The Development of the Combahee Ferry:  
An Ethnohistory of Ferry Transportation in the South Carolina Lowcountry

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Because of the nature of South Carolina’s geography, it was vital that colonial settlers construct a means to cross the many rivers that flow into the Atlantic. As in most of the other early American colonies, ferries in South Carolina were essential in the development of the early transportation network and played a role in the economic, social, and political development of the colony. Using examples from the Lowcountry, and focusing on the Combahee Ferry specifically, this paper will examine the socio-political aspects of the colonial transportation network in South Carolina. The assessment of ferries will demonstrate that they not only served as components of important transportation routes, but also served as another means for the planter elite, and later other economic leaders, to gain and retain political and economic hegemony. Ferries served as important centers of economic development, and some of the ferry sites developed into important towns and cities while others disappeared from the landscape. As the state developed during the 1800s, the ferries remained an important mode of transportation, even with the growth of bridges later railroads. It was the creation of the modern automobile infrastructure with its metal and concrete bridges that finally made ferries obsolete.

**Historiography**

Often overlooked by historians and archaeologists, ferries played an important part in the transportation network that developed during the colonial period, and
continued to operate until the twentieth century. Underwater archaeologist Christer Westerdahl argues that ferries and inland road networks were important because they were part of a larger maritime cultural landscape that includes ports, harbors, wharfs, and other structures. Ferries were “the first transit point at which river-based cultural area [met] the outer world.”¹ Ferries in South Carolina, for instance, were the local connection to the larger Atlantic world network within which South Carolina operated and developed.

Despite the significance of ferries to the growth of South Carolina’s Lowcountry, scholars have rarely examined them solely. This study explores the role of ferries through various disciplinary prisms to assess their significant role in the economic, political, and social development of South Carolina from the early colonial period to the early twentieth century. This study will provide a historic context for a better interpretation of ferries by historians, whether in academic publications, markers, museum exhibits, and other public history tools.

Despite ferries’ importance in the economic, social, political, and transportation history of the state, there has not been a comprehensive study of ferries in South Carolina, and many of the important larger history works do not deal with ferries.² An examination of the historiography of ferries in South Carolina reveals that there has only been one article tracing the history of ferries in the state, and it was written in 1970 and was not published in a scholarly journal.³ The article is primarily descriptive in nature and does not provide any real interpretation of the importance of ferries in the state’s history. Other maritime histories do not deal with ferries, either. For instance, P.C.


² For example, in Robert M. Weir, Colonial South Carolina: A History (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), there is only one reference to the importance of ferries (see page 158).

Coker’s significant work on Charleston’s maritime heritage contains little discussion of ferries in the area, although several important ferries operated in the Charleston area.\textsuperscript{4}

Although historians have somewhat ignored ferries, scholars have not totally overlooked ferries in South Carolina. Since the late 1980s, archaeologists, both academic and in the cultural resources management world, have produced several important works that address historical themes related to ferry boats, landings, and ferry sites. Archaeologists in Alabama and Mississippi stated during their exhaustive study of the Tombigbee River that the “examination of ferry sites, with their dock construction and refuse areas, extant engineering elements of bridges and artifact concentrations from historic fords, is necessary for a complete definition of the historic road system.”\textsuperscript{5} In 1988, archaeologist Mark Newell stated in a review of the rivers around Charleston that many ferry boats and sites remained and could provide important studies. To assist in these investigations, underwater archaeologist Bradford Botwick established a research plan for historic underwater archaeological sites in South Carolina dating from 1670 to 1860. Underwater archaeologists from the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology conducted numerous studies of shipwrecks and landings during the 1980s and 1990s.\textsuperscript{6}

Because of the importance of agriculture to the colony, the initial settlement in South Carolina focused on the coastal plain and specifically around the Charleston area. By the early 1700s, to meet the needs of the growing population, expansion of South Carolina colonial settlement from south of Charleston toward Port Royal and Beaufort


resulted in the establishment of several unregulated, private ferries along the rivers of the Lowcountry. It should be noted that while ferries were the predominant means of river-crossing in the Lowcountry, river fords predominated as river crossings in the South Carolina backcountry.\(^7\) To manage the developing transportation infrastructure, in 1709 the South Carolina Colonial Assembly chartered the first regulated ferry in South Carolina on the Santee River.\(^8\)

