



An Archaeological Survey of  
the Parsonage Site (38Ch1660)  
Willtown Plantation

**Archaeological Contributions 32**  
The Charleston Museum  
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*By*

Martha A. Zierden  
Ronald W. Anthony

The Charleston Museum

*Prepared for*

The Knox Family  
The Seymour H. Knox Foundation, Inc.

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## Introduction and Background

Archaeological research at the 'New Willtown Church' site by The Charleston Museum began in May 1997 when work was ongoing at the site of James Stobo's plantation on nearby Willtown Bluff, owned by Hugh Lane, Sr. Based on the description of the site by the Knox family and Mr. Dickie Godley, and research by Dr. Suzanne Linder and Mr. Jack Boineau, the sites on Willtown Plantation were presumed to be those of the church and parsonage. Artifacts were recovered from the church site (38Ch1661) and the presumed parsonage site (38Ch1660). A third site, consisting of a brick scatter and early 18<sup>th</sup> century artifacts, was located in a plowed field south of the parsonage (38Ch1662). Above-ground features and surface artifacts at both the church and the parsonage sites conformed to expectation for such structures. The open area adjacent to the cemetery yielded hand-wrought nails and window glass typical of the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, though the lack of brick from piers was unexpected, and remains unexplained. The parsonage site contained more dramatic above-ground evidence, consisting of a rectangular mound obviously covering a brick foundation. A range of domestic debris, including ceramics, bottle glass, and nails were recovered from the ground surface near the mound (figure 1).

In 2002, the Knox family invited The Charleston Museum back to the parsonage site to continue exploration of this site. A Phase I survey and minimal testing of the structure foundation was proposed. This was scheduled to coincide with the College of Charleston archaeological field school, to be held in the summer of 2003. Museum archaeologists Martha Zierden and Ronald Anthony joined with College of Charleston professor Barbara Borg and 18 undergraduate students to investigate the site. Fieldwork was conducted from May 19 through May 28. The fieldwork included shovel testing and surface collecting of an area measuring 500' by 500', excavation of 5' by 5' test units on the mound, and surface collecting the adjacent site (38Ch1662). The project revealed that the site is domestic, was occupied during the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and is remarkable in its state of preservation.

## Documentary Information

Information on the church and parsonage is summarized in the history of the Willtown Presbyterian church written by Slann Legare Clement Simmons in 1960. Mrs. Simmons was Secretary of the Huguenot Society of South Carolina. This information is also contained in the site report on Willtown research in 1997-1998. (see Chapter 5 of Willtown: An Archaeological and Historical Perspective, 1999).

Following the death of Minister Archibald Stobo in 1741, the Presbyterian Meeting House "at Wilton" stood vacant. The Reverend Archibald Simpson noted in 1754 that a "chapel of ease

had been built in the upper part of the congregation.” Dissention between members in the ‘south district’ who preferred to remain at Willtown, and the ‘north district’ ensued during this time. Reverend Simpson noted continued contention during the subsequent decade, when he and Mr. John Alison served the church during a vacancy. Mr. James Stobo, of the Willtown area, seemed to be a leader of the contentious group.

The new church, “now abuilding” in July 1767, was complete the following month when Mr. Simpson preached a sermon there. He mentions that the new Meeting house was “about four miles from the old one (at Willtown Bluff), and about three miles from the public path (Willtown Road), so that it is very convenient and central; it is a large handsome and very well built house - the pulpit and pews the same which used to be in the old brick meeting house.” The contrasting remark about the ‘old brick’ house suggests the new one was of wood.

The new minister was the Reverend John Maltby from Bermuda, installed in December 1769. Only a year later his daughter and wife died, and Simmons notes that they are buried in the churchyard of the “burnt church”. She cites a manuscript of J.L. Girardeau, which states that “the remains of the ruins and a few grave stones which still stand in tolerable preservation. One of these is the name of John Berkeley, of honored memory, who was one of the deacons of the church, and on another that of Mrs. Maltby...and nearby signs of the place where the parsonage stood.”

Reverend Maltby died one year after his wife and was buried in Dartmouth, New Hampshire. There followed a rapid succession of ministers, some who died and others who moved on after a short tenure. On May 1, 1807, the congregation was asked to assemble at “the ruins of the church lately burnt” (Simmons 1960:152). A number of subscribers pledged money for the purpose “of rebuilding the Wilton Church, situate at Willtown Bluff” Simmons concludes that the abandoned church at Willtown was repaired for temporary use, before a new church was built in the Adams Run area.

McCrary Plat 4451, dated 1815 and located by Dr. Suzanne Linder (figure 2), shows the church at the end of a straight road, leading east from the Willtown Road. It has been assumed that the present woods road on Willtown plantation, across from the Bethlehem cemetery, follows this same configuration, as it terminates at the church cemetery and the presumed location of the church itself. Two small squares to the south of this may represent the parsonage ; the plat is labelled “Willtown Parsonage” in a location centered between the church building and these two squares. The same plat outlines a swamp on the east and south sides of these buildings, which conforms to the elevation contours shown on the current topographic map. This suggests that the structures shown on the plat are those sites investigated by the Museum.

### **Site Description**

The site known as the Parsonage, 38Ch1660 occupies a ridge of high land adjacent to freshwater swamps, a few miles from the historic village of Willtown on the South Edisto River

(figure 3). The site is marked by a rectangular mound of soil about 5' tall. The mound, as well as an exposed brick-lined well, are within a wooded area of mostly climax hardwood. Understory here is greatly reduced, or nearly absent, due to a carefully-executed program of prescribed burning. The wooded area containing historic remains measures approximately 200' by 300'. The northern and eastern boundary of this area is a slough, or swampy area. The site is bounded to the west by a woods road running north/south, parallel to (secondary) State highway 38. The area around the wooded section, to the west and the south, was an open field, recently plowed by Mr. Dickie Godley (figure 4). This field was freshly plowed in April, and had only moderate vegetation during the time of fieldwork. Heavy rains made portions of the field quite wet, however. Visibility in both the field and the wooded area was very good. Cultural artifacts and brick rubble were clearly visible on the ground surface, and areas of dense refuse, and sparse refuse, were easily noted.

Based on the condition of the site, the documented site history, and the resources available for the present study, an archaeological survey consisting of shovel testing and surface collection was planned. Shovel testing, or the excavation of 1' by 1' squares, is a standard archaeological method for recording site stratigraphy, condition of this stratigraphy, and site limits and distribution. In addition, the majority of the site was amenable to a controlled systematic surface collection. Plowing disturbs, or destroys, the vertical position of artifacts in the ground and associated stratigraphy, but decades of research suggests that the horizontal position of materials is only minimally affected. Surface collecting by grid units can provide reliable information on the distribution and concentration of particular types of artifacts and site activities.

The woods road continued to the south and, 300' beyond the limits of 38Ch1660, curved to the east and served as the northern border of the field containing site 38Ch1662. This consists of a scatter of 18<sup>th</sup> century artifacts and brick, also readily visible on the ground surface. This field measures approximately 450' by 250' (figure 5).

### **Field and Laboratory Methods**

Preparation of the site for surface collecting was conducted by Mr. Godley prior to the arrival of the archaeological crew. Studies have noted that the best method for a surface collection in a previously plowed field is to lightly disc the field. This does little damage, because the site has been continuously plowed for decades. Following the plowing, the field is allowed to sit until washed by a heavy rainstorm (Riordan 1988; King 1988). This proved to be no problem in the unusually wet spring of 2003! The rain significantly increases the visibility of artifacts on the surface. The artifacts themselves are washed free of dust, and they are often left on a pedestal of soil, as the loose sand around them is compacted by the rain. Surface collection must then proceed before heavy and rapid weed growth occurs. Our timing for the Parsonage project was nearly ideal.

Investigation of the site began with establishing horizontal control. A Chicago grid was established over the site, with grid points at 25' intervals. In order to more closely align with the physical features of the landscape, a grid orientation of 20 degrees east of north was arbitrarily

selected. A key stake was established at the presumed southwest corner of the site, adjacent to the woods road and along the southern edge of the plowed field. This stake, a length of rebar driven into the ground and marked with a sleeve of white pvc pipe, was given the arbitrary designation of N200E200. All measurements at 38Ch1660 were made to the north and east of this point.

The chosen orientation of the grid is slightly west of the woods road. The meridian was first established to the north, at 25' intervals, from N200 to N700. This line roughly paralleled the woods road, and crossed the road at N650. A base line was then established from the key stake, from N200E200 to N200E600, parallel with the southern edge of the plowed field at 38Ch1660 (figure 6).

Parallel lines were established with the transit north/south from the N200E400 point and the N200E600 point. Tapes were used to locate the points (at 25' intervals) between these lines. All grid points except for the key stake were marked with wire flags. The grid points were completed for a rectangular collection area measuring 500' by 400'. As the fieldwork proceeded, a concentration of cultural material was noted at N600E600, extending outside of the gridded area. Two parallel lines of grid points, extending to the east 200' at N600E600 and N625E600 (see figure 5, figure 7).

Vertical control was established with the transit. An arbitrary datum point, consisting of a large nail in a tree, was placed at a point approximately N475E625. Based on the contour intervals present on the USGS Topographic map (Fenwick quadrangle), this point was given an assumed elevation of 30.0' msl. All elevations, for both ground surface and subsurface features, were taken relative to this point.

Survey began with shovel testing. The crew was divided into teams of three, and every other (25') grid point was tested. Shovel tests measuring 1' by 1' were excavated into culturally sterile soil and screened through 1/4" mesh (figure 8). The grid pin flag served as the southwest corner of the shovel test, and as the coordinates for that test. All materials, including brick and mortar rubble, were collected. The shovel tests were placed in the areas exhibiting surface debris, between the E200 line and the E450 line. A total of 117 shovel tests were excavated. These are shown on figure 7.

