## Archaeological Testing of the Settlers House Site and Presumed Location of Liberty Church, Kettle Creek Battlefield, Wilkes County, Georgia

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## Introduction

The Kettle Creek Battlefield Association, Inc. (KCBA) is a non-profit organization founded in 2011 and dedicated to the preservation and better understanding of the important Revolutionary War battle that took place in today's southwestern Wilkes County on February 14, 1779 (Figure 1). Known as the battle of Kettle Creek, the battlefield today is synonymous with a prominent, 80-foot high knoll directly abutting Kettle Creek that is known as War Hill (Figure 2). In 1930 the Kettle Creek chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution successfully lobbied the United States War Department to place a large stone monument on the crest of War Hill, to mark and commemorate this battle site (labeled as Historical Monument on Figure 2). Kettle Creek Battlefield was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on June 26, 1975, encompassing a 40-acre tract that contains War Hill and a small amount of adjoining land that at the time was in private hands.

In spite of the monuments on the crest of War Hill and its placement on the National Register, almost no archaeological field investigation had been conducted to learn where the various aspects of the battle actually took place until the past decade. Historic accounts and analyses of these accounts in light of modern topographic maps could paint a fairly detailed picture of the fierce, oneday battle, but without contemporary battle maps or corroborating archaeological evidence there has been uncertainty and imprecision in trying to reconstruct the battlefield. This lack of archaeological research was significantly remedied with a comprehensive document review and extensive metal detector survey directed and authored by Dan Elliott in 2008. Elliott's (2008) study, grounded in previous historic research by Robert Scott Davis and Ken Thomas, showed that a "core area" of the battlefield would encompass about 200 acres around War Hill. As a result of his 2008 metal detecting work, Dan Elliott prepared and submitted an archaeological site form for the battlefield, which was assigned site number 9WS370. In cooperation with the Kettle Creek chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Georgia Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, and the City of Washington, Georgia, the KCBA began supporting a long-term program of archaeological research on the battlefield site that was spurred by Elliott's ground breaking work in 2008.

The present project is one of series of archaeological investigations into various aspects of the battlefield site itself, archaeological site 9WS370, and into related nearby sites. Much of the recent archaeological work has focused on detecting and documenting the field burials of those killed in the February 14, 1779 battle at Kettle Creek. This has encompassed using cadaver dogs and ground penetrating radar to locate potential graves (Bigman 2015, 2016, 2017) and hand archaeology and soil science to verify the indications from the remote sensing (Gresham et al. 2018). The present project, the subject of this report, is the archaeological investigation of a house site on a hill top immediately northwest of War Hill, sometimes known as the Hammett House but here called the Settlers House, and the probable location of the former ca. 1780s Liberty Church (Figure 2).

## **Previous Research**

Elliott's 2008 large-scale metal detector survey was conducted at two levels. First, two metal detectorists conducted a preliminary survey of the entire approximate 1-square mile (640 acre) target area that included both of our targets of investigation (Figure 3). Using topographic maps and GPS units they thoroughly visually inspected the entire area seeking out landforms and features (old roads,



Figure 1. Location of Kettle Creek Battlefield (source: USGS 1:500,000 Base Map of Georgia).



Figure 2. USGS topographic map of Kettle Creek Battlefield locale, showing the boundaries of the Kettle Creek Battlefield archaeological site and the location of the Settlers House site and proposed location of Liberty Church (source: USGS 7.5' Philomath quadrangle).



Figure 3. Target area of Elliott's 2008 metal detector survey (from Elliott 2008:11).

rock piles) that hinted at possible historic period use so that these could be metal detected. In this manner, about 20 activity loci, places where metal artifacts were concentrated to some degree, were discerned (Figure 4). These loci included an old house site, labeled Locus E, and a late nineteenth century house site, labeled Locus K, near where some believe Liberty Church once stood.



Figure 4. Results of Elliott's metal detector survey, showing artifact locations (blue diamonds) and activity loci (capital letters in boxes) (from Elliott 2008:134).

Elliott's (2008:110) Locus E is the Settlers House site, which he describes as:

A wood's road runs through the center of Locus E. The locus contains the ruins of several buildings that are probably part of a farmstead complex. The ruins include one large brick chimney fall, two or more rock chimney falls, and several large rock foundation stones. The deposit of metal artifacts defined the limits of the farmstead. Locus E yielded 175 historic artifacts and one aboriginal artifact (a ground basalt celt). Surprisingly, only one artifact in the Arms Group was discovered in Locus E. That artifact was a piece of hardware from an 18<sup>th</sup> century musket. The total absence of lead balls probably indicates that Locus E was not the scene of a fire fight during the battle.

Test Unit 2, a 1 m by 1 m excavation, was placed adjacent to a brick chimney fall at Locus E. That test revealed a shallow deposit of early 19<sup>th</sup> century artifacts, including machine cut nails and glass. Two shovel tests also were excavated at Locus E. One was excavated near a large granite foundation stone. That test revealed shallow eroded soils and yielded a small quantity of glass. The other shovel test was placed in an area of suspected midden soil. Although the organic soil deposit was thicker in this area, compared to the previous shovel test, it yielded only a few artifacts.

Elliott detected, excavated and plotted 154 metal detected artifacts in Locus E, plus 16 artifacts from a test unit and five from two shovel tests. About 43 percent of these artifacts were described as wrought nails or wrought nail fragments. These 175 artifacts are listed in Appendix A and the metal detected ones are plotted here as Figure 5. There are 131 plotted locations of metal detected artifacts, reflecting that some hits yielded more than one artifact. Elliott's artifacts are summarized by type and group in Table 1. We are grateful to Dan Elliott for readily providing us with his metal detector data. One important result of the metal detector survey was that no lead balls (bullets) and only one gun part was found at the Locus E house site, leading Elliott to conclude that Locus E probably was not the scene of a fire fight during the battle.

