library, Library of Congress, and various public libraries in South Carolina all contain collections of Lowcountry maps that illustrate many of the ferries in the state.[4]

A first step in the cartographical survey of the state has already been finished. In the early 1990s, the Chicora Foundation conducted cartographical surveys of Beaufort and Georgetown counties. These studies used historic maps to locate potential archaeological sites, including ferry sites.[5] It would be beneficial for similar studies to be conducted for Berkeley, Charleston, Colleton, Horry, Jasper, and Williamsburg counties to provide the location of potential Lowcountry ferry sites.

These historic maps could serve as the basis for a new Geographic Information Systems (GIS) layer that would assist CRM professionals in the identification and study of

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[4] Other important maps of South Carolina are discussed in Worthington Chauncey Ford, "Early Maps of Carolina," *Geographical Review* 16 (April 1926), 264-273, and Cummings, *The Southeast in Early Maps*.

[5] Trinkley and Hacker, *Cartographic Survey of Historic Sites in Beaufort County, South Carolina;* Michael Trinkley and Debi Hacker, *Cartographic Survey of Historic Sites in Georgetown County, South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: Chicora Foundation, 1993).

ferry sites.[6] This layer should be placed on ArchSite, South Carolina's online cultural resource information system. ArchSite contains all of the state's archaeological and aboveground cultural resources. ArchSite provides online access to a comprehensive source of cultural resource information and creates a digital process for archaeological site recordation.[7] Before conducting any cultural resources survey in the state, CRM professionals consult ArchSite to identify any documented cultural resources within the project area.

As mentioned above, Chicora Foundation has completed similar work for two counties in the state; preparation of a similar ferry-related cartographical survey could be accomplished by graduate students from the College of Charleston or the University of South Carolina. The College of Charleston offers a master's degree in environmental science that focuses on the use of GIS and other remote-sensing technology. Recent masters' theses from the program have included topics related to archaeology and CRM issues.

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[6] For a discussion of the use of historic maps in archaeology, see Nancy S. Seasholes, "On the Use of Historical Maps," in *Documentary Archaeology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 92-118.

[7] http://archsite.cas.sc.edu/sciaainfo/Overview.htm. Accessed December 24, 2008.

Also, the University of South Carolina's anthropology and public history programs might be the source for students who could utilize this project as part of their thesis research.

Phase II: Reexamination of SCIAA Site Files

While archaeologists have recorded some ferry sites as archaeological sites, that information is not complete. Many times archaeologists recorded ferry sites as regular river landings, or did not examine the other side of the river to see if ferry remains exist.[8] To correct these records, SCIAA should have a graduate research assistant reexamine the site forms for archaeological sites located near ferry sites that appear on the cartographical GIS layer prepared in Phase I. Using archival materials such as *Mills' Atlas: Atlas of the State of South Carolina, 1825; Statistics of South Carolina Including Its Natural, Civil, and Military History, General and Particular;* and Volume 9 of *The Statutes of the State of South Carolina*, the student

[8] Keith Derting, interview, Informal Discussion, May 2008.

could amend the site forms to indicate that a site might contain a portion of a ferry complex.[9]

Phase III: Field Reconnaissance of Potential Ferry Sites

Using the cartographical GIS layer prepared in Phase I and the revised site forms prepared in Phase II, SCIAA personnel should conduct reconnaissance of potential ferry sites along Lowcountry rivers. From a boat (if they do not have right-of-entry), the archaeologists should be able to determine if the site has retained any integrity or if it has been disturbed by the construction of a bridge or other activities. After the reconnaissance, new archaeological site forms or site form updates should be prepared for the sites and included in the cartographical GIS layer prepared in Phase I.[10]

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[9] Robert Mills, *Mills' Atlas: Atlas of the State of South Carolina, 1825* (Easley, SC: Southern Historical Press, 1980); Robert Mills, *Statistics of South Carolina Including Its Natural, Civil, and Military History, General and Particular* (Charleston, SC: Hurlbut and Lloyd, 1826); McCord, ed., *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. IX.*

[10] This methodology for identifying ferry sites from the water corresponds to the techniques in Wayne, "Burning Brick: A Study of a Lowcountry Industry." She identified many brick kiln sites along the rivers of the Lowcountry from the water.