As ground visibility was very good (at least 50%) in both the wooded areas and the plowed fields, the site was subjected to intensive surface collection. The fields were disced in April and heavy rains exposed the surface artifacts. Each of the 25' by 25' blocks was collected and bagged separately. The grid flag at the southwest corner of the unit served as the designated coordinates for that square. Individual crew members were assigned a north/south line of surface units, and materials were collected by walking in linear fashion back and forth across the unit. All visible cultural materials, including brick, mortar, shell, and other artifacts, were collected from each surface unit. Each 25' by 25' unit in the 500' by 400' block was collected (figure 7).

The site observed in the field to the south was also subject to surface collection. As the field was 300' away, the grid from 38Ch1660 was extended in to the new field. Tapes and transit

were used to locate and place a point from N200E500, due south to S400E500. This point was located in a wooded area south of the road, and remains as a grid marker. Grid points in the south field were established with transit and tapes. As the grid, and its coordinates, were continued from the northern field, all of the grid measurements at 38Ch1662 are measured south from the key stake of N200E200. These squares, then have coordinates such as S500E200, etc. Given that the same grid originally established the southwest corner of each unit as the source of designation, this continued in the south field. As with the more northerly site, all of the 25' by 25' flagged units contained within the plowed field were collected. The collection included all brick and mortar rubble, as well as artifacts.

All of the shovel tests and surface collections were bagged separately, and the bags were labeled by site and grid coordinate. Artifact bags were inventoried, and assigned an ordinal Field Specimen number in the field. In the laboratory, each bag or provenience was washed and sorted individually. Brick and mortar were weighed and recorded, and other artifacts were identified and catalogued. A catalogue card listing the number of identified artifacts was prepared for each provenience. The number and location of various artifact types were then entered on computer, using the Excel program. Density (frequency) maps of these various artifact types, by both count and weight, were then prepared using SURFER program. These distribution maps are useful in planning future exploration of the site.

### **Excavation Units on House Foundation**

In addition to the surface collection and the shovel test survey, nine excavation units, measuring 5' by 5', were excavated at the parsonage site. Eight of these were strategically located on the mound, in order to expose corners of the foundation. The final unit was excavated in a rich midden area, encountered during shovel testing. Units were located using tapes and triangulation from the grid point flags to locate the units, based on surface evidence for the foundation location. The excavation units were marked with 10" nails and string, and nail markers remained in place after the excavation for ease of relocation.

N525E290 was the first unit excavated, and it was strategically placed on the northwest corner of the structure, based on surface evidence. The ground surface of this unit sloped dramatically from east to west, a 1.5' difference in elevation between the east and west sides of the unit. Excavation of this unit revealed the northwest corner, and a portion of the western face of the foundation. This was the only unit excavated to sterile subsoil, and the base of the structure foundation. Three zones were defined for the unit. Zone 1 was a narrow band of organic topsoil and root mat. This was followed by a deep deposit of brick and mortar rubble (zone 2), containing no other cultural material. Zone 2 averaged .7' in depth. Zone 3 was a loamy grey-tan sand, containing a range of 18<sup>th</sup> century artifacts. A sample of zones 1 and 2 were screened (25% of the excavated material), while zone 3 was screened in its entirety. Zone 3 ranged from .3' to .5' in depth. Because the zone 2 brick rubble was loose and unconsolidated, a sloping section was left in place along the southern edge of the unit, at the interface with the foundation wall. This resulted in the southeast quadrant of the unit remaining unexcavated below zone 2 level 1. This is reflected in the profile drawing of the east wall of the unit (figure 9).

Excavation of the unit to sterile subsoil exposed a 5' section of the western foundation, three feet in depth. The top 1.8' of the exposed wall was constructed of soft orange-red bricks, and exhibited well-finished mortar joints. The mortar was bright white, with a relatively wide scribed joint. Below this point, unfinished mortar joints indicate the grade at time of excavation, and suggest that the foundation continued 1.2' below historic grade. A large fragment of three bricks, plus the bond joint, was retained from the zone 2 rubble. Elevations were taken at the top and bottom of excavation, and profile drawings were completed for the east and west walls. The unit was also photographed in black and white and color (figure 9).

Two adjoining units revealed the northwest corner of the building, and a short portion of the north wall. Units N530E290 and N530E295 revealed a 6' section of the north wall. Unlike the first unit, these two units were excavated into zone 2 to minimally expose the top of the foundation. In this unit, zone 1 averaged .4' in depth, and excavation of zone 2 was terminated at a varying depth (relative to slope), ranging from .6' to 1.4' below ground surface (figure 10).

A group of four units exposed the northeast corner of the structure and the majority of the eastern wall, including an apparent chimney base centered in the east wall (figure 11). The four units included N535E325, N530E325, N530E330, and N525E330. Zone 1 was relatively thin, and zone 2 was relatively dense in this area. The units were located on a sloping ground surface, and excavations proceeded to an average depth of .8' below present ground surface. This block revealed a 4' section of the north wall, the northeast corner, and a 14.7' section of the east wall. The exposed exterior of the foundation revealed the same high-quality mortar joints seen on the east side of the structure. Unit N535E325 also exposed the entire width of wall along the northeast corner, suggesting a foundation 2.4' thick. Two 'joists', or narrow slots without bricks, were visible on the northern half of the wall. One of these opened to the interior of the foundation, the other to the exterior. The overall surface of the foundation was uneven, based on removal or deterioration of brick courses, and so the pattern of the brick was somewhat difficult to determine (figure 12).

The foundation for an exterior chimney was centered on the east wall of the structure. This chimney was 7.5' wide on the exterior, and initiated 7.5' south of the northeast corner. While the northern half of the foundation was rather eroded, an interior fire box, complete with rounded interior corners, was evident in the southern half of the chimney foundation. The exposed brick flooring on the fire box interior evidenced a fair amount of wear. Excavations terminated at the southern edge of the chimney foundation.

The final excavation unit on the foundation was positioned to exposed the southeast corner of the structure. This was posited by pulling tapes from the previously exposed corners. Unit N515E330 exposed the exterior southeast corner of the structure, and a portion of the interior. Excavation here was only .4' deep, and was designed to only expose the top of the foundation here.

The eight excavation units revealed three corners, plus an exterior chimney, for a structure measuring 22' by 36' on the exterior (see figure 11). The brick foundation is well made, and is 2.4' thick, suggesting a substantial building. The mound apparently just covers the intact



foundation, and the sloping ground on the structure exterior consists of a pile of brick rubble, covered with a thin layer of soil and humus (see figure 13). Unit N525E290, excavated to sterile subsoil, revealed a midden deposit of grey soil, containing a moderate amount of artifacts dating to the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The above rubble, in all units, contained only a few cultural materials.

### **The Midden Area**

A single 5' by 5' unit was excavated in an area of possible trash midden, located east of the dwelling house. A concentration of refuse was noted in both the surface collection and shovel testing in the vicinity of N525E400; in fact, a shovel test at this location produced over 100 artifacts. This prompted excavation of a 5' unit in this same location, with the shovel test at the southwest corner of the unit. This unit was excavated to a depth of 1.2' below ground surface; excavations were halted here due to time constraints; thus the unit was not completed to sterile subsoil.

The deposits encountered in N525E400 were rich and complex. Three zones and 14 features were identified and excavated in this unit. About 1600 artifacts were recovered from this unit. These have been tabulated separately (figures 14-16).

Excavation began with zone 1, a lense of dark soil loamy sand and light root mat, about .2' deep. A moderate amount of artifacts were recovered, particularly post-1780 pearlwares. Only a light concentration of brick rubble was noted, 8 pounds. Brick rubble and artifacts increased in the subsequent deposit, designated zone 2. This soil was slightly lighter brown loamy sand, and this deposit continued for .4'. Both artifacts and brick rubble increased in density. Brick from zone 2 weighed 19 pounds, and was concentrated in the northern half of the unit. The zone contained a great quantity of colono wares, in particular.

Below zone 2 was a lense of lighter, grey loamy sand that appeared to be an ash layer. This was designated Feature 1, and covered the entire unit. Feature 1 was excavated in two levels, and was .2' thick in total. A number of features were encountered within feature 1. Three areas were designated at the base of level 1. These included a hard-packed area of ash in the southeast corner of the unit, a concentration of mortar and ash in the center of the unit, and a hard-packed area of orange-brown sand and brick rubble. The latter was designated feature 2. It was quite shallow (.15'), and exhibited an undulating bottom. Because of amorphous boundaries, none of the other areas received feature designations. They were, however, mapped and photographed (figure 15).

Excavation continued with another shallow level of feature 1, and a number of features were defined at the base of this deposit. The ash layer continued in the southwest corner of the unit, but did not receive a feature designation. Feature 3 was a roughly circular area in the northeast quadrant of the unit, filled with orangish-brown mottled soil, ash and charcoal. Feature 3 was rather deep, and excavated in two levels. It began as an irregular area, but became more rectangular in shape as excavation proceeded. Features 5 and 6 were located along the south wall

of the unit, and were filled with dark brown (10yr3/2) soil. They may represent a post mold and post hole, but were not clearly defined. Feature 7 was the best-defined. It intruded into the north wall of the unit, and was rectangular in shape, with rounded corner. The feature exhibited a lighter fill, principally yellowish-tan loamy sand, mottled with orange clay, indicating a deep excavation. Only the top level of this feature was excavated, however.