While the ferry was just one element of the transportation network that developed in the Lowcountry, one can see the particular importance of ferries by examining Mouzon’s 1776 map of South Carolina, which shows two ferries over the Pee Dee and Savannah rivers, four over the Congaree, and one each over the Black, Combahee, Coosaw, Edisto, and Waccamaw rivers.\(^9\)

**Chartering of Combahee Ferry**

As with many other concepts in the American legal system, the roots of the origins of ferry regulation are in English common law, and the rights of the Crown, through royal privilege, to establish a public ferry and grant a franchise to the ferry operator.\(^10\) The concept of granting charters originated in the English common law principals of granting certain franchises, in which the Crown could grant “exclusive rights of sporting, or such as the exclusive right to keep a market or a ferry, and to take toll from those who resort to it.”\(^11\)

From its very beginning, South Carolina relied on ferries as a means of transportation, and early land grants illustrate ferries’ importance during early


\(^9\) Ibid., 46.


colonization. In 1686, the Lord Proprietors stated in the Rules and Instruction for granting land that:

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

Although not stated specifically in the order, one can deduce several reasons for the order. First, and probably most important, is to aid in the creation of a transportation system as a means to get agricultural products to markets. Second is to develop roads and transportation as a means to move troops around the colony to protect it from French, Spanish, and Native American threats.

Before 1733, the South Carolina Colonial Assembly allowed a committee of commissioners to choose the ferry keepers. After 1733, the Colonial Assembly determined all ferry sites, rates, and ferry keepers. In the early history of the colony, lawmakers viewed the improvement of roads, ferries, and bridges and the clearing of rivers as important; law professor James W. Ely Jr. suggests that this desire stemmed primarily from economic motives. While much of the historiography of colonial legal history suggests that colonial law was static, Ely contends that South Carolina cultivated economic growth in the colony through their legislative actions. Ely shows that in response to the needs of the infrastructure, the politicians countered with a series of statutes that established ferries, and that these charters reflected a legislative commitment to foster internal improvements at minimum cost to the public. While the General

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Assembly kept the costs of internal improvements to a minimum, Ely claims that ferry charters were highly prized among merchants despite regulatory features and the limited lifespan of the grant.\textsuperscript{15}

To examine how ferries operated, one should examine the Combahee Ferry, the first ferry established in the southern parishes. On January 12, 1705, Joseph Bryan received a grant of 550 acres on the Combahee River from the Lord Proprietors.\textsuperscript{16} Bryan was originally from Hereford County, England, and after migrating to the colony, he acquired lands along the Pocotaligo River. To illustrate his integration into the larger South Carolina socio-political scene, Bryan’s granddaughter married Stephen Bull, heir to one of the largest families in the colony.\textsuperscript{17} On Bryan’s land, the General Assembly authorized a ferry and road on November 10, 1711. The earliest archival evidence of the Combahee Ferry indicated that the South Carolina General Assembly chartered it on February 25, 1715, when it granted Joseph Bryan, the present keeper of the Combahee Ferry, the right to operate the ferry and charge “half a rial for a man, and one rial for a man and horse.”\textsuperscript{18} In addition, according to a 1715 act of the Colonial Assembly, the operator of the Combahee Ferry was charged with maintaining

a stout boat, a loading ramp, depending rope and capstan, a canoe for attending the ferry, and shelter for travelers on the end of the Combahee causeway. With a permanent shelter for travelers and a rope-drawn ferry operated by capstans, this was undoubtedly the most elaborate and most used facility in the southern district.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{15} Ely, “Patterns of Statutory Enactment in South Carolina, 1720-1770,” 71-72.

\textsuperscript{16} Charleston County Deed Book S:55.


\textsuperscript{19} Lawrence S. Rowland, Alexander Moore, and George C. Rogers, Jr., \textit{The History of Beaufort County, South Carolina: Volume 1, 1514-1861} (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 123.
The owner operated it for a profit, and the Colonial Assembly fixed the rates and regulated the conditions. Ministers, government messengers, and free Indians were exempt from paying the fee for using the ferry. The Combahee Ferry would remain an important transportation site, but it would be the addition of other economic forces later in the eighteenth century, when it was owned by the powerful Bull family and later the Middletons, that would result in its growth as a site.