Phase IV: Preparation of a National Register Multi-Property Cover Form for Ferries

Because of the potential for numerous ferry sites and ferry-related properties in South Carolina, one of the best techniques to manage ferry-related historic properties would be for SCDAH and SCIAA to prepare a National Register Multiple Property Nomination (MPN) that addresses historic ferry sites, ferries, and ferry-related resources as a distinct and significant property type. Then, where possible, they could begin the process of nominating eligible individual sites to the NRHP. Erika Martin Seibert, an archeologist with the National Park Service, argues that

> The Multiple Property Submission … is an under-used nomination format that provides valuable contexts for current historical and archeological research and for public outreach opportunities such as inclusion in National Register educational programs like Teaching with Historic Places lesson plans and the National Register travel itineraries. These documents may be used as frameworks for documentation, assessment, education, and eligibility decisions.[11]

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[11] Erika Martin Seibert, "Multiple Property Documentation for Planning and Interpreting Archeological Resources," *CRM* 25 (2002): 30.

The use of the MPN is not new in identifying and assessing ferry sites, ferries, and ferry-related resources. MPNs have greatly increased the usefulness of the NRHP as a unique source of information about historic properties in the United States. Historian Linda McClelland states that using an MPN provides "a formal structure that could be used throughout the preservation process in diverse activities from survey to rehabilitation or interpretation."[12] The document emphasizes "connecting historic properties and historic themes and defining the characteristics of historic places."[13] An MPN developed before a survey was complete could later be expanded or modified as new information was gathered and as new properties were identified. Finally, the cover form is flexible to meet the practical needs of sponsors and the existing framework through which preservation decisions are routinely made.[14]

The preparation of a ferry-related MPN will have several benefits to SCDAH, CRM professionals, and public

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[12] Linda Flint McClelland, "Connecting History with Historic Places: The Multiple Property Approach," *CRM* 17 (1994): 8.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid, 8-9.

historians. First, individuals will be able to use the document to nominate and register thematically related historic properties simultaneously and to establish the registration requirements for properties that may be nominated in the future. Second, the MPN will streamline the method of organizing information collected in surveys and research for registration and preservation planning purposes. The National Park Service states, "The form facilitates the evaluation of individual properties by comparing them with resources that share similar physical characteristics and historical associations."[15]

The MPN can also be used as a management tool; the thematic approach may furnish essential information for historic preservation planning because it evaluates properties on a comparative basis within a given geographical area and because it can be used to establish preservation priorities based on historical significance. The focus on significance and priorities will be useful in Section 106 review.

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[15] National Park Service, *Guidelines for Completing National Register of Historic Places Forms, Part B: How to Complete the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Interior, 1999): 2.

In addition to the cover form that will facilitate better identification and assessment of ferry properties and related resources, the research and documentation from an MPN "may serve broader public education uses."[16] Using examples from other states, research from MPN cover forms can be disseminated to the public in "in historical publications, tourist pamphlets, walking tour notes, and educational manuals directed at elementary and secondary school students."[17]

Some of the newer MPNs prepared for larger Lowcountry areas mention ferry properties. For example, the "Historic Resources of the Cooper River, ca. 1670-ca. 1950" Multiple Property Documentation Form discusses ferries as a potential property type. [18] Beyond identifying potential significance, the form does not address ferries along other rivers in the Lowcountry, so a more comprehensive Multiple Property Documentation Form is needed. The form can provide registration requirements not only for ferry boats and

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[16] Ibid, 3.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Andrew Chandler, Valerie Marcil, Tracy J. Power, Stephanie Skelton, Katherine Saunders, Jonathan Poston, and Carl Steen, "Historic Resources of the Cooper River, ca. 1670-ca. 1950," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2002, F-35.

landings, but also for taverns, tavern keepers' houses, warehouses, and other buildings and archaeological remains that might be present at the site. The form's methodology should also include a discussion of viewing the entire waterscape, not just the site.[19]

Phase V: Development of Research Questions for Ferries

As part of the MPN form, archaeologists need a prepared list of research questions to guide their investigations of future ferry sites. While every archaeological site is different, basic guidance is imperative so that when CRM professionals are testing and conducting data recovery at a ferry site, they can focus their fieldwork in a way to ensure that their findings actually are related to significant research questions, thus meeting Criterion D of the National Register criteria of eligibility.