When the ash layer, feature 1, and the intrusive features were removed, excavation continued with zone 3. This was a loamy brown sand. Additional features were present at the base of zone 3. Feature 12, located in the center of the unit, was a shallow post hole with a flat base and a square shape. This intruded into three other defined features. The most impressive were features 9 and 10, a large double post hole 1.8' deep (figures 14 and 16). This was a mottled soil, filled with dark brown and lighter yellowish brown sand. Examination of the eastern profile of the unit after excavation of this feature revealed that the overlying layers of soil had all slumped toward the center of feature 10, suggesting some rotting of a post, or settling, after deposition. Two additional features were defined at this level, and neither were excavated; features 13 and 14 appeared to be post holes.

Due to time constraints, excavations were halted at this point. The floor at the base of zone 3, the eastern, and northern profiles were photographed and mapped. The unit was then backfilled.

### **Results: Site Features**

Results of the surface collection, the shovel testing, and the test excavations were all similar - the project revealed a domestic site whose dates of occupation are in close agreement with the documented dates of occupation. Both shovel testing and surface survey revealed smaller brick concentrations in areas other than the house mound, likely indicating support structures of some sort. The first was detected by shovel testing, in N275E325. Here, the shovel test revealed a solid lense of crushed brick and mortar, about .6' below the ground surface. Additional tests in this vicinity revealed more of the brick. A second concentration was noted around a group of hardwood trees, and southwards into the plowed field at N425-450 E475-500. Here, a large scatter of brick fragments accompanied a number of partial bricks in the root structure of the trees. A third brick scatter, north and east of the main house, was outside the bounds of the gridded area. A fourth brick feature was a circular brick well, located at N650E375. These brick concentrations were detected in both the shovel testing and surface collection (figures 17 and 18). All brick was recorded by weight.

Density maps were created for a variety of artifact types, for both the surface collected materials and the shovel tests. The shovel test data and the surface data show similar results, though the larger quantity of material collected from the surface provided more detailed information. Both show the concentrations of brick rubble as described above, and associated clusters of artifacts. Figure 18 shows the architectural materials, principally nails and window glass, distributed in relation to the collected brick. These materials vary positively with the concentrations of brick. There is a particularly strong association of architectural materials in the

area of N275E325, though this was not readily apparent in a casual walk-over of the site. Clearly this area bears further examination.

Figures 19 and 20 show the distribution of total artifacts, for both the shovel tests (figure 19) and the surface collection (figure 20). Figure 19 suggests some positive association of artifact, or refuse, accumulation with the brick concentrations. Refuse was concentrated to the east of the brick cluster at N275E325, to the south of the brick cluster at N425E475, and south and east of the main house. The shovel test data also shows significant midden accumulation to the east of the main house, particularly in the vicinity of N525E400, and at N600E600. The midden concentrations are particularly pronounced in the shovel test data. The midden at N525E400 is less well-defined in the surface data, but the concentration at N600E600 is very pronounced.

The surface collection data shows a strong concentration of refuse to the east of the N275E325 structure and a much lighter concentration of materials around the N425E475 structure. Refuse is also distributed around the east and south sides of the main house; this refuse actually forms a continuous band between the main house and the brick structure to the south. This may suggest a domestic, or food-related function for the southernmost structure.

Finally, distribution maps were prepared for different types of diagnostic artifacts. Figure 21 shows the distribution of early 18<sup>th</sup> century ceramics (shown in purple) and colono wares (shown in yellow cross-hatch). Colono wares are ceramics of local manufacture, principally attributed to African residents (Anthony 2001; Ferguson 1992). The early ceramics are concentrated around the main house and in the N600E600 area. Colono ware is particularly pronounced in the latter location. This may suggest that the structure associated with N600E600 (located outside of the grid to the east) may be a dwelling for an African slave. There is also a concentration of colono ware around the N275E325 structure. But this structure, in contrast, is the site of the greatest concentration of refined earthenwares, used after 1770 (figure 22). This may suggest that the southernmost structure is a later addition to the landscape. The concentration of colono ware at this site may suggest that this is also a dwelling for an African descendant, but it is equally likely that the colono wares were used by all site residents. The concentration of ceramics, from both European and local sources, may indicate kitchen functions for these buildings. Clearly, additional work is warranted in each location.

### **Results: Material Culture**

The site contained an assemblage of artifacts typical of British colonial sites of the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In order to be comparable to other excavated colonial sites, the artifact discussion follows Stanley South's model for the Carolina Artifact Pattern (South 1977; Zierden et al. 1999). Under this method, artifacts are grouped by presumed function, or how they were used in the everyday life of their owners. Artifacts are grouped, and then quantified, within eight broad categories; those relating to kitchen activities such as food preparation, service, and storage; to architecture and the buildings themselves; to arms and weaponry; to clothing, its surviving elements, its manufacture and repair; items of personal ownership; to furniture and

furnishings; to tobacco smoking as an individualized habit, and a final eclectic category which includes a variety of daily activities such as gardening, storage, equestrian affairs, etc.

As most of the artifacts recovered from domestic sites have to do with the affairs of daily life, the largest group is usually those items associated with food preparation, storage, and service. On the sites of wealthy families, those of the latter category were designed to display one's social status and the knowledge of use that went with ownership of such display pieces. Chinese porcelain was the most expensive and the most desired of all colonial ceramics. The parsonage site contained a moderate amount of these, both the blue on white underglazed variety and the more elaborate overglaze decorated styles. The earliest English tablewares were tin-glazed earthenwares known as delft. This ceramic was manufactured from 1670 through 1795. Though common, delft was not very durable, and so fell into disuse after porcelain and other English wares, became more available. Delft was particularly replaced by white saltglazed stoneware, developed in 1740. This decorative refined stoneware was recovered in significant amounts from the Parsonage site, and was slightly more common than delft. Another common English ceramic of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was Combed and Trailed slipware, and it was in use throughout the century. These wares feature a clear to yellowed lead glaze over a variety of clay slips applied to a buff-colored body. Slipware came in hollow ware forms, as well as open bowls, and was likely used for food preparation as well as service. Slipware was slightly more common in the shovel tests than in the surface collection. Another hallmark of 18<sup>th</sup> century sites is Westerwald stoneware, distinguished by its grey body and dimpled grey glaze, and blue decorations. Westerwald was common in both the surface collection and the shovel tests.

The parsonage site was occupied during the era of rapid development in the English ceramic market, both in terms of innovation and marketing. The leader of this innovative group of potters was Josiah Wedgwood. It was he who perfected the group of white-bodied ceramics known as refined earthenwares, and spread them literally to the four corners of the world. These were inexpensive, durable, fashionable, and mass-produced. The earliest type exhibits clouded or swirled underglaze designs in brown, yellow, green, and grey, or solid green design. Known among archaeologists as Whieldon ware, this type of ceramic was manufactured from 1740 to 1760 (often made in the same molds as the contemporary white saltglazed stoneware), and was never very popular in the lowcountry. A few fragments were recovered from the excavation units. Whieldon wares were rather rapidly replaced with the cream-colored ware known as Creamware or Queens' ware, and available by 1762. It is this ceramic that dominates the parsonage site assemblage. Like the Chinese porcelain, creamware came in highly decorated and expensive styles, as well as relatively plain and inexpensive types.

In their quest for an all-white ceramic, Wedgwood and his contemporaries altered the glaze formula with the addition of cobalt to produce a bluish-tinted ware. Known collectively as pearlwares, these came in a variety of decorative styles. Hand painted and shell edged wares appeared in 1780, while transfer-printed and annular striped wares were available in 1795. Creamware, tinted yellowish, continued alongside the pearlwares in popularity. Though not as common as creamware, the parsonage site contains a number of pearlwares, in each of the four decorative groups.

The final type of ceramic common on 18<sup>th</sup> century sites are colono wares, which are low-fired, unglazed earthenwares of local manufacture. It is recovered on all lowcountry historic sites from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, particularly after 1730, through the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. In Charleston, colono wares comprise about 6% of the ceramic assemblage, though on rural plantations it can be as much as 50%. Archaeologists have determined that much of this ware was made by the African slaves who populated the lowcountry, though Native Americans, either slave or free, likely made some of the wares recovered. (Anthony 2001; Ferguson 1992). The ware varies greatly in quality, ranging from thick, coarse, sand-tempered wares to intermediate, burnished wares, to fine, hard, micaceous types. The Parsonage site contains an impressive collection of colono ware, worthy of detailed study.

Another common component of the kitchen group is olive green bottle glass. These were generally, though not exclusively, used to hold alcoholic beverages, and were often reused. These were hand-blown, and exhibit a pontil scar on the base and irregularities throughout the glass. Seventeenth century examples are short and squat, and known as 'onion bottles'. They gradually get taller and narrower, until by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century green bottles exhibit the proportions found today (Noel Hume 1969). Fragments of olive green glass are common at the parsonage site. Another variety of glass container are small vials for medicines or condiments. These are also hand-blown and exhibit a pontil scar at the base. They are often aqua or light olive green, but can also be made of clear glass. A few fragments were recovered at the parsonage.

Artifacts were tabulated separately for the shovel tests, the surface collection, and the excavation units (particularly N525E400), with varied results. Overall, the three assemblages contained the same types of materials. The proportions of these materials, though, were varied. The shovel tests produced 410 artifacts. Nearly 80% of these were kitchen artifacts, ceramics and bottle glass. Colono wares, the pottery of local manufacture, dominated the ceramic assemblage, and was 52% of the ceramics recovered. Other commonly recovered ceramics include creamware (1760-1820), slipware (1680-1795) and white saltglazed stoneware (1740-1760). A moderate amount of olive green bottle glass, a hallmark of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, was recovered. Architectural items include 26 nails and 23 fragments of window glass, the majority the light aqua color typical of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Other artifacts included two lead shot, a fragment of worked chert, a brass button, a brass upholstery tack, and eleven tobacco pipe fragments. A complete list of artifacts can be found in Table 1, while general artifact proportions are shown in Table 2.