Architecture Group		thimble	1
wrought nail	55	umbrella rib	1
wrought nail frag.	21	Farming Group	
machine cut nail	20	horseshoe	5
unident. nail	5	hoe	1
wrought hardware	5	handle	1
brick frag.	1	Arms Group	
Kitchen Group		gun side plate	1
iron kettle/pot frags.	11	Unidentified Metal	
pearlware	3	wrought iron	19
iron fork (2 tine)	1	iron	9
pewter	2	brass	2
olive green bot. glass	2	Prehistoric	
clear curved glass	4	celt	1
crown cap (modern)	1	quartz flake	1
Clothing/Personal Group			
button, brass	1	TOTAL	175
buckle, iron	1		

Table 1. Artifacts reported by Elliott's (2008) metal detecting of Locus E, by group.



Figure 5. Distribution of metal detected artifacts in Locus E located by Elliott (2008).

In addition to the wide-area metal detecting in and around Locus E, Elliott excavated a 1x1m test unit next to the brick chimney that he observed downslope at the western edge of the site. This unit revealed shallow soils (over red clay subsoil) that contained ten machine cut nails, a modern bottle cap, a fragment of green-edged pearlware, three piece of clear bottle or goblet glass and a prehistoric quartz flake. Two shovel tests yielded two pieces of curved glass, a fragment of pearlware and two pieces of iron.

Elliott (2008) also metal detected on a hill top northwest of War Hill where it has long been believed that Liberty Church and an associated cemetery once stood. This was his Locus K (Figure 4). He found so much late nineteenth century material, relating to a late nineteenth to early twentieth century house site, that metal detecting was not effective and so it was only cursorily inspected. There is a variety of evidence to indicate that the original location of Liberty Church was on this hill top just northwest of War Hill, and that the church, which existed in its first location for about 12 years, had a small cemetery, perhaps with only two graves but possibly more. Elliott (2008:29-32) presents this evidence, relying mostly on the research and interviews conducted by Robert Scott Davis and Ken Thomas in 1974 and 1975 in connection with their successful efforts to get the battlefield listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Most notably Davis and Thomas (1975) observed and sketched a pile of bricks and a pile of rocks and observed other field stone grave markers in 1974. The stone pile was believed to be the chimney base to the nineteenth century house, while the 3-ft high pile of bricks was believed to be a grave marker.

The hill top has been bulldozed to create a logging deck in the past two decades and is now ringed with push piles of topsoil that contain brick fragments and nineteenth to early twentieth century artifacts. The artifacts indicate the former presence of the latter nineteenth to early twentieth century house or farmstead on the hill top, and there is no intact evidence of the brick pile and stone chimney base documented by Davis and Thomas in 1974. In an effort to non-invasively explore for evidence of the church and/or its associated graves, the Kettle Creek Battlefield Association contracted with Bigman Geophysical, LLC to conduct a ground penetrating radar (GPR) survey of a 30 x 30 m grid on the bare, nearly level hill top logging deck. Bigman (2018) reports that a human remains detection dog survey in 2015 failed to encounter any alerts to human remains on the hill top. Bigman's GPR survey encountered a 20- to 75-cm deep, 10-m diameter circular anomaly in the northern corner of his grid that he concludes "may indicate the remains of Liberty Church" (Bigman 2018:2) (Figure 6). Bigman also encountered several smaller anomalies described as "isolated reflection events consistent with the expectations of possible unmarked graves" near the center of the grid (Bigman 2018:2). He further concludes that there does not appear to be a cemetery in the surveyed grid, but there is a possibility of individual unmarked graves. He depicts two such isolated reflections that are possibly graves as A and B in Figure 6 (Bigman 2018:6).

## Field Investigations at the Settlers House

Today the Settlers House site is most visibly marked by an outcrop of large rocks on a hill crest that is bisected north-south by a woods road. Upon further inspection, other historic period features are also visible. The site is known by many researchers and is labeled on some signs at Kettle Creek as the Hammett House, named for landowners who may have built and occupied a house on the property at the time of the Battle of Kettle Creek, in 1779. Because the presence of the



Figure 6. Bigman's (2018:6) GPR time-slice showing possible Liberty Church and possible unmarked graves, A and B.

house at that time period is not firmly documented, and because Elliott's (2008) metal detector survey indicated no fighting at the house site (possibly suggesting it was not present at the time), there is some question as to the construction and earliest occupation date of the site. Our goals for investigating the site were to establish site boundaries, gather more evidence of its dating and further map and document the features associated with the site. Since this site lies outside of the boundaries of the Kettle Creek Battlefield site (9WS370), we treated it as a separate site, which has been assigned the number 9WS414 (Appendix B).

Our inspection of the Settlers House (Elliott's Locus E) immediately revealed the central, north-south woods road (Figure 7), a large rock outcrop with piled rocks on it (Figure 8), and three large fieldstones that are very likely foundation stones for a structure (Figure 9). We did not immediately locate the "large brick chimney fall", which led to helpful discussion and clarification with Elliott, who recalled that the brick chimney was located on a slope at the western edge of the cloud of metal detector hits, about 20 m west of the central woods road. The general area of Elliott's Locus E was in mature woods (mostly pines) when he conducted his work in 2007/2008, but was extensively clearcut in 2015/2016. The clearcutting left intact the mature trees in a north-south strip about 10 m on either side of the woods road, and the area beyond this, especially on the west side of the site, was intensively cleared of timber. In 2018/2019 this clearcut area was in thick secondary growth and dense briars. On our third effort to locate this large brick chimney fall, or at least some scattered brick from the chimney, we did locate it. It is now a low (20 cm) mound of brick covered in soil and vegetation (Figure 10). Elliott's 1-x-1-m test unit dug in 2008 on the south side of the chimney stack), covered in soil, extends about 4 m to the east of the mound. Minor hand clearing of



Figure 7. View of logging road through the Settlers House site, site 9WS414, looking south from north edge of site.



Figure 8. View of possible stone chimney base, looking northwest.



Figure 9. View of field stone pier.