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[19] For discussion of waterscapes, see James R. Errante, "The Significance of Waterscapes in the Context of South Carolina's Tidal River Growing Plantations," in *Critical Approaches to Archaeology and Anthropology, Annual Papers of the University of South Carolina Anthropology and Archaeology Students Association* (Columbia: University of South Carolina , 1989), 74-78, Errante, "Waterscape Archaeology: A Survey for 18th Century Boat Landings," Westerdahl, "The Maritime Cultural Landscape," 5-14, and John R. Stilgoe, *Alongshore* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996).

Early studies of ferries in the South offer some basic research questions. In the mid-1970s, as part of his study of ferries in Tennessee, geographer Tyrel G. Moore Jr. suggested three primary research questions: Where and when were ferries utilized for stream crossings? How did their location and function change through time? What do ferries reveal about the places and routes they serve?[20] These basic questions provide researchers with a fundamental understanding of the history of the ferry site. However, most of these questions can be answered through strictly archival and cartographical resources, and require no archaeological investigations.

SCIAA has been active in the theoretical study of ferries. In 1989, Bradford Botwick prepared a research plan for underwater historic archaeological sites in South Carolina. His research design discussed the various underwater site types, including ferries, and resulted in a set of research questions for ferries. These include:

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[20] Moore, "The Role of Ferry Crossings in the Development of the Transportation Network in East Tennessee, 1790-1974," 1.

1. What is the date of the site?

2. What are the structural characteristics of the site?

3. Where is the site located?
   a. In which geophysical zone?
   b. At what type of river?

4. What structural and artifactual materials are associated with the site, both on land and under water?[21]

Except for the first question, some form of archaeological investigation is necessary to address these questions.

For his study of Strawberry Ferry, William Barr offered additional research questions concerning the relation of ferry sites to settlement patterns. Barr asked:

> Why were these towns established if a slave based plantation economy eliminated the need for settlements? What form did they take? What was the extent of construction? What was their function within

[21] Botwick, "Underwater Historic Archaeological Sites in South Carolina: A Research Plan," 41-42.

> the local areas they served, and is size a viable marker of their significance to the local community?[22]

Research questions about ferries have evolved in the last thirty years, and increasingly they focus on issues of settlement patterns or transportation as demonstrated in the recent MPN for the Cooper River Historic District. Archaeologists from SCDAH prepared research questions about resources associated with transportation in the region. They argued:

> These resources have the potential to yield valuable information about transportation networks and methods from the late seventeenth through the mid-twentieth centuries. Potential topics of interest include the changing technologies associated with roads, canals, railroads, docks, landings, ferries, and ships, boats, barges, and other vessels on the Cooper River, as well as the transportation of inhabitants and goods into, out of, and through the Cooper River region.[23]

The most thorough set of research questions for ferry sites in the South comes from the state of Georgia.[24] Using

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[22] Barr, "Strawberry Ferry and Childsbury Towne," 2.

[23] Chandler et al. "Historic Resources of the Cooper River, ca. 1670-ca. 1950," F-35.

[24] Elliott, *Georgia's Inland Waters*, 83.

that set of research questions as a basis, I suggest the following research questions for ferries:

1. Where are the locations of ferry landings across the state?

2. What types of ferries (pole, hand pulley, generator, etc.) operated in South Carolina in the past?

3. Was ferry construction always largely an individual decision, or did certain models become popular and spread across the state?

4. Was the material used in ferry construction dependent on the type of wood and other resources available in the area, or were specific types of wood and certain materials considered necessary for proper ferry construction?