#### Artifact Assemblages

	<u>Surface Collection</u>	<u>Shovel Tests</u>	<u>N525E400</u>	<u>N525E290</u>
porcelain, b/w Oriental	23	8	58	3
porcelain, overglazed	10	1	17	
porcelain, English	4	1		
Brown saltglazed stoneware	8	1		
Westerwald stoneware	15	4	16	

grey saltglazed stoneware	13		3	
White saltglazed stoneware	22	12	82	3
Scratch blue stoneware	1	1	5	
Nottingham stoneware		1	18	
Elers ware			1	
Black basalte ware			1	
whieldon ware			5	
creamware	342	48	57	4
creamware, decorated	3		1	
pearlware, undecorated	55	10	15	
pearlware, shell edged	22	2	7	
pearlware, hand painted	35	10	6	5
pearlware, transfer print	31	4	5	
pearlware, annular	2		2	
Delft	18	7	38	3
Slipware	5	13	88	2
Mottled ware		1	6	
Mid-Atlantic ware		2	2	
Jackfield ware			13	
Lead-glazed earthenware	3		7	1
Spanish storage jar	1			
Moravian earthenware			1	
Colono wares	70	140	560	1
olive green glass	304	41	93	2
clear container glass	19	14	21	
aqua container glass			15	
amber glass			2	
pharmaceutical glass	2			
table glass	1	5	11	
iron kettle			3	
wrought nail			156	
cut nail			26	
nail frag	6	26	46	3
window glass	59	23	116	69
flint	2	1	2	
shot		2		
brass button		1		1
pewter button			1	
glass bead	1			
furniture tack			4	

misc brass			
tobacco pipes	3	11	84
misc iron		17	7
drill bit			1
horse shoe			1
buckle			1
misc lead			1
hoe	6		

The surface collection was far more numerous, and 1100 artifacts were recovered. The vast majority of these were ceramics; kitchen wares comprised 92% of this assemblage. By far the most commonly recovered ceramic was creamware, with 342 of the 683 total ceramics. The later pearlwares, manufactured from 1780 to 1820, were also recovered in significant numbers. The colono wares so prominent in the shovel tests comprised only 10% of the surface ceramics. These differences most likely reflect the increased visibility and durability of the refined earthenwares; they are, after all, large, white, and shiny. The brown colono wares, in contrast, may be more difficult to see, even when the ground is under careful scrutiny. Bottle glass was also a significant component of the surface assemblage. A moderate amount of window glass was recovered, but nails were rare on the surface. They are both less durable and less visible on the ground surface. Tobacco pipes were also less common on the ground surface.

The zone 3 deposits adjacent to the east side of the dwelling house, in N525E290, contained 22 ceramics, and included all of the types described above. Creamware and hand-painted pearlware were the most common; the unit also contained delft, white saltglazed stoneware, and Chinese porcelain. Only one sherd of colono ware was recovered. Architectural items were common, and included 3 nails and 69 fragments of window glass. A brass button was also recovered.

The unit in the midden, N525E400, contained a larger, and slightly different, ceramic assemblage. Like the shovel tests, colono wares were over half of the 560 ceramics recovered. The earlier slipwares, white saltglazed stonewares, and delft were the most common European ceramics. The later refined earthenwares, creamware and pearlware, were slightly less common. Bottle glass was slightly more common. Kitchen wares were 72% of this assemblage. Architectural items were more common, and nails and window glass represented 21% of this assemblage. While the majority of the nails were hand wrought, at least 1/5 were machine-cut, suggesting some construction after 1780 - 1800. Tobacco pipes were more common in this unit than elsewhere on the site; they comprised 5% of the assemblage, compared to 2.6% of the shovel tests and .6% of the surface collection.

### Relative Artifact Proportions

	<u>Surface Collection</u>		<u>Shovel Tests</u>		<u>N525E400 all deposits</u>		<u>N525E290 zone 3</u>	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Kitchen	1010	91.8	327	79.7	1155	72.1	24	24.7
Architecture	78	7.0	66	16.0	344	21.4	72	74.2
Arms	2	.18	3	.73	2	.12	—	--
Clothing	1	.09	1	.24	2	.12	1	1.03
Personal	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	--
Furniture	—	—	2	.48	4	.24	—	--
Pipes	3	.27	11	2.68	84	5.2	—	--
Activities	6	.54	—	—	10	.62	—	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,100</b>		<b>410</b>		<b>1,601</b>		<b>97</b>	

### Dating the Site Deposits

As is standard, all archaeological deposits from this site were dated on the basis of stratigraphic point of initiation and Terminus Post Quem. Stratigraphic point of initiation (or the relative vertical position of the top of a feature or zone) states that soils gradually accumulate on sites of human occupation, and that the deepest is the earliest. Terminus Post Quem, or TPQ, is based on the invention date of the newest artifact in the provenience. Both principals are used in combination to date events on sites. These dating tools cannot be used specifically for the shovel test or surface collection data, as there is no vertical separation of the artifacts. The plowed portion of the site, in particular, have lost the vertical layering reflected in stratigraphy. Examination of the artifact assemblages as a whole suggest that they contain some artifacts manufactured throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century and others produced for a short time during the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Still others, the refined earthenwares, were manufactured and used in the final decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Taken together, the artifact assemblage is in agreement with the documented dates of occupation, from c. 1767 through 1807.

The principals of TPQ and stratigraphy were applied to the units excavated in the wooded area, those on the brick foundation and in the midden area. There was some evidence for



temporal stratification in the midden excavation unit. The refined earthenwares, manufactured after 1760 and after 1780, were confined to the upper zones, zones 1 and 2 in particular. Feature 1 contained the 1740s ceramics, Whieldon ware and White saltglazed stoneware, as the newest ceramic, as did most of the features below. This suggests that the ash represented by feature 1 may be a 1760s event, and that considerable use of the site occurred after this. This single unit suggests that the site may have changed through time, and may be appropriate for temporal subdivision. The sample retrieved from zone 3 of N525E290 contained artifacts from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century (TPQ of pearlware), plus a number of architectural artifacts, which suggests this zone contains some materials deposited at the time of site abandonment.

A final measure applied to the site assemblages was calculation of the Mean Ceramic Date. This principal, developed by Stanley South (1972), aids in determining period of occupation, as the Terminus Post Quem merely allows dating of the fill. It is based on the principals of fashion and lifecycle of manufactured items, principally ceramics, to determine a peak period of site occupation, based on the frequency of each ceramic type and its median date of manufacture. While the Mean Ceramic Date does not provide an absolute time of deposition, or range of occupation, it does hint at the peak period of site use, based on relative frequency of datable artifacts.

Based on the assumption of a mid-18th century date of construction, through abandonment at 1807, the documented mean date of occupation for the parsonage is 1778. The shovel test assemblage produced a mean ceramic date of 1770. The surface collection, dominated by refined earthenwares, produced a later mean ceramic date of 1783. In contrast, the excavation unit in the midden produced the earliest date, 1758, reflecting the preponderance of early ceramics in those features. This is somewhat reflected in the small zone 3 assemblage from N525E290, with a date of 1769. These dates may reflect the lengthy availability of the wares that span the entire 18<sup>th</sup> century, or they may suggest that the heaviest use of the site occurred in the third quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, rather than the fourth quarter of the century.

#### **Provenience and Dating Guide, N525E400**

<u>FS#</u>	<u>Provenience</u>	<u>TPQ</u>	<u>Date</u>
398	zone 1	transfer printed pearlware	1795
399	zone 2	annular ware	1795
400	zone 2 level 2, N1/2	creamware	1760
401	zone 2 level 2, S1/2	transfer printed pearlware	1795
402	zone 2 level 2, E1/2	creamware	1760
403	feature 1	pearlware	1780
404	feature 1 level 2	whieldon ware	1740
430	zone 3	shell edged pearlware	1780
406	zone 3	Jackfield ware	1740
407	feature 2	Jackfield ware	1740

408	feature 3	creamware	1760
409	feature 3 level 2	colono ware	—
410	feature 4	hand painted pearlware	1780
411	feature 5	white saltglazed stoneware	1740
412	feature 6	westerwald stoneware	1670
413	feature 7	oriental porcelain	1670
421	feature 9	white saltglazed stoneware	1740
422	feature 10	white saltglazed stoneware	1740
423	feature 11	slipware	1670
424	feature 12	bone	—
425	feature 13	scratch blue stoneware	1744
426	feature 14	scratch blue stoneware	1744

### **Summary and Recommendations**

The Parsonage site offers an unusual opportunity to explore a well-documented colonial site, occupied for a relatively short period of time (see also Zierden et al. 1999; Joseph and Zierden 2001). The site exhibits only minimal disturbance subsequent to abandonment in the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A portion of the site has been plowed, but this area retains excellent horizontal integrity. A smaller portion is wooded, and test excavations suggest that there is almost no post-depositional disturbance to the site, beyond the first few inches of soil. The principal feature of the site, the brick foundation to the dwelling house, appears to be well-preserved within a mound of soil rising 5' above grade. Test excavations suggest the continuous foundation is intact, with minimal covering of soil and humus, and has assumed its rounded shape from the accumulation of brick rubble around the sides of the foundation. It remains unclear if the structure burned, was destroyed by some other natural event, or gradually decayed following abandonment.