**Combahee Ferry as an Economic Center**

In addition to being part of the transportation network, historian Tyrel Moore argues that ferry landings were “important transportation centers as well as trading centers… [and] outlets for local agricultural products” and influential in shaping the economic development of the state.\(^{20}\) To promote the economic prosperity of the region these wealthy planters collectively submitted petitions to the General Assembly for a communal fair, market, public buildings, and most importantly, a ferry landing.\(^{21}\)

With the success of the Combahee Ferry, Stephen Bull attempted to form the town of Radnor in 1734 at the site of the ferry on his father William Bull’s Newbury Plantation. It was not uncommon for large planters to branch out of the agricultural business to also provide transportation and other services for their neighbors. Many owned gristmills and sawmills, and a few owned stores. Sometimes they dreamed of elaborate, planned towns. Bull designed Radnor to be a port of entry for loading and unloading ships of burden, because it was located between Charleston and Port Royal. At this time, navigation on the Combahee River centered on transportation for the rice industry.\(^{22}\)


\(^{21}\) Brenda Lynn Harris, “Charleston’s Colonial Boat Culture, 1668-1775” (Ph.D. diss., University of South Carolina, 2002), 81.

Historian Robert Weir described the geographical layout of Radnor as resembling “a New England village” with a church, school, and commons. The town of Radnor was located at the ferry over the Combahee River, where the high road from Beaufort to Charleston crossed the river. An act of the Commons House of Assembly on March 11, 1737, established Radnor as a market town. Records indicate that the town consisted of several buildings; however, the town never grew out of its infancy. Figure 1 provides a plat of Radnor prepared by H.A.M. Smith. While Radnor struggled, there was some economic development in the area. In 1754, Colonel John Mullryne of Beaufort constructed a combination store, lodging house, and public house at the Combahee Ferry. This all-in-one economic center was housed in a two-story frame building with a one-story veranda. It is not surprising that a tavern such as this was located at the Combahee Ferry. Historians suggest that taverns were among the most important social, political, and economic institutions in American colonial life and often were located at ferry sites.

In the July 11, 1754, issue of the *South Carolina Gazette*, Katherine Wyerhysen, who managed the tavern for Mullryne, advertised:

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private lodging and entertainment for man and horse and also to ferry travelers over the said river, at the rate formally established by act of assembly
One shilling and three pence for a foot passage
Two shillings and five pence for man and horse
Five shillings for a chair and horse.
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26 *South Carolina Gazette* July 11, 1754.
In 1741, as a means to aid travel and secure the southern parts of the colony, the Common House of Assembly authorized the construction of a bridge over the Combahee River from the causeway to the town of Radnor. The bridge was funded by a tax on all males from 16 to 60 years old (free or slave) in St. Helena and Saint Bartholomews parishes. However, the General Assembly did not establish a means to fund repairs to the bridge. By 1754, the bridge had become a financial burden to local planters and began to decay, becoming dangerous to pass over. In May 1754, the General Assembly appointed Daniel Wilshuysen, Stephen Bull, William Simmons, Thomas Hutchinson, and Joseph Ladson as commissioners for repairing and keeping in repair the bridge over the Combahee River. The appointment of these successful men to the commission illustrates the importance of transportation in South Carolina’s socioeconomic


28 Ibid., 173.
development. After the failure of the bridge, Stephen Bull received the charter for the ferry for 14 years.\textsuperscript{29}

In November 1763, certain inhabitants of Granville and Colleton counties petitioned the Provincial Council to encourage people to settle in Radnor.\textsuperscript{30} The reaction of the Provincial Council is unknown, and the town of Radnor disappears soon after from many documents. For example, on de Brahm’s 1757 map, Radnor is denoted as a town, but it is not denoted on Mouzon’s 1775 map. Also, there is no further mention of Radnor in the Statutes of South Carolina. Records do not disclose many sales of lots by Stephen Bull, but in his will, made in April 1750, he devised a large number of lots to his children and grandson.\textsuperscript{31} Since the city is discussed in William Bull’s 1749 will and Stephen Bull’s 1750 will, we can assume that Radnor still existed at that time. Beaufort historian John F. Morrall hypothesizes that either the hurricane of 1752 or later ones contributed to the failure of Radnor and the destruction of the bridge over the Combahee River.\textsuperscript{32}

Even with the decline of Radnor, a tavern continued to operate at Combahee Ferry. In 1765, James Gowen and his brother Buck settled at Combahee Ferry, and James married Mary “Polly” Keating in Beaufort. Polly owned and operated the Haymarket Tavern and store located at the ferry independent from her husband. This occurred at a time when it was very unusual for a woman to own property, let alone a tavern and store. In 1815, her estate received the charter for the ferry. The Gowen family remained at Combahee Ferry through the mid-1800s.\textsuperscript{33}

An interesting historical note is that two of the Combahee Ferry operators in the 1770s were Charlestonians. Richard Magrath, a famous cabinetmaker and importer of furniture in Charleston, operated the ferry, probably alongside the Gowens, until his return to London in 1777. In 1779, John Packrow, other cabinetmaker, was granted the

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\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 217.
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\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 151-153.
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\textsuperscript{33} McCord, ed., \textit{The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, IX}: 479.
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authority to operate the ferry for one year.\(^{34}\) That these two men held this post even though they did not have any experience in ferry operation probably illustrates that there was potential to become wealthy in the endeavor.