5. Were ferries in South Carolina constructed by professional boat builders or by laymen?

6. Did ferry construction evolve from the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries?

7. What is the relationship between ferries and communities in terms of location, distance, and period of existence?

8. Which ferry locations operated for the longest period of time?

9. Which operated most recently?

10. How did the construction of bridges impact ferries, and when and why did this occur in various regions of South Carolina?

11. What was the cost of ferry licenses through time, and were ferry operations a profitable venture in South Carolina history?

12. Did ferry licensees have other sources of income in addition to their ferry operation?

13. How did South Carolina legal codes positively or negatively impact ferry operations?

14. What characteristics were typical of ferry landings?

15. Did most ferry landings contain a house or structure for a ferry operator?

Phase VI: Additional Historical Studies of Ferries

Unfortunately, very few ferry crossings are extant within the Lowcountry. Those that do exist are generally in very poor condition and lack integrity.[25] Since there is not a large archaeological sample of sites to utilize for investigations, the importance of historical research at these sites is evident. To understand the individual sites, historians at the universities of the state could focus some of their undergraduate and graduate students' research on the history of individual ferries.

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[25] Barr, "Strawberry Ferry and Childsbury Towne," 92-93.

Phase VII: Dissemination of Ferry Information

I propose the development of a Web site designed specifically to highlight the cultural and historic significance of ferries in South Carolina. The Web site will contain information related to the history of ferries, links to specific open-source records related to ferries such as *Mills' Atlas: Atlas of the State of South Carolina, 1825; Statistics of South Carolina Including Its Natural, Civil, and Military History, General and Particular;* and Volume 9 of *The Statutes of the State of South Carolina*. The Web site can also contain archaeological data, academic papers, and other sources related to ferry investigations. The site can be funded as mitigation for adverse effects on a historic site.

Since the 1990s, historians and educators have been exploring ways to use the expanding reach of the Internet[26] to teach history and the historical method to students. In 1999, historians prepared a white paper for the U.S. Department of Education on how to use technology in the social-science classroom.

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[26] Several articles use the term *World Wide Web* and others use the term *Internet* in reference to the same computer network. For ease of the reader, I use *Internet,* unless it appears differently in a quote or title.

Historian John Lee argues that the Internet has had several important impacts on the study of history. He states that the Internet has made it possible for students to use primary sources to which they normally would not have access. Today primary source materials that were once available only at archives around the world can be accessed by anyone with a computer. Studies by historians show that since the 1990s, both the quality and the quantity of history materials on the Internet have expanded significantly. This new availability of historical primary sources and secondary source interpretation offers new opportunities for teaching history. Historian Mark Tebeau argues that the new materials allow teachers to engage students in creative thinking and analysis. Another benefit of the Internet is that students can publish their history projects. Lee also states that most of the use of the Internet for historical instruction has been at the college level, and that K-12 teachers and students have yet to make full use of computers in the classroom.[27]

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[27] M. DenBeste, "Power Point, Technology and the Web: More Than Just an Overhead Projector for the New Century?" *History Teacher* 36, no. 4 (2003): 491-504; M. Tebeau, "Pursuing E-opportunities in the History Classroom," *Journal of American History* 89, no. 4 (2003): 1489-1494; J. K. Lee, "Digital History in the History/Social Studies Classroom," *History Teacher* 35, no. 4 (2002): 503-517.

In addition to providing primary sources to students, the Internet can also be used to provide virtual history museums (VHMs) that interpret historical events. A VHM can be created by anyone and can present history in different ways. Based on research done in four urban middle-school classrooms, researchers found that students with disabilities made knowledge gains similar to those of honors students, but still did not show signs of gains in historical reasoning based on written essays. This shows that while online instruction is important, it still needs to be paired with regular instruction.[28]

Besides studying the test results, the researchers interviewed the students and teachers about the use of the VHM. The students expressed an increased interest in the VHM and believed that it helped them in understanding the subject. Some of the students who traditionally did not participate in classroom activities participated in the VHM activities. The teachers also stated that students who usually would not ask questions did so with the VHM. It appears from this research that VHM benefits both teachers and students; it provides a new way for teachers to present