Survey of an area approximately 600 by 900', plus walk-over inspection of the surrounding few acres revealed a site with definite boundaries, and concentrations of materials suggesting specialized activity areas. The survey produced 2,700 artifacts from the ground surface and shovel tests, and an additional 500 from controlled excavations. Three possible structures, in addition to the dwelling house, were located. Excavation of eight 5'by5' units on the mound revealed a brick foundation measuring 22' by 35', with an exterior chimney on the east side. A door was likely located on the north side, centered on the wall, and it is possible that a second chimney was located on the western wall. The latter two features have not been revealed to date. A rich midden area was located 75' to the east of the main house, and a single test unit identified a deep ash layer and several features which are likely wooden post stains.

This survey has been adequate to identify the function and dates of occupation of the site. It has pinpointed the boundaries and identified three possible outbuildings. The project suggests that the site is significant to the colonial history of the lowcountry, and that the site is worthy of the level of stewardship it has enjoyed under the Knox family. There are, however, several

avenues of additional research which might be pursued to learn more about the site and its role in the history of the Willtown community.

The site has been subject to only a brief review of the historical literature. This was conducted by Dr. Suzanne Linder in 1998 as part of the study of the early town of Willtown. Additional documentary research would help us understand the function of the site, activities conducted there, and the people in residence there. We presume, based on location and current documentary evidence, that this is the parsonage which accompanied the new Willtown Presbyterian church, located a few hundred yards to the north. But the quantities of colono ware, presumably produced by enslaved African and Native American people, suggests that both residents and site activities were many and varied. Did this land function as a plantation, as well as a home for the minister? Clearly, additional documentary research is warranted. The site could also be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places, a federal listing of sites, buildings, and districts of national, state, or local significance that are have yielded, or are likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Complete excavation and exposure of the foundation to the main house would answer questions concerning the layout and style of the dwelling. This could be accomplished by a series of 5' excavation units, strategically placed over the walls of the building. At least some of these should be excavated to sterile subsoil to collect midden deposits around the house, and to reveal builder's trenches for the footings. At the time of excavation and exposure of the foundations, careful consideration should be given to the method of preserving this foundation. Exposed brick foundations are subject to some weathering and deterioration. Re-burying the foundation after study is one option.

It is also possible, based on excavations at similar structures, that the interior of the foundation may contain a quantity of significant artifacts. Brick foundations at James Stobo's plantation on the Edisto (Zierden et al. 1999) and Isaac Lesesne's property on the Wando (Calhoun et al. 1986) contained layers of refuse, much of it discarded *in situ*. If the structure burned, or was abandoned suddenly, then it becomes even more likely that the building is filled with cultural materials. Excavations on the building interior would therefore be time-consuming, but very revealing. At least a portion of this interior should remain unexcavated, and preserved for future generations.

Test units, and possibly large excavations, could be conducted at each of the possible outbuilding locations to identify the building size, style, and function. Artifacts recovered in and around each of these buildings should inform on the date of occupation and function of that locus. There may be other outbuildings that have not yet been identified. Very little work was conducted in the vicinity of the brick well, and it is possible that structures may be located near that feature, as well.

The midden area east of the main house also warrants further testing. The single unit revealed a rich, dense midden, and evidence for a host of activities. The features excavated to date have not revealed much about the function of this area. It is possible that the posts reflect a building constructed of wood, rather than brick, while the array of artifacts suggest a kitchen

function for the area. Likewise, the surface density maps indicate a concentration of refuse on the west and south sides of the main house. Further testing here may also be fruitful. Finally, the concentration of refuse at N600E600 could also be examined through test excavations.

The artifacts recovered to date are worthy of more detailed analysis. This is particularly true of the colono wares. Study of these wares at the nearby Stobo plantation at Willtown bluff revealed a number of fragments exhibiting Native American characteristics (Anthony 2001). These ceramics reveal a great deal about the interactions of people from a variety of backgrounds in the colonial lowcountry. Anthony and others have been studying this pottery for decades, and all agree that the makers, as well as the manufacture and distribution networks of these wares are poorly understood. Sites such as the Parsonage, and the nearby Stobo plantation, where African, Indian, and European peoples lived and worked together, present an excellent opportunity to examine these issues (Zierden 2001).

Religious settlements in the lowcountry have received relatively little attention, and the artifacts recovered at the Parsonage suggest that a range of activities - economic, social, and religious - may have occurred here. Research at Willtown and other Dissenter communities (Beck 2001) suggest that these communities were complex and were fluid. The Parsonage site is part of the greater Willtown community, founded a few miles to the south. Continued study of the Parsonage could expand the studies begun at Willtown, and ongoing at Dorchester.

The new Willtown church and Parsonage are part of the evolving Carolina frontier, and the creation of the new church reflects a shift from frontier to plantation economy in the Edisto area. A major characteristic of frontier society was its multiracial and multiethnic character, and the ways relations and identities of its component groups shifted. The Parsonage site should be studied as a component of the evolving Willtown community.

The Parsonage site contains data capable of providing new insights into the history of the Edisto area and the lowcountry. The site has been well-protected and well-preserved, and is worthy of continued stewardship. Addition archaeological and historical research on the site will add considerably to our understanding of this special property.

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## Guide to Illustrations

Figure 1. Site views of the Parsonage before excavation. The 'mound' covering the main house foundation is visible in the wooded area: a) facing southeast, b) the well, c) facing southeast, d) the plowed portion, facing east.

Figure 2. McCrady Plat 4451, dated 1815, showing the location of "Willtown Parsonage".

Figure 3. Portion of U.S.G.S. Topographic quadrangle (Fenwick) showing the location of 38Ch1660 (circle). The smaller marks indicate 38Ch1661 (church) to the north and 38Ch1662 (colonial site) to the south.

Figure 4. Views of the Parsonage site at the time of study: a) the plowed field facing southeast, b) the plowed field, facing north from the N200E200 grid point.

Figure 5 (same page as figure 4). Views of grid work: a) meridian (north-south line) marked with flags along woods road, b) laying in the base line (east-west line) with tapes.

Figure 6. General site map of 38Ch1660 and 38Ch1662.

Figure 7. Composite sketch of all gridded collection units.

Figure 8. Views of shovel testing (c) and surface collecting (a,b,d) at 38Ch1660.

Figure 9. Views of N525E290, west wall of the dwelling: a,b) location and excavation of unit, facing west, c) portion of wall showing struck mortar joint, d) west wall of structure at base of excavation.

Figure 10. N530E290, N530E295, northwest corner of dwelling: a) north wall, facing south, b) north wall, facing west.

Figure 11. Composite map of excavated dwelling foundation.

Figure 12. Photographs of composite excavation, east wall of dwelling: a) chimney/fire box, facing south, b) east wall and northeast corner, facing north, c) hearth/fire box, facing north, d) southeast corner, facing west.

Figure 13. Views of the mound, with excavation in progress: a) exterior of east wall/chimney facing west, b) mapping east wall, c) excavating northeast corner.

Figure 14. Unit N525E400, excavation at various levels: a) base of zone 1, b) base of feature 1, c) top of feature 1, d) close-up of feature 10, visible in b.

Figure 15. Planview of N525E400 at the level of Feature 1, zone 3.

Figure 16. Profile drawings, N525E400.

Figure 17. Distribution and density map, brick rubble from shovel tests.

Figure 18. Distribution of brick and other architectural items from surface collection.

Figure 19. Distribution of total artifacts from shovel tests.

Figure 20. Distribution of total artifacts, surface collection.

Figure 21. Distribution of pre-1760 ceramics and colono wares, surface collection.

Figure 22. Distribution of refined earthenwares and colono wares, surface collection.

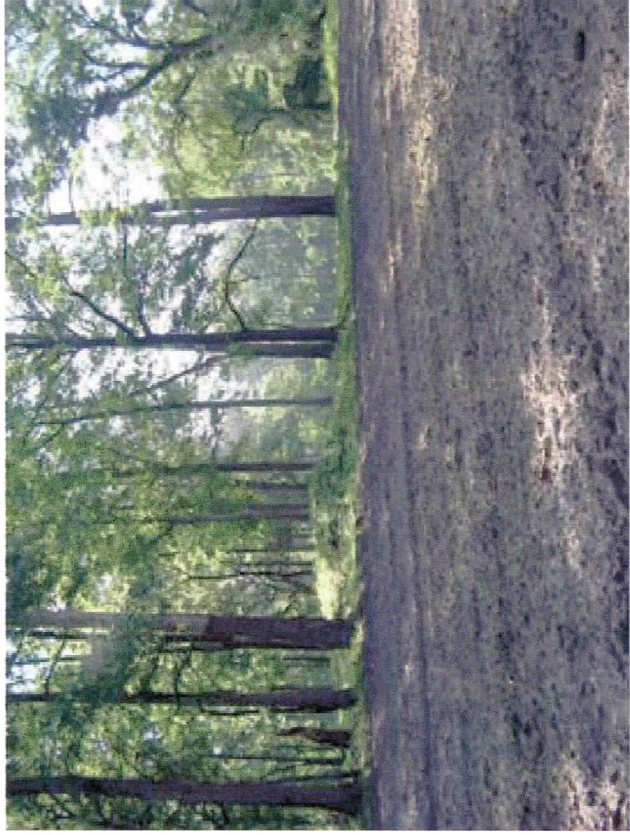




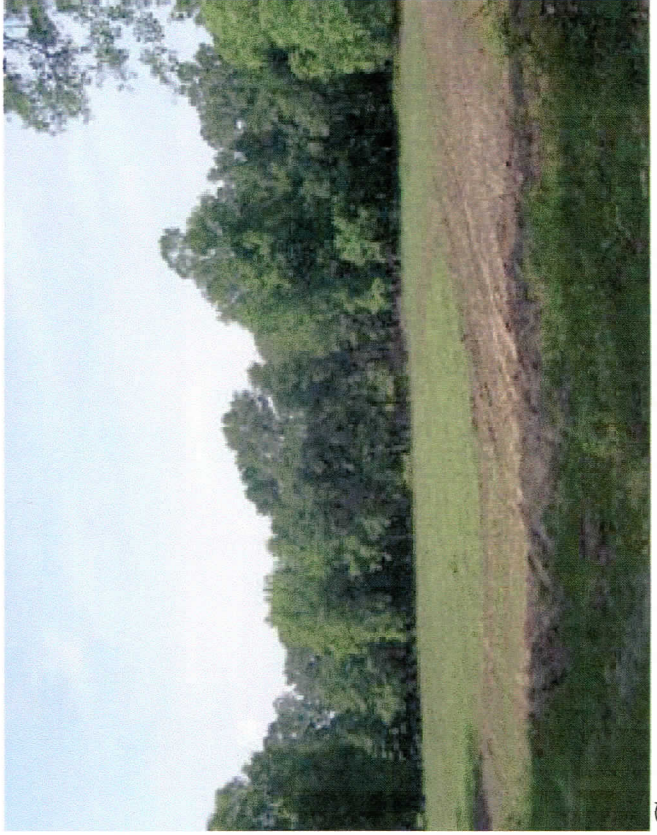
B.