Figure 10. View of brick chimney fall, looking north.

the mound revealed some seemingly intact brick that would be the base of the chimney. We recovered one of the hand-made bricks from the chimney for a sample.

Our work essentially consisted of excavating a 10-m grid of 30-cm diameter shovel tests over the site (Figure 11). The bulk of this shovel testing was done on October 31, 2018 by the author, SAS archaeologist Ron Schoettmer and KCBA member and amateur archaeologist Dr. David Noble. The shovel testing was completed on January 25, 2019 by the author, SAS archaeologist James King and Dr. Noble. Dr. Noble also conducted limited area metal detecting near the center of the site. King and Gresham returned to the site to locate the brick chimney on February 15, 2019. The grid was established with a compass and fiberglass tape. An arbitrary center point of 100 North, 100 East was established in an undergrowth-free, level area just west of the logging road that bisects the site. The perceived site center point 100N, 100E was recorded with a recreational grade GPS unit as being at Zone 17 0324775E, 3729495N (NAD 27 datum). Positive shovel tests (and a few negative ones) were marked with pink flagging. Soil was passed through quarter inch hardware cloth and the stratigraphy of each test was recorded. During the laying out of the grid and the walking back and forth to the shovel tests, surface features were observed and mapped.

The site is centered on the north-south logging road that runs along a ridge crest. Just a couple of meters east of the road is the principal visual feature of the site, an outcrop/pile of granite-like rocks and boulders at the very crest of the ridge (Figure 8). This has been interpreted by some as a stone chimney base, but we could see no clear evidence to support this. It is composed of some very large rocks, several of which are embedded and essentially are bedrock. Most of the non-embedded rocks are about 30 to 50 cm in maximum dimension. We cleared off the leaf litter and inspected this jumble of rocks and conclude that it does not look like the typical stone chimney base. There is no visible squaring of a chimney base and no evidence of mortar or clay chinking. The rocks are angular and seem to be of a size and shape that would be very difficult to use to construct a chimney. It is conceivable that this was a chimney, and perhaps was only the base, firebox and stub of a chimney that was topped with a stick and clay flue. However, we remain doubtful that this was a chimney, especially in light of the presence of a brick chimney 30 m to the west.

Directly across the logging road from the rock outcrop are three large rocks that appear to be piers for a structure (Figure 9). The two larger, flat-topped stones are 6.5 m (21 ft) apart, while a third stone is 3.8 m west of the southern stone (Figure 11). The three stones are not at precisely right angles and we cannot be certain that they are indeed piers or that they have not been moved. Shovel testing began at the rock outcrop (possible chimney) and extended outward in a grid pattern in the four cardinal directions. As shown in Figure 11, this resulted in 15 positive and 27 negative shovel tests. While shovel testing, we observed and mapped a cluster of rocks at an apparent terrace break in the northeast portion of the site, a 2-m diameter, 30-cm high rock pile in the southeast portion of the site, a small cluster of surface rocks at about 78 N, 118 E and a small hole that appeared to be man-made at about 70 N, 114 E (Figure 11). Interestingly, the shovel tests directly north and south of the southeastern rock pile both contained historic period ceramics, plain and hand painted whiteware. The shovel testing was extended outward to encompass the main body of Elliott's (2008) metal detector hits, as shown in Figure 12. Based on the combination of our shovel test data, the location of visible features and Elliott's (2008) metal detector data, we drew site boundaries as shown in Figures 11 and 12. We marked these boundaries with red and white candy striped flagging



Figure 11. Map of the Settlers House, site 9WS414, showing positive and negative shovel tests and surface features.



Figure 12. Map of the Settlers House site with Elliott's (2008) metal detector hits superimposed with red dots (UTM grid lines at NAD 27 datum added).

(Figure 13) on January 25, 2019. Settlers House site 9WS414 is roughly 65 m by 70 m, or about 1.05 acre.



Figure 13. Candy striped flagging marks the boundaries of the Settlers House site.

The following artifacts were recovered by the systematic shovel testing (from west to east, north to south) and limited metal detecting in October 2018 and January 2019:

ST 110 N, 100 E	2	cut nails, 1 inch long
(0-12 cm)	3	quartz late stage reduction flakes
ST 110 N, 110 E (0-15 cm)	1	cut nail, "T" head, fragment 1.5 inches long
ST 100 N, 90 E	2	plain whiteware
(0-18 cm)	6	quartz late stage reduction flakes
ST 100 N, 100 E	1	plain whiteware (in 2 pieces)
(0-20 cm)	1	quartz early stage reduction flake
ST 100 N, 110 E (0-23 cm)	1 1 1	aqua window glass, 1 mm thick cut nail, rose head, 1.5 inches long quartz late stage reduction flake

ST 100 N, 120 E		
(0-20 cm)	1	cut nail fragment, rose head, 1.5 inches long
	1	quartz angular waste
	1	unidentified rock, iron ore?
ST 90 N, 100 E		
(0-25 cm)	1	green shell edged whiteware
(0 25 011)	1	blue edged whiteware
	1	plain whiteware
ST 90 N, 120 E		
(0-18 cm)	1	plain pearlware
	1	hand-painted, polychrome pearlware, burned
	1	cut nail, 1.5 inches long
	1	quartz late stage reduction flake
ST 80 N, 100 E		
(0-20 cm)	1	plain whiteware
(0-20 cm)	1	plain wintewale
ST 80 N, 110 E		
(0-18 cm)	1	plain pearlware
	1	blue transfer print pearlware
	1	purple transfer print whiteware
CT 00.31 100 F		
ST 80 N, 120 E	1	1
(0-15 cm)	1	hand-painted, polychrome pearlware
	1	plain whiteware
	1	cut nail, headless fragment, 1.2 inches long
ST 80 N, 130 E		
(0-15 cm)	1	plain whiteware
(* *** ****)	1	olive green bottle glass, 1.8 to 3.7 mm thick
	1	cut nail, clinched, rose head, 2 inches long
	1	quartz late stage reduction flake
ST 80 N, 140 E		
(0-10)	2	plain whiteware
ST 70 N, 120 E		
(0-15 cm)	1	cut nail, 2 inches long
(0 10 011)	1	eur nam, 2 menes rong
ST 70 N, 140 E		
(0-8 cm)	1	blue hand-painted whiteware
Metal Detector Hits		
#1 1	cut na	il fragment, 1.5 inches long
#2 1		il, "T" head, 2 inches long
#3 1		ht(?) nail, 2 inches long
1		fragment
1		ated prehistoric sherd, very small, cord marked?
#4 1		ht nail, rose head, clenched, 2.5 inches long
#5 1	-	il fragment, 1.25 inches long
#6 1		il fragment, 1.4 inches long
#7 1		ntified square nail, 1.25 inches long
1	plain v	whiteware