Richard Magrath was a London cabinetmaker who came to Charleston by way of Philadelphia. From a 1771 announcement in the *South Carolina Gazette* it appears he operated a shop along King Street near Tradd Street. Based on records, Magrath was not a good businessman. In September 1773, he was indebted to William Luten, a fellow cabinetmaker, for the sum of £166.6.8. Luten later sued him. The next year, William Neall sued Magrath for food, drink, room, board, and work done between 1771 and 1774.\(^{35}\)

In the July 21, 1777, *Gazette of the State of South Carolina*, Magrath placed an advertisement that he

Has taken Combahee Ferry and proved every necessary to render it agreeable to the passengers. He hopes all gentlemen and others who travel to and from the southward, will convince themselves of the improvements at his ferry, as that will be the only means to support the dependence that will attend keeping of it in his present improved state, particularly as it is the nearest and best traveling road. He assures the public it shall be his constant duty to merit their favors by diligent attendance and good accommodations.\(^{36}\)

The tone of the advertisement, with Magrath trying to assure the public of his reliability, might indicate problems with the previous ferry operator or that Magrath was worried about his reputation with Charlestonians. Another interesting point in the announcement is Magrath’s statement that “the cross way which leads to the ferry is now completely repaired,” indicating a previous problem with the causeway (the nature of the problem was not indicated).

\(^{34}\) Ibid., 270.


\(^{36}\) *Gazette of the State of South Carolina*, July 21, 1777.
Magrath did not operate the ferry long, and another cabinetmaker, John Packrow, took it over.\textsuperscript{37} In the August 7, 1778, issue of the \textit{Gazette of the State of South Carolina}, Packrow placed an advertisement that he was determined to put the ferry in good condition, as soon as he can get a flat built and a new role made. He also informs the public, that the causey is in so good order, that travellers may gallop from one end of it to the other; and if the Commissioners are careful to throw up the other side as well as that they have already done, any person may pass at any time, without the least difficulty; besides, it will enable him to keep the causey always in good repairs, and save the inhabitants a deal of work, trouble, and expense.—His friends, who have publically expressed their appreciation of his taking the Ferry, and who express thereby to have its character retrieved may depend on his using every endeavors fully to satisfy their expectations.\textsuperscript{38}

It is clear from the assurances of this advertisement that the previous operator had left the ferry in disrepair, and that Packrow felt it necessary to make many repairs as well as reassure the public that the ferry was under new management. By November, Packrow had made several improvements to the ferry. In another \textit{Gazette of the State of South Carolina}, in an announcement on November 25, 1778, he stated that “instead of his having no boat at his Ferry, he keeps two, one that is fixed with oars, the other with a rope, and he can prove, that no person has ever been detained half an hour since he took possession of the ferry.”\textsuperscript{39} The last record of Packrow and the ferry is a \textit{Gazette of the State of South Carolina} announcement dated February 3, 1779, in which he states his intention to sell the ferry and the house there “June next.”\textsuperscript{40}

In addition to the physical problems with the ferry, Packrow had to deal with dishonest competitors. In the November announcements, Packrow offered a £100 reward “to find the wretch, who through prejudice, has sent gentlemen at least eight miles out of their way... by telling them there was no boat at the ferry.”\textsuperscript{41}

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\item \textsuperscript{37} McCord, ed., \textit{The Statutes at Large of South Carolina}, IX: 270.
\item \textsuperscript{38} \textit{Gazette of the State of South Carolina}, August 7, 1778.
\item \textsuperscript{39} \textit{Gazette of the State of South Carolina}, November 25, 1778.
\item \textsuperscript{40} \textit{Gazette of the State of South Carolina}, February 3, 1779.
\item \textsuperscript{41} \textit{Gazette of the State of South Carolina}, November 25, 1778.
\end{itemize}
In 1831, Arthur Middleton received the charter for the Combahee Ferry, and his family operated it as part of the larger Newport Plantation until the construction of the new bridge over the river in the early twentieth century. Figure 2 presents a Plat showing the Combahee Ferry at Newport Plantation, in 1857. Figure 3 shows the location of the Combahee Ferry on the 1835 Mills Atlas map of Beaufort and Colleton Districts.