D.



A.



C.



A.



B.



A.



B.



A.



B.



C.



D.



A.



B.



C.



D.



A.



B.



A.



B.



C.



D.



A.



B.



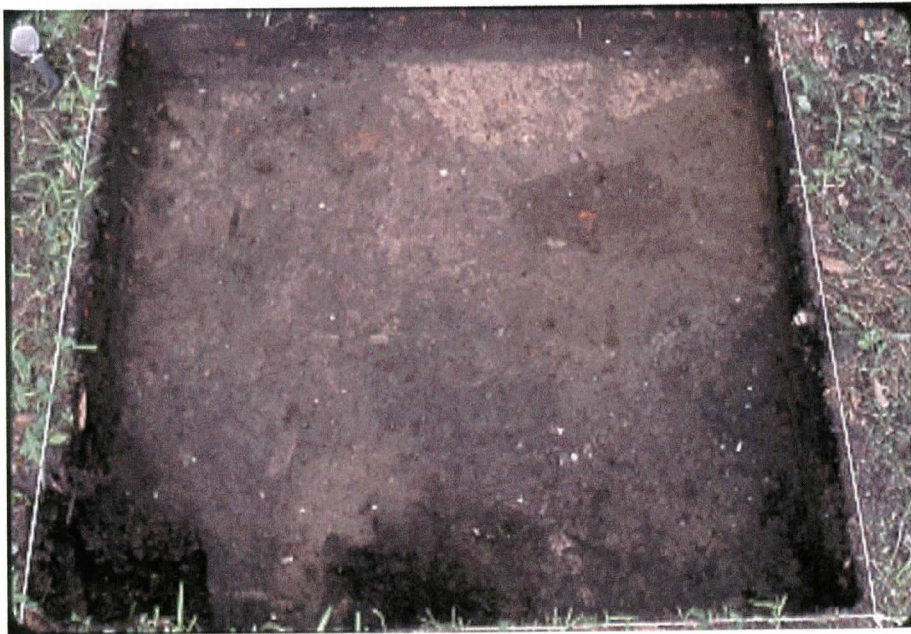
C.



A.



C.

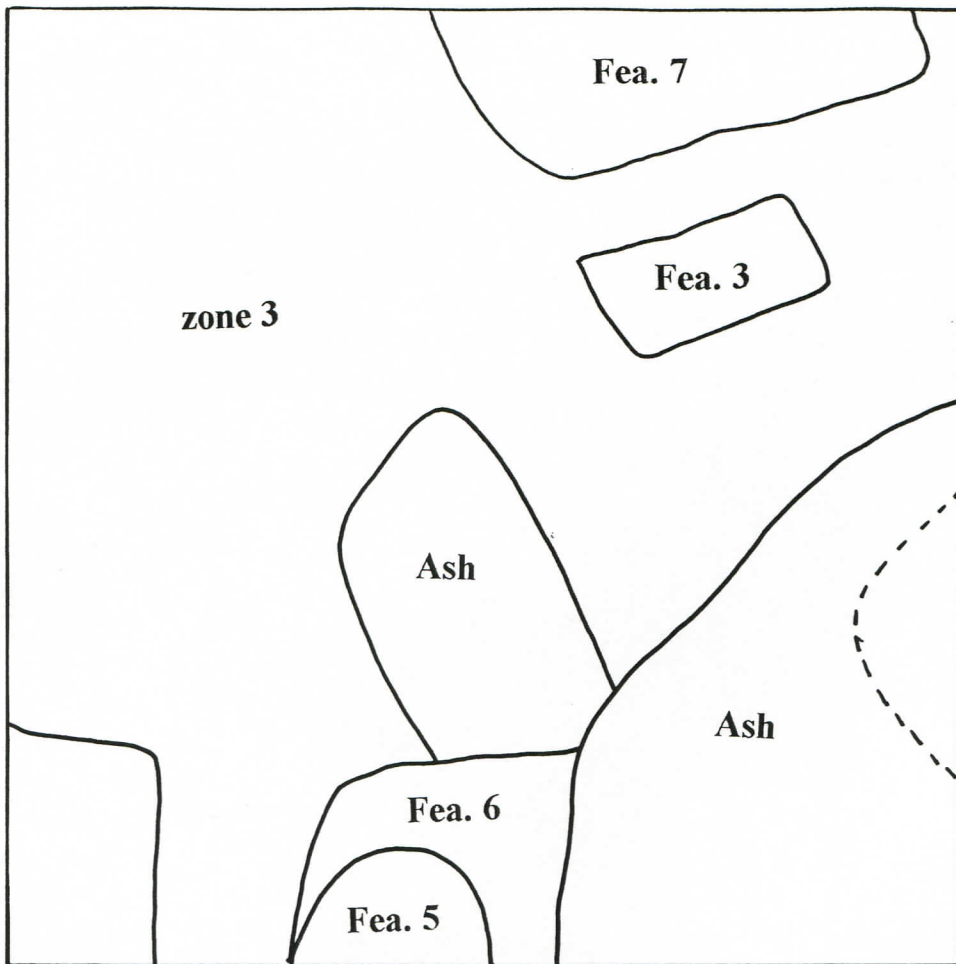


B.



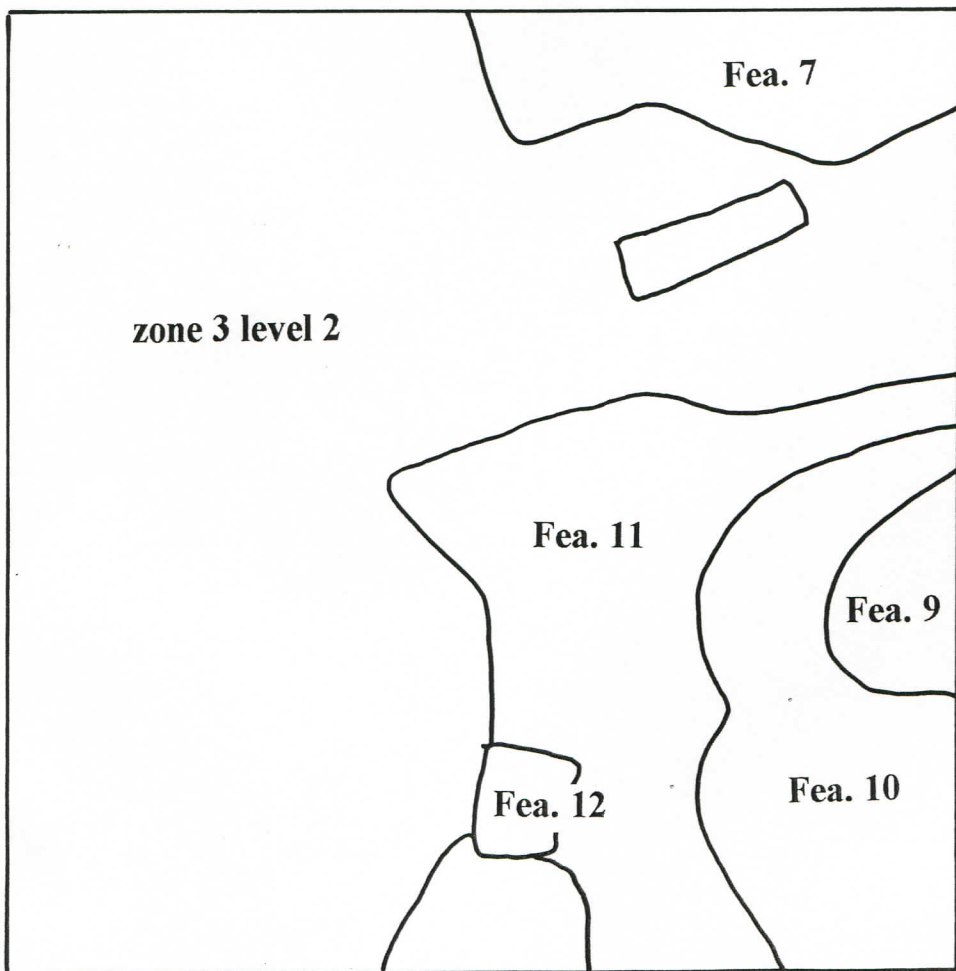
D.