	3	quartz late stage reduction flakes
#8	2	quartz late stage reduction flakes
#9	1	cut nail, 2 inches long

These 59 artifacts are tallied by group and type in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of Artifacts Recovered at Site 9WS414 by Shovel Testing and Metal Detecting in
2018 and 2019.

Class	type	decoration		Metal	Total
			Tests	Detect.	
Ceram			18	1	19
	Pearlwa		5		5
		plain	2		2
		hand painted polychrome	2		2
		blue transfer print	1		1
	Whitew		13	1	14
		plain	9	1	10
		green shell edged	1		1
		blue edged	1		1
		purple transfer print	1		1
		blue hand painted	1		1
Nails			9	8	17
	Wrougł	ıt		2	2
	C C	plain		1	1
		rose head		1	1
	Machin	e Cut	9	5	14
		plain	4	1	5
		T head	1	1	2
		rose head	2		2
		fragment	2	3	5
	Uniden	tified square		1	1
Glass			2		2
Olubb	Window	v, 1 mm thick	1		1
		olive green	1		1
Brick	fragment	-		1	1
DITCK,	maginem			1	1
Total Historic			29	10	39
Prehist	toric				
	quartz f	laking debris	14	5	19
		inknown decoration		1	1
Grand	Total		43	16	59

To summarize further, the shovel testing alone yielded 42 percent historic period ceramics, 33 percent prehistoric flaking debris, 21 percent nails and 5 percent glass fragments. In contrast to Elliott's metal detector results (Appendix A, Table 1), where wrought nails outnumbered machine cut nails 76 to 20, our shovel testing and limited metal detecting revealed that machine cut nails outnumbered wrought nails 14 to 2. David Noble informed us that since Elliott's initial analysis in 2007, his metal detected artifacts have undergone electrolysis and many are now seen to actually be machine cut nails. We do not have a firm assessment of the true ratio of wrought to machine cut nails, but clearly there are large numbers of each, with the strong possibility that cut nails outnumber wrought nails. Cut nails did not come into use in the United States until the 1790s, and the period from then to 1830 encompasses a remarkable technological transition from wrought to cut nails (Nelson n.d.). During this period wrought nails continued to be used, or used up, as machine cut nails became more plentiful and cheaper due to a burgeoning of cut nail manufacturers and improved transportation of goods. The large number of cut nails at the Settlers House suggests that the house dates to after 1790, and perhaps after 1800. This is supported by the presence of pearlware and whiteware that indicates use of the house after the battle date of 1779. However, we cannot rule out the possibility that there was a simple cabin here in 1779, which used a modest number of wrought nails, and that this cabin was expanded or replaced in the 1800s using machine cut nails. On the whole, however, the existing evidence points to an early nineteenth century construction and use date for the Settlers House.

We assume that the brick chimney observed and explored by Elliott in 2007/2008 was for the main house at the site. It is somewhat unusual for the house to be off the crest of a ridge, on a ridge slope. The nails in Elliott's test unit next to the chimney were entirely machine cut, indicating a post-1790s date for that house. Most of the nails we encountered on the crest of the ridge and especially in and around the apparent pier stones were also cut, with a 14 to 2 count. Because electrolysis has revealed that some of Elliott's wrought nails are actually cut, we are unclear about the true number, percentage and distribution of wrought nails on the site. We have considered the possibility that the site contains a ca. 1779 house constructed with only wrought nails and a later house constructed with machine cut nails. There is a fairly wide distribution of wrought nails, and we were unable to discern any particular cluster that would indicate the presence of a 1779 house. Almost certainly the wide distribution of so many nails (cut and wrought) and other artifacts east of the former brick chimney indicates the presence of other structures/outbuildings and activity areas on the crest of the ridge and over to the east side of the ridge. While it seems clear that some artifacts have been dislocated by timbering activity, and this may be particularly the case with material being carried southward down the central logging road, we believe the distribution is mostly a true reflection of deposition. That is, that most of the site area indicated in Figure 11 was indeed used by settlers who built outbuildings and created activity areas in the yard area above the house, which was located on the western flank of the ridge.

## Field Investigations Liberty Church

The proposed, likely location of the ca. 1785 Liberty Church and possible associated cemetery (see Figure 2) is now a bulldozed logging deck (Figure 14). At the request of the Kettle Creek Battlefield Association, we were asked to work with David Noble in minimally investigating, or ground truthing, three anomalies detected by Dan Bigman in 2018 with ground penetrating radar in a 30 x 30 m grid that he established across the hill-top logging deck. We observed the marked



Figure 14. View of logging deck, looking west southwest.