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[28] C. M. Oklo, "The Virtual History Museum, A Web-Based Environment for Improving this Instruction," *Journal of Special Education Technology* 21, no. 1 (2006): 48-50.

historical research in a manner that is enjoyable and engaging for students.[29]

Phase VIII: Interpretation of Ferries

After ferries are identified, it is important to provide public interpretation of the historic sites. The interpretation of ferries can also aid heritage tourism. Heritage areas, historical societies, and SCDAH can promote the heritage tourism of the ferries in the state through programs such as the National Register's Online Travel Itinerary, which creates self-guided tours to historic places listed on the National Register, based on text and photographs supplied by the city. Several heritage trails, corridors, etc., in the state of South Carolina have online maps of the area. The South Carolina National Heritage Corridor and the Gullah Geechee National Heritage Corridor, both units of the National Park Service, have significance potential for ferry interpretation due to their shared focus on the cultural landscape.

Whatever type of interpretation plan is developed, it should contain multiple interpretive products and illustrate the many significant aspects of the history of a

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[29] Ibid.

ferry site. As part of Brockington and Associates' mitigation of the Combahee Ferry Historic District, Brockington, SCDOT, and SCDAH prepared a multi-part mitigation strategy that can serve as a model for future interpretation and mitigation of ferry sites.

First, using the research and documentation compiled in the previous work, the partners developed a National Register nomination for the Combahee Ferry Historic District.[30] The Combahee Ferry Historic District is eligible for the NRHP. The historic district includes six terrestrial archaeological sites, three architectural resources, and five submerged archaeological sites. The proposed U.S. Highway 17 Bridge Replacement at the Combahee River (hereafter the Project) would have an adverse effect on the Combahee Ferry Historic District; therefore, Brockington and Associates recommended a multi-part mitigation plan.[31] The National Register nomination dealt

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[30] South Carolina Department of Transportation, Memorandum of Agreement among SCDOT, SCDAH, and Federal Highway Administration related to the Mitigation of the Combahee Ferry Historic District. In the possession of Brockington and Associates.

[31] Edward Salo, "Combahee Ferry Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Documentation Form [Draft], 2009, South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

not only with the Combahee Ferry raid led by Harriet Tubman but also with the historic landscape of the ferry district, including the rice fields, causeway, and other elements.

In addition to preparing the nomination, Brockington archaeologists conducted the data recovery investigations to mitigate adverse effects to 38BU1216. Research questions specifically relevant to the data recovery investigation of 38BU1216 included:

1. How many buildings does the architectural debris at 38BU1216 represent? What is the nature of the former buildings at 38BU1216? Does the architectural debris represent commercial buildings (e.g., tavern or store) or possibly former slave housing from Newport Plantation? How do the size and configuration of the buildings compare to those of similar contemporary buildings in the region?

2. If former building(s) at 38BU1216 are associated with a tavern/inn, how does this dwelling and its artifact assemblage compare

to those encountered at other tavern sites? Was the tavern a center for social activities important to the Ashepoo-Combahee-Edisto Basin as an isolated frontier community?

3. How do the subsistence patterns evidenced at 38BU1216 compare to those of similar sites in the region? What foodstuffs did the occupants of 38BU1216 have access to? How do these foodstuffs reflect the ethnicities and social relations of the former occupants? Do these patterns compare similarly with those of other coastal plantations? Do the ceramic vessels recovered from the site reflect the foodways interpreted from the subsistence remains that are present?

4. Is there evidence of the 1863 Civil War raid at Combahee Ferry, led by Harriett Tubman, in the archaeological record at 38BU1216? Is the loss of Structure 2 or other facilities related to this event?

To support the mitigation of adverse effects by excavation of 38BU1216, Brockington historians conducted additional research of taverns, ferry sites, and Newport Plantation as required to assist in addressing research questions regarding the social, economic, political, and cultural history of the tavern/ferry site. The research included continued examination of Middleton family papers, historic local newspapers, and secondary sources related to the topics. Additional investigations were necessary to mitigate adverse effects to the historic landscape of the Combahee Ferry Historic District as a whole. The historians conducted additional archival research to provide more information regarding the Combahee Ferry. This research provided a comprehensive historical document that addresses several historical questions and themes including the development of ferries in South Carolina; the role of taverns in social, cultural, political, and economic development; the ferry's role in Civil War engagements; and the Tubman/Montgomery raid.