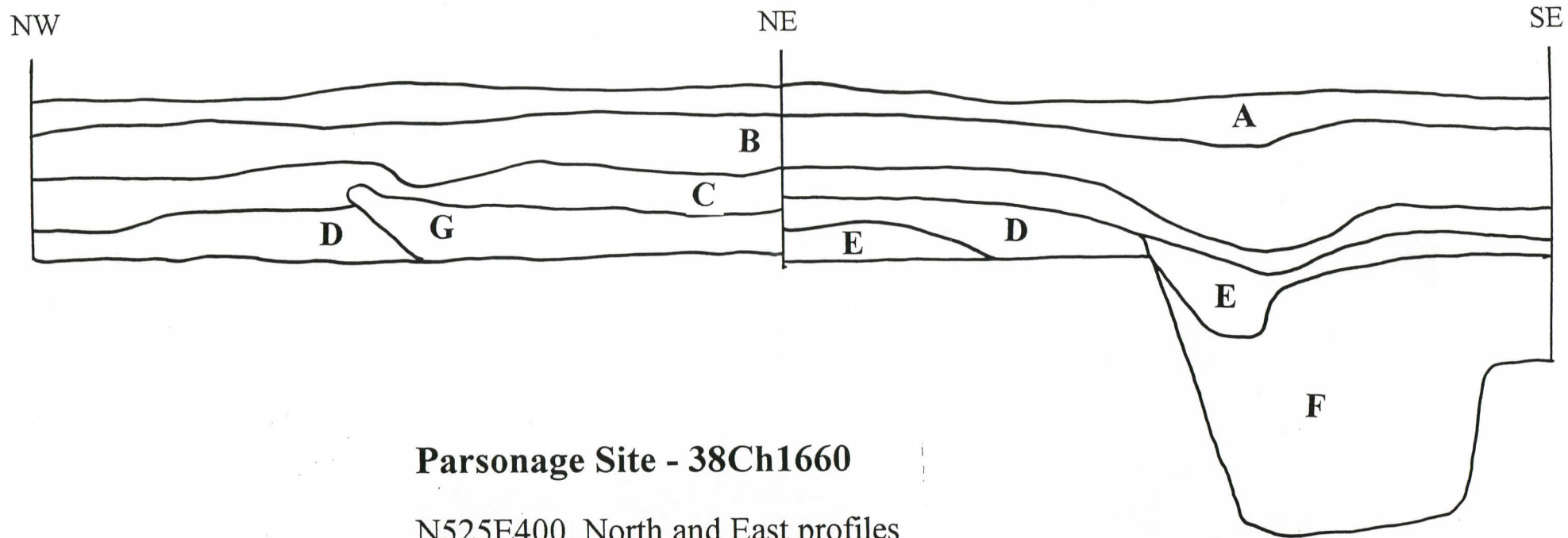
**38 Ch 1660**  
N525 E400

Base Feature 1



**38 Ch 1660**  
N525 E400

Base Zone 3



**Parsonage Site - 38Ch1660**

N525E400, North and East profiles

- A. Excavated as Zone 1; very dark brown loamy sand
- B. Excavated as Zone 2; dark brown loamy sand
- C. Excavated as Feature 1; ash layer
- D. Excavated as Zone 3; tan loamy sand mottled with brown and dark brown sand
- E. Light yellowish brown loamy sand mottled with loamy brown sand
- F. Excavated as Feature 10; light yellowish brown loamy sand mottled with brown and very dark brown loamy sand.
- G. Excavated as Feature 7; light yellowish brown loamy sand mottled with orange clay.

The Parsonage Site  
38 Ch 1660

N (grid)

N (magnetic)