corners of Bigman's (2018) grid that Bigman established for his GPR study of this area, and measured that it is aligned at 300° (Figure 15). We measured the eastern corner of this grid to be at Zone 17 0325118E, 3729617N (NAD 27 datum). Dr. Noble was able to help guide us to the precise locations of these anomalies. On October 31, 2018 Gresham and Schoetmer excavated two 30-cm diameter shovel tests in the northern corner, where Bigman noted high-amplitude reflections that might be indicative of a structure, possibly Liberty Church (Figure 16). Shovel Test 1 had the following stratigraphy: 0-12 cm, dark gray sandy loam with organic logging debris and artifacts; 12-28 cm, yellow coarse sand; 28-35 cm yellow sandy clay subsoil, becoming mottled and more clayey with depth. The top 12 cm of this test yielded: 2 plain whiteware, 3 clear bottle glass, 1 aqua bottle glass, and 2 wire nails. This test appeared to reveal a thin top zone of dislocated soil and logging debris that contained late nineteenth to early twentieth century household artifacts overlying a sandy clay subsoil. Shovel Test 2 was placed 6 m to the south-southwest of ST 1 (Figure 16) and had the following stratigraphy: 0-13 cm, gray sandy loam with artifacts; 13-34 cm, mottled light gray and tan sandy clay with reddish clay nodules and artifacts; 34-46 cm, mottled tan, yellow and gray sandy loam; 46-52+ cm, vellow sandy clay, becoming more clayey with depth. The following artifacts were recovered from the top two zones, 0-34 cm: 2 plain whiteware, 3 clear bottle glass, 1 aqua bottle glass, 2 brick fragments, 1 section of heavy chain (9 links), 2 bundles of fiber, and 2 quartz flakes. The artifacts from both shovel tests are almost certainly associated with the late nineteenth to early twentieth century occupation of the ridge top and, with the case of the chain, probably with twentieth century logging of the area. The author did not see any evidence of a former church building in this northern corner of the grid. In the case of a similar church site in neighboring Oglethorpe County, the ca. 1785 log Beth-Salem church, the evidence of that structure consisted of a cluster of wrought



**Figure 15.** Location of Bigman's (2018) GPR grid at presumed location of Liberty Church (source: USGS 7.5' Philomath quadrangle).



Figure 16. Bigman's (2018:6) GPR time-slice showing possible Liberty Church and possible unmarked graves, A and B, with SAS Shovel Tests and Cores added.

nails (some clenched) located about 10 m from a cemetery where founding minister Rev. John Newton was buried (Gresham 2014).

On January 25, 2019 Gresham, King and Noble returned to the site and extracted two 1-inch cores from a slight depression near the center of the grid where Noble had reckoned Bigman's anomalies A and B to be. As measured from the east corner of the grid, the first probe was 20 m to the southwest (along the grid line) and then 9.5 m to the northwest (Figure 16). It had the following stratigraphy:

Core #1

0-8 cm	grey clay
8-12 cm	yellowish-brown clay
12-22 cm	grey clay
22-26 cm	yellowish brown clay
26-31 cm	grey clay
31+ cm	yellowish sandy clay

The bands of clay were quite distinct, and thus seemed to reflect a relatively recent, multiple-episode infilling of the depression. In the author's opinion, the fill as reflected by the coring did not resemble typical grave shaft fill. The fill extended to about 31 cm below current ground surface, which probably has been lowered by the bulldozing of the logging deck, as evidenced by the linear mounds of topsoil that encircle much of the deck.

Core #2 was attempted to be placed 1.2 m to the north of Core #1, at the edge of the depression that at the time was holding rainwater, but the soil was impenetrable and the location was abandoned. We then moved it about 1 m to the west and about 1 m north of Core #1, within the standing water (mud puddle). Core #2 had the following stratigraphy:

Core #2

0-7 cm	grey sandy clay loam
7-19 cm	tan clay
19-22 cm	reddish brown clay
22-30+ cm	tan clay

If the hard soil of the abandoned coring is a measure of "natural" soil in this area, then Cores #1 and #2 encountered some sort of artificial depression. One might assume that ca. 1800 graves would be filled with a mixture of sandy loam topsoil, which could have been 30 to 50 cm thick, and underlying clayey loam and/or clay. The fill revealed by the two cores was fine clay, often in distinct layers. This appears to be more recent fill sediment, but we really do not know. We cannot rule out that Bigman's anomalies A and B and our Cores #1 and #2 reflect early nineteenth century graves, but we did not encounter compelling evidence to confirm these as graves.

## Summary and Recommendations

Our shovel testing of the Settlers House site, Georgia site number 9WS414, has supplemented the extensive metal detecting work conducted by Elliott (2008) and his colleagues. Artifact and above-ground features occur in an approximately 70 m by 70 m area on and around a ridge crest. The site is bisected by a north-south oriented woods road that passes by a large outcrop of rocks on the very crest of the ridge. These rocks, a few of which are embedded boulders, superficially resemble a rock chimney fall, but we believe they are more likely not a chimney feature. Directly across the woods road are three large rocks spaced several meters apart that appear to have been pier stones for a structure. In October, 2018 we conducted metal detecting around these likely pier stones and recovered five machine cut nails, two wrought nails and one unidentified nail. Based on the cut nails, this structure dates to after 1790, and based on its location about 20 m from a brick chimney, we believe it is likely some sort of outbuilding. Almost exactly 20 m due west of the pier stones, on the slope of the ridge, is a chimney base and fallen chimney stack made of hand-made bricks. Elliott (2008) excavated a 1-x-1-m test unit next to the chimney and recovered 10 machine cut nails, which indicate that this structure, almost certainly a house, dates to after 1790. In the southeast corner of the site is a low rock pile that may have been another historic period feature. It seems too small to be a chimney, and its function is unknown.