In addition, Brockington and Associates, in consultation with SCDOT and SCDAH, developed a public outreach program concerning the Combahee Ferry Historic District as further mitigation for adverse effects on the

district as a result of the Project. The program includes a multimedia presentation that showcases the important historical themes and events related to the Combahee Ferry Historic District. Significant guiding themes and specific topics associated with each theme for the Combahee Ferry Historic District included:

Transportation, Building a State

- Early Road Networks
- Ferries and Taverns
- Plantation Shipbuilding
- Underwater Archaeology

Antebellum Rice Plantations

- What Is a Plantation
- Rice Technology
- African American Lifeways

Military Maneuvers

- Harriet Tubman
- Defending Charleston
- Earthwork Preservation
- Earthworks and Strategy

Cultural Resource Preservation

- The Combahee Ferry Historic District
- Laws and Legislation
- Being a Good Steward: What the Public Can Do

Members of the History Workshop, a division of Brockington and Associates, suggested five interpretive products. The historians designed the products so that

components of the program complement each other to provide a multimedia presentation of cultural resources, history, and local heritage. The five products include a double-sided historical marker, a double-sided outdoor interpretive sign within a covered kiosk, a traveling panel exhibit, two educational lesson plans for local schools, and a Web site.

The historians worked to design each product as a complete concept that can stand alone as a medium of interpretation. However, the content and overall design of the products was such that, used in combination, they created a complementary and cohesive interpretive program that provides a powerful opportunity to enhance the public's understanding and appreciation of the remarkable history of the Combahee Ferry.

One of the first things to be prepared was interpretive text for a double-sided roadside historical marker. These markers are seen throughout the state and commemorate important places, people, and events. Markers are usually placed in the right-of-way of state highways or public roads. The proposed marker commemorates the events that took place at this location on the Combahee River, particularly the Harriet Tubman raid.

Also, Brockington designed and will fabricate a large 3.5-by-5.5-foot double-sided interpretive panel that includes several of the themes outlined above. One side of the panel presents a general overview of the resources that make up the Combahee Ferry Historic District. The presentation on the other side focuses on transportation and archaeology in the area.

Brockington is also developing a traveling exhibit that includes a three-by-four-foot double-sided panel that can be used to promote and teach. Several of the themes outlined above are being used for this exhibit. One important aspect of this type of exhibit is its ability to be set up and dismantled easily so that it can be used in a variety of venues including libraries, schools, museums, and community centers.

Finally, Brockington proposed to develop and host a six- to eight-page Web site designed specifically to highlight the cultural and historic significance of the Combahee Ferry Historic District. The Web site is planned to include a homepage, several history-specific pages, a CRM page, and a page dedicated to teachers and teacher information including downloadable projects, lessons, and information.

The History Workshop proposed to develop and produce two lesson plans that can be incorporated into the social-studies programs of local schools. Each lesson plan will explore a different topic and be designed for a different grade level. History Workshop staff will work closely with school staff to ensure that the content of each lesson is useful and meaningful to their students. Also, History Workshop staff will ensure that the product is designed in a manner familiar to teachers and their work methods. The lessons may include multimedia presentations, hands-on activities, and Internet research. Lesson topics may focus on understanding the science of archaeology, taking care of our cultural heritage, African American culture, or any of the themes and topics outlined above.

The history of ferries in South Carolina offers public historians the opportunity to use a historic site related to transportation and discuss the political, economic, social, transportation, and military history of the Palmetto State. Ferries also are sites where slavery can be discussed while demonstrating the empowering of the slaves. This proposed plan will provide adequate identification, assessment, preservation, and interpretation of ferries and ferry-related resources, and that will allow professionals

to better understand ferries and the public to better appreciate their significance.

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