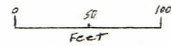
"South Field"  
38 Ch 1662

Brick (House)  
Mound

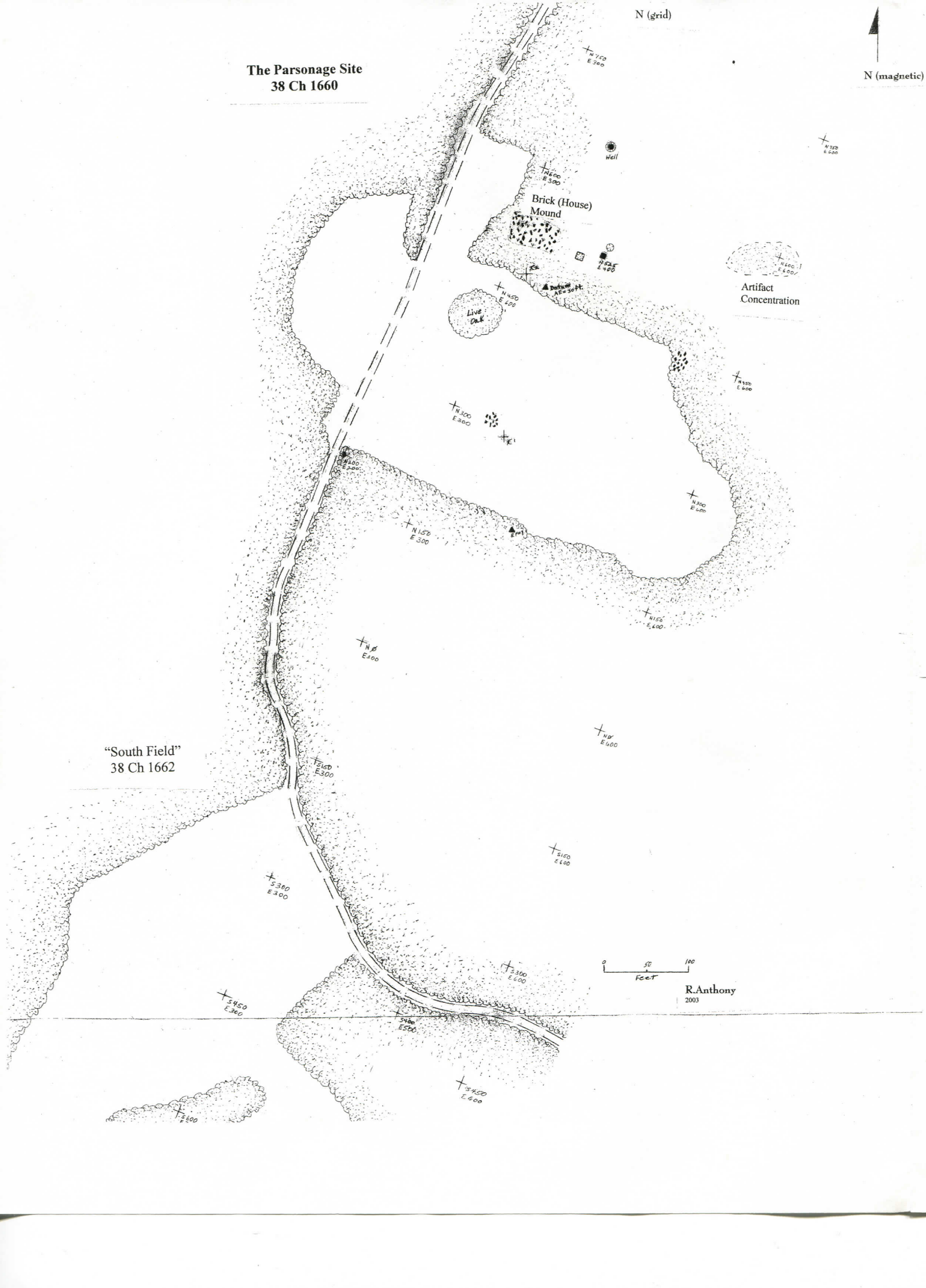
Artifact  
Concentration

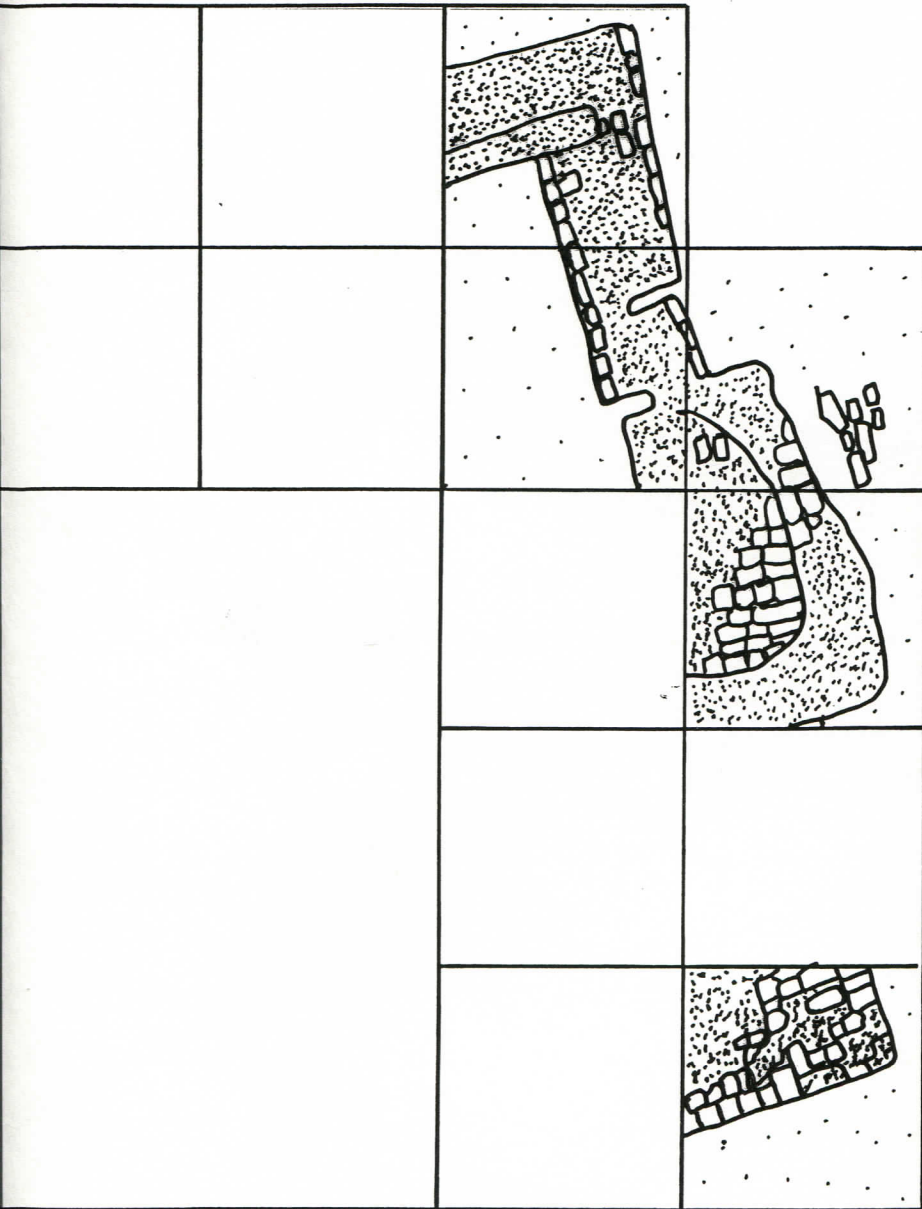
Live  
Oak

Well



R. Anthony  
2003





**Parsonage Site  
38Ch1660**

Composite Map, units  
excavated, and proposed  
for excavation to expose  
building foundation  
Scale 1:40

315

E320

E325

E330

E335

N535

N530

N525

N520

N515

N510

N505

E290

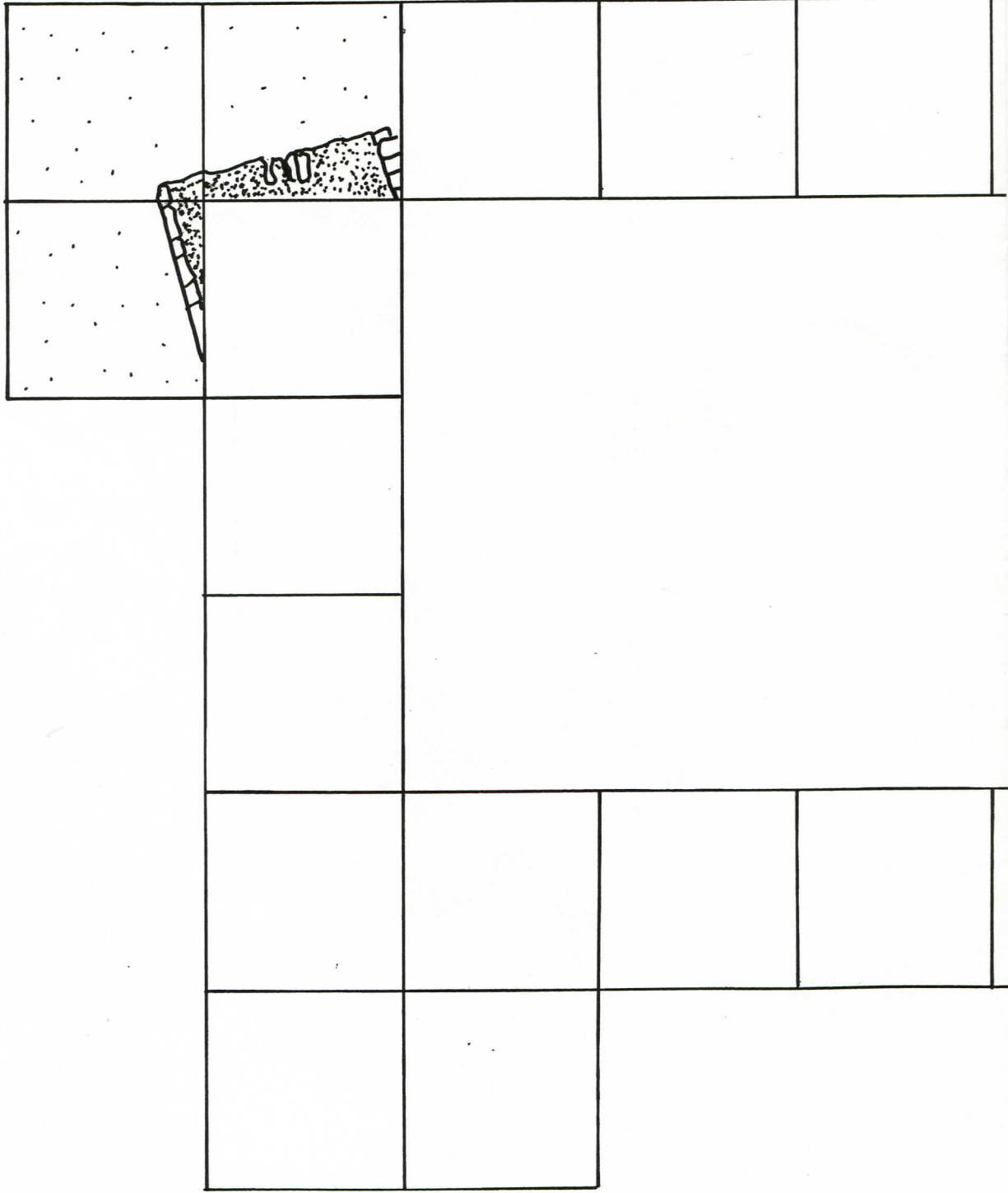
E295

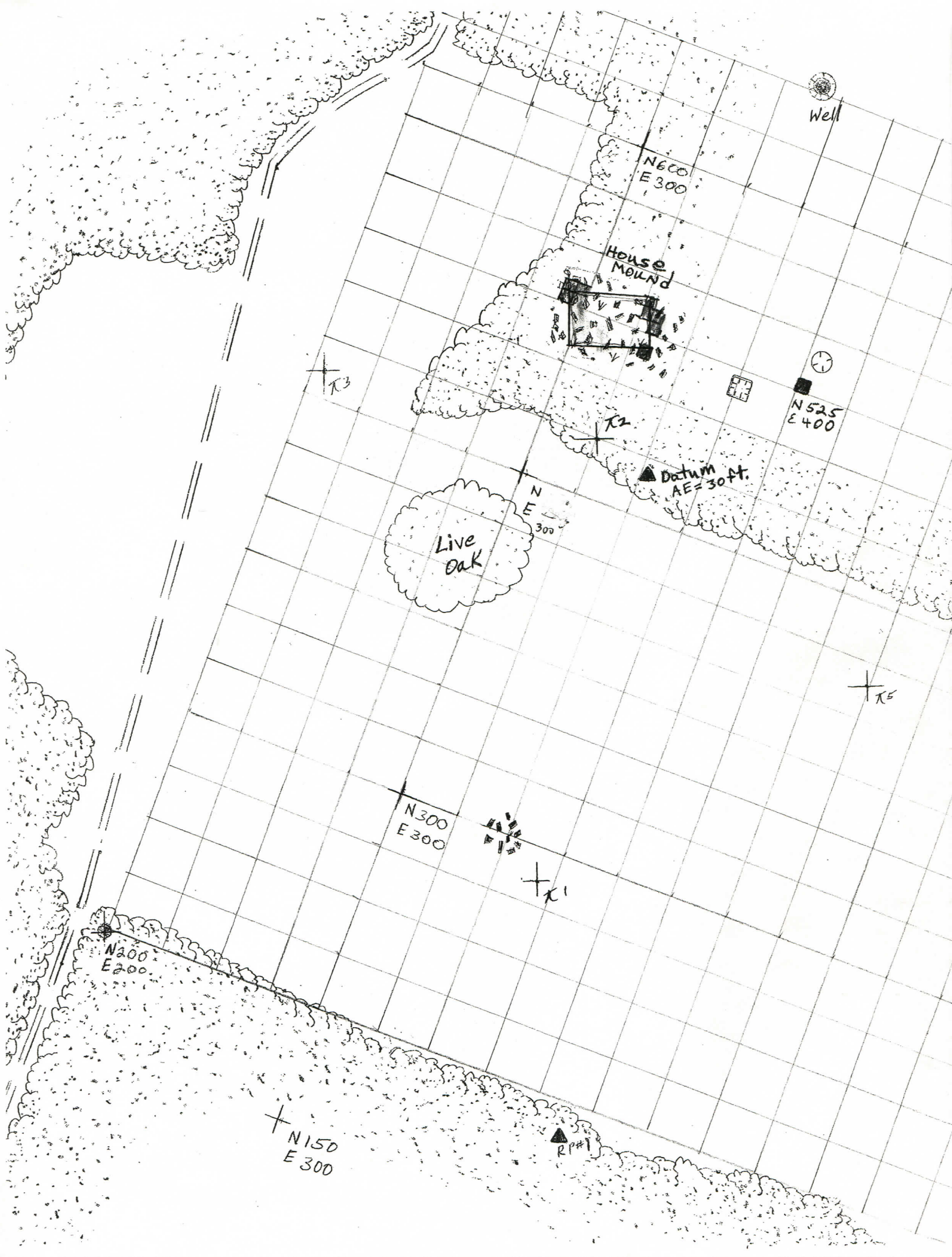
E300

E305

E310

E





Well

N600  
E300

House  
MOULD

N525  
E400

▲ Datum  
AE=30ft.

Live  
Oak

N  
E  
300

N300  
E300

N200  
E200

N150  
E300

RP#1

K3

K2

K5

K1

+  
N750  
E600

+  
R7

R6  
N600  
E600

N450  
E600

N300  
E600