Elliott's (2008) metal detector survey of the site, which he labeled as Locus E, recovered 175 artifacts, most of which were nails. He found only one arms category artifact, a side plate to a gun. The lack of bullets indicates that little to no Revolutionary War fighting took place at this site. Our shovel testing and limited metal detecting recovered 59 artifacts comprised of 19 ceramic pieces (14 whiteware, 5 pearlware), 17 nails (2 wrought, 14 cut), one piece of olive green bottle glass, 1 piece of window glass, 1 brick fragment, 19 prehistoric quartz flakes, and one prehistoric sherd. The quartz flakes and sherd indicate that this is also a prehistoric site likely dating to several cultural periods. The fact that only one sherd was recovered from 42 shovel tests indicates that the late prehistoric use of the site was not substantial. The mix of whiteware and pearlware and wrought and cut nails suggests an early to mid-nineteenth century occupation of the site. While it is possible that the site reflects a brief and/or insubstantial Colonial era occupation, perhaps dating to as early as the Battle of Kettle Creek (1779), that is followed and largely masked by a more substantial and longer lived early to mid-nineteenth century occupation, it is our conclusion that it is more likely that the site reflects a single occupation during an undetermined span of time between about 1790 and the midnineteenth century. We found clear evidence of only one chimney, the brick one noted by Elliott (2008) that had only machine cut nails in the test unit next to it. We saw no indicators that the rock outcrop on top of the ridge or a small rock pile in the southeast corner of the site were parts of chimneys. As shown in Figure 17, there are no nails near the southeastern rock pile. However, as also shown in Figure 17, there is no particular clustering of nails around the confirmed brick chimney. The bulk of the nails were found in the central, ridge-crest portion of the site, from the area of the rock piers and to the south, southwest and southeast. There is also no readily apparent clustering or separation of wrought versus cut nails. Based solely on the distribution of the two types of metal detected nails, it would be nearly impossible to predict the location of structures on the site. We are not quite sure how to interpret this. Probably plowing and timbering have moved some artifacts around, but it is unlikely that these actions moved large numbers of nails from one side of the ridge



Figure 17. Distribution of nails recovered by Elliott (2008) at the Settlers House site.

to the other. It is likely that there were several structures on the site, quite possibly a house and several outbuildings. It is possible that some structures, such as outbuildings, were razed and that building materials, including embedded nails, were moved from one part of the site to another.

Our limited testing of anomalies detected by ground penetrating radar at the presumed location of Liberty Church and cemetery yielded limited results. At the possible location of the church in the northern corner of the GPR grid, two shovel tests failed to detect artifacts or other indicators of a church. Besides a scatter of wrought nails and the presence of associated graves, we are not sure what such evidence would be. Our Cores 1 and 2, near Anomalies A and B, are indeed depressions, but the coring to just 30 cm did not return any firm confirmation that they are graves. Given the fairly robust archival documentation that graves once did exist on this landform, we recommend that Anomalies A and B and Core locations 1 and 2 be considered possible graves until further confirmation can be conducted.

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# Appendix A

Tally of Metal Detected Artifacts from Site 9WS414, Elliott's Locus E

PP	NORTHING	EASTING	LOCI	COUNT	DESCRIPTION	WT G	DIAM MM
111	3729499	324783	Е	1	Button, plain brass, backmark	6.0	25,3
158	3729475	324802	Е	1	Unidentified nail		
160	3729474	324798	Е	1	Kettle, cast iron		
161	3729476	324797	Е	1	Hoe, iron		
162	3729484	324807	Е	1	Wrought iron hinge, decorative		
305	3729493	324778	Е	1	Scrap brass, sheet	4.9	
306	3729478	324794	Е	1	Pewter, flat fragment, possibly	34.5	50.6
432	3729464	324783	Е	1	Gun side plate and rivet, brass		
433	3729464	324782	Е	1	Wrought nail fragment		
434	3729466	324782	Е	2	Wrought nail fragment		
435	3729466	324783	Е	1	Thimble, brass		
436	3729468	324783	Е	1	Wrought nail fragment		
437	3729472	324782	Е	1	Wrought nail		
438	3729470	324784	Е	1	Horseshoe, 1/2		
439	3729473	324783	Е	1	Machine cut nail		
440	3729474	324782	Е	1	Wrought nail fragment		
441	3729477	324792	Е	1	Machine cut nail		
441	3729477	324792	E	1	Pearlware, undecorated, plate b		
442	3729478	324792	E	1	Wrought nail, T-head		
443	3729482	324795	Е	1	Wrought nail		
444	3729479	324796	Е	1	Wrought nail, rosehead		
445	3729487	324793	Е	1	Wrought nail, T-head		
446	3729487	324790	Е	1	Wrought nail fragment		
446	3729487	324790	Е	1	Dark olive green bottle glass		
447	3729489	324789	Е	1	Wrought nail, T-head		
448	3729491	324786	Е	1	Wrought nail fragment		
449	3729490	324793	Е	1	Wrought nail fragment		
449	3729490	324793	Е	1	Wrought nail, rosehead		
449	3729490	324793	Е	1	Wrought or cut nail fragment		
450	3729490	324799	Е	1	Pewter spoon bowl	28.8	
451	3729491	324803	Е	1	Dutch oven lid fragment, cast i		
452	3729494	324804	Е	1	Wrought nail, T-head		
452	3729494	324804	Е	1	Wrought iron, unid. Hardware		
453	3729497	324806	Е	1	Wrought nail		
454	3729503	324805	Е	1	Celt, basalt		
454	3729503	324805	Е	1	Pot, cast iron	190.0	
455	3729504	324807	Е	1	Wrought nail		
456	3729498	324802	E	1	Wrought iron hardware, loop		
457	3729495	324794	E	1	Door lock plate, wrought iron		
458	3729496	324795	E	1	Wrought nail, rosehead		
459	3729497	324794	Е	1	Wrought nail, rosehead		
459	3729497	324794	Е	1	Strap, wrought iron		
460	3729497	324795	Е	1	Wrought nai		
461	3729502	324791	E	1	Wrought nail, rosehead		
462	3729498	324795	Е	1	Kettle, cast iron	92.2	
463	3729483	324795	Е	1	Machine cut nail, early variety		
464	3729484	324794	Е	1	Wrought nail, T-head		
465	3729501	324787	Е	1	Wrought nail, T-head		
466	3729509	324795	Е	1	Wrought or cut nail, possibly e		

PP	NORTHING	EASTING	LOCI	COUNT	DESCRIPTION	WT_G	DIAM_MM
467	3729511	324794	Е	1	Wrought nail, T-head		
468	3729514	324793	Е	1	Wrought spike, rosehead		
469	3729504	324780	Е	1	Wrought nail fragment		
470	3729502	324781	E	1	Wrought iron strap w/eye		
471	3729498	324780	Е	1	Wrought nail fragment		
472	3729497	324782	Е	1	Wrought nail, T-head		
473	3729493	324782	Е	1	Wrought or cut nail fragment		
474	3729493	324782	Е	1	Wrought nail, T-head		
475	3729491	324781	Е	2	Wrought nail, T-head		
476	3729490	324781	Е	1	Wrought nail fragment		
477	3729489	324781	Е	1	Wrought nail, rosehead		
478	3729487	324781	E	2	Wrought nail, T-head		
479	3729485	324780	Е	1	Wrought nail, rosehead		
480	3729488	324784	Е	1	Wrought nail, T-head		
481	3729484	324784	Е	1	Wrought iron ring and chain lin		
482	3729481	324780	Е	1	Wrought nail, L-head		
483	3729493	324780	Е	1	Wrought nail fragment		
484	3729496	324780	Е	1	Wrought nail, rosehead		
484	3729496	324780	Е	2	Wrought nail, T-head		
485	3729498	324780	Е	1	Wrought nail, rosehead		
486	3729486	324784	Е	1	Pan, cast iron	29.8	
487	3729479	324777	E	1	Wrought nail, rosehead		
488	3729481	324770	Е	1	Machine cut nail		
489	3729479	324763	Е	1	Umbrella rib, brass		
490	3729480	324763	Е	1	Unidentified flat iron		
491	3729481	324763	Е	1	Wrought strap with 2 rivets		
492	3729480	324765	Е	1	Machine cut nail		
493	3729481	324762	Е	1	Kettle, cast iron	28.3	
494	3729495	324749	Е	1	Wrought chain link		
495	3729493	324752	E	1	Chain link, wrought iron		
495	3729493	324752	E	1	Horseshoe, 1/2		
496	3729486	324753	E	1	Clevis, cast iron (19th or 20th		Horseshoe
497	3729495	324755	E	1	Unidentified flat iron, thin	1	
498	3729494	324758	E	1	Wrought nail, T-head		
499	3729493	324759	E	1	Wrought nail fragment		
501	3729502	324831	E	1	Hook, wrought iron, trammel?		
502	3729527	324819	E	1	Wrought nail, T-head		
503	3729527	324819	E	1	Wrought nail fragment		
503	3729527	324819	E	1	Wrought nail, T-head		
600	3729492	324759	E	1	Wrought nail, T-head		
601	3729492	324759	E	1	Wrought nail fragment		
602	3729490	324757	E	1	Spud, wrought iron		
603	3729489	324759	E	1	Wrought nail fragment		
604	3729489	324762	E	1	Wrought nail, T-head		
605	3729503	324756	E	1	Brick, handmade (sample near TU		
606	3729497	324760	E	1	Cut wrought iron piece, possibl		
607	3729494	324763	E	1	Wrought nail, T-head		
608 609	3729493 3729497	324765 324766	E E	1 1	Pot leg, cast iron		
009	J I 4747	324766	Е	1	Wrought nail, T-head		

PP	NORTHING	EASTING	LOCI	COUNT	DESCRIPTION	WT G	DIAM N	
610	3729492	324771	Е	1	Wrought nail, L-head			
611	3729488	324768	Е	1	Wrought chain link			
612	3729482	324771	Е	1	Iron buckle fragment			
613	3729484	324773	Е	1	Wrought nail fragment			
614	3729487	324772	Е	1	Machine cut nail			
615	3729487	324772	Е	1	Wrought nail, T-head			
616	3729491	324773	Е	1	Wrought nail, T-head			
617	3729492	324775	Е	1	Wrought nail, rosehead			
618	3729491	324776	Е	1	Snaffle bit, iron			
619	3729490	324776	Е	1	Wrought or cut nail, early vari			
620	3729489	324765	Е	1	Wrought nail, T-head			
621	3729495	324774	Е	1	Wrought nail fragment			
622	3729496	324771	Е	1	Wrought nail fragment			
623	3729497	324773	Е	1	Rivet, wrought iron			
624	3729500	324772	Е	1	Wrought iron loop			
625	3729499	324775	Е	1	Machine cut nail			
625	3729499	324775	Е	1	Hinge, iron, small			
625	3729499	324775	Е	1	Flat iron, thin, unidentified			
626	3729497	324775	Ε	1	Wrought nail fragment			
627	3729480	324794	Е	1	Wrought nail, T-head			
628	3729478	324798	Е	1	Fork, iron, 2-tine			
629	3729502	324762	Е	1	Brooch, brass (3 fragments)			
630	3729517	324767	Е	1	Wrought iron scrap, blacksmith	56.5		
631	3729515	324758	Е	1	Pan, cast iron	92.3		
632	3729513	324757	Е	1	Wrought nail, rosehead			
633	3729508	324760	Е	1	Pot leg, cast iron			
634	3729504	324754	Е	1	Machine cut nail			
635	3729505	324758	Е	1	Wrought nail, T-head			
635	3729504	324753	Е	1	Machine cut nail			
636	3729498	324763	Е	1	Pot leg, cast iron			
637	3729499	324766	Е	1	Horseshoe, 1/2			
638	3729504	324769	Е	1	Horseshoe, 1/2			
639	3729504	324765	Е	1	Wrought nail, horseshoe			
640	3729501	324777	Е	1	Wrought nail, T-head			
640	3729501	324777	Е	1	Wrought iron rod			
641	3729504	324778	Е	1	Wrought nail, T-head			
642	3729508	324781	Е	1	Iron rod, wrought, bent into lo			
643	3729503	324775	Е	1	Wrought nail, T-head			
643	3729503	324775	Е	1	Horseshoe, 1/2			
644	3729509	324772	Е	1	Wrought nail, rosehead			
645	3729507	324779	Е	1	Wrought nail, T-head			
646	3729507	324757	Е	1	Hinge, iron, small			
647	3729517	324769	Е	1	Wrought nail, horseshoe		,	
648	3729516	324762	Е	1	Wrought nail, rosehead			
649	3729508	324764	Е	3	Wrought chain sections (3)			
650	3729502	324758	Е	1	Flat iron, unidentified			
651	3729501	324765	Е	1	Wrought nail, horseshoe			
651	3729501	324765	Е	1	Wrought iron strap			
652	3729500	324765	Е	1	Machine cut nail fragment			

MM

3

PP	NORTHING	EASTING	LOCI	COUNT	DESCRIPTION
653	3729500	324771	Е	1	Wrought or cut nail fragment
0	3729501	324755	Е	10	Machine cut nails (10)
0	3729501	324755	Е	1	Crown cap, modern
0	3729501	324755	Е	1	Green edged pearlware plate rim
0	3729501	324755	Е	1	Clear tumbler glass w/ pontil s
0	3729501	324755	Е	1	Goblet glass, clear rim
0	3729501	324755	Е	1	Clear glass
0	3729501	324755	Е	1	Secondary flake, quartz
0	3729492	324772	Е	1	Olive green bottle glass
0	3729492	324772	Е	1	Clear lampglobe glass
0	3729492	324772	Е	1	Scrap iron
0	3729484	324791	Е	1	Polychrome h.p. pearlware rim,
0	3729484	324791	Е	1	Wrought iron hardware, unident.

WT\_G DIAM\_MM

Appendix B

Site Form for Site 9WS414

### GEORGIA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE FORM

## Official Site Number: 9WS414

Institutional Site Number: Site Name: Settlement House					
County: Wilkes Map Name: Philomath USGS OR USNOAA					
UTM Zone: <u>17</u> UTM East: <u>324780</u> UTM North: <u>3729500</u>					
Owner: Wilkes County Address: Washington, Georgia					
Site Length: <u>75</u> meters Width: <u>65</u> meters Elevation: + - <u>154</u> meters					
Orientation: 1. N-S 2. E-W 3. NE-SW 4. NW-SE 5. <u>Round</u> 6. Unknown					
Kind of Investigation:1. Survey2. Testing3. Excavation4. Documentary					
5. Hearsay 6. Unknown 7. Amateur					
Standing Architecture: 1. Present 2 <u>. Absent</u>					
Site Nature:1. Plowzone2. Subsurface3. Both4. Only Surface Known					
5. Surface 6. Unknown					
Midden: 1. Present 2. Absent 3. Unknown Features: 1. Present 2. Absent 3. Unknown					
Percent Disturbance: 1. None 2. Greater than 50 3. Less than 50 4. Unknown					
Type of Site       (Mill, Mound, Quarry, Lithic Scatter, etc.):       house/farmstead					
Topography (Ridge, Terrace, etc.): hill/ridge top					
Current Vegetation (Woods, Pasture, etc.): mixed woods and clearcut					
Additional Information: This is a late 18 <sup>th</sup> to mid 19 <sup>th</sup> century house site thought by some to be					
the ca. 1779 Hammett House. It is Locus E described by Elliott (2008) as a cluster of 170 metal detected					
artifacts around a probable stone chimney. In 2018/2019 SAS excavated 41 shovel tests on 10-m grid, 13					
were positive. Wrought and cut nails, pearlware, whiteware, and bottle glass was collected.					



SKETCH MAP (Include sites, roads, streams, landmarks)

OFFICIAL MAP (Xerox of proper map)

#### State Site Number: 9WS414 Institutional Site Number: FS **Public Status:** 1. National Historic Landmark 2. National Natural Landmark 3. Georgia Register 4. Georgia Historic Trust 5. HABS 6. HAER National Register Standing: 1. Determined Eligible 2. Recommended Ineligible 3. Recommended Eligible 4. Nominated 5. Listed 6. Unknown 7. Removed 1. Local 2. State National Register Level of Significance: 3. National **Preservation State** (Select up to Two): 1. Undisturbed 2. Cultivated 3. Eroded 4. Submerged 5. Lake Flooded 8. Redeposited 7. Destroyed 6. Vandalized 9. Graded 10<u>. Razed</u> 11. Logging/replanting 2. Endangered by: \_\_\_\_\_ **Preservation Prospects**: 1. Safe 3. Unknown

## **RECORD OF INVESTIGATIONS**

 Supervisor: Thomas H. Gresham Affiliation: Southeastern Archeological Services. Date: 1/12/2019

 Report Title: Archaeological Testing of the Settlement House Site and Hypothesized Location of Liberty Church, Kettle Creek Battlefield, Wilkes County, Georgia

 Other Reports: Stirring up a Hornet's Nest: The Kettle Creek Battlefield Survey, Lamar Institute

 Publication Series Report Number 131. Daniel T. Elliott (2008).

Artifacts Collected: 5 pearlware (hand painted polychrome, bl.transfer print, plain), 14 whiteware (plain, green shell edged, blue edge, blue hand painted, purple transfer print), 2 wrought nails, 14 cut nails (fragments, T head, rose head), 1 unid, square nail, 1 thin window glass, 1 olive green bottle glass, 1 brick fragment. Prehistoric artifacts: 19 quartz flaking debris and 1 decorated sherd.

Location of Collections: Washington-Wilkes historical Museum, Washington, GA Location of Field Notes: Washington-Wilkes historical Museum, Washington, GA Private Collections: Name: Address:

\_\_\_Address:\_\_\_

### CULTURAL AFFINITY

Cultural Periods: Historic and Unid. Woodland / Miss.; unid. Lithic

**Phases:** Late 18<sup>th</sup> to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century

### FORM PREPARATION AND REVISION

DateNameJanuary 31, 2019Thomas H. Gresham

**Institutional Affiliation** Southeastern Archeological Services, Inc.