The early 1800s were a period of great growth for ferries in the state. The 1825 Mills’ Atlas shows 107 ferries in operation. In 1806, the General Assembly re-chartered

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42 McCord, ed., The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, IX: 592-593.

the Combahee Ferry to William Keatings Gowen and his heirs for seven years. The charter commented that the ferry had formerly been vested in Mrs. Gowen, but it does not make indication of when that charter was established. Table 11 provides the rates for the Combahee Ferry in 1806. Seven years later, in 1815, the General Assembly granted a seven-year charter for the Combahee Ferry to John Ulmer and Mary E. Sharp, who was the executor of Mary Gowen’s estate. As part of the charter, the General Assembly required that Ulmer and Sharp construct a ferry slip on the north east side of the river where for the causeway was located. 44 Family records indicate that Mary Gowen died in 1813, and the Gowen family remained at Combahee Ferry through the mid-1800s.

After seven more years of ownership of the Combahee Ferry by Ulmer and Sharp, the General Assembly in 1831 granted the charter to the Combahee Ferry to Arthur Middleton, Jr., for the period of seven years. 45 This made perfect sense since Middleton owned the surrounding Newport Plantation.


45 Ibid., 527, 592-593.
Figure 3. A portion of Roberts Mills’ 1825 Atlas of Beaufort and Colleton District showing present-day US Highway 17 and the Combahee Ferry.

Combahee Ferry and Slavery

Like most elements of South Carolina society, the operation of ferries, including the Combahee Ferry, was influenced by slavery. During the early 1700s, the operator of the Combahee Ferry as well as many others was required to “keep and maintain a good and sufficient ferry boat, and two able servants or slaves, who shall constantly attend the said ferry, as well by night, as by day, for the transportation of all persons, their slaves, horses and cattle.” This meant that slaves continually operated the ferry, in some cases without supervision. Because of the backlash of Carolina society against the Stono Rebellion, the legislature passed a law in 1744 requiring that all ferries be manned by at least one free white man. To keep the ferries operating, the General Assembly exempted slaves working on ferries from labor on road projects. In 1801, as a means to control the movement of slaves, the General Assembly passed legislation forbidding the transportation of slaves on ferries without written permission of the slave owners. That same year, the General Assembly required all ferry keepers to swear an oath “to prevent negro slaves and other persons of colour from being brought into or entering this State.” Controlling slaves’ travel by ferry was not a new concept. As early as 1696, an act was passed based on existing laws in the West Indies that threatened any slave who “shall take away or let loose any canoe or boat” with 39 lashes and loss of an ear for repetition. This legislation reflects the obvious use of boats managed by slaves as escape mechanisms as well as the difficulties inherent in water travel.

46 Ibid., 81.
47 Ibid., 626.
Combahee Ferry in the Civil War

During the Civil War, the Combahee Ferry remained an important transportation node and was the site of an important raid. With the fall of Port Royal and Beaufort, General Robert E. Lee, commander of the new Department of South Carolina, Georgia, and East Florida on November 5, 1861, changed the defense strategy for the rivers of the state. Unfortunately for Lee, when he reached Coosawhatchie on November 7, Brigadier General Roswell Ripley, commander of coastal defense, reported the defeat at Port Royal. Ripley relocated his forces from the Sea Islands to defend the Charleston to Savannah railroad, the vital transportation artery for the area.50 The Charleston and Savannah Railway was originally chartered in 1854 and ran a 120-mile line from Charleston to Savannah. While it was not popular with many locals, the railroad provided Confederate forces with a means of quick transportation to the battlefield.

Lee moved the defenses from the coastal islands and deep waterways inland to where the rivers emptying into the sounds were narrow and shallower. At these spots, including Combahee Ferry, he ordered the construction of batteries and fortifications to stop Union advances. The fortifications would be manned with pickets and reinforced by reserves moved along the Charleston and Savannah Railroad. Military historian Russell Weigley compared Lee’s defense strategy with his father “Light Horse” Harry Lee’s Revolutionary War defense of parts of Virginia’s coast. The plan’s strength lay in the fact that it also allowed the Confederate forces to control the location of battle. The strategy protected the South Carolina–Georgia coast against deep penetration by Union forces until General William Sherman’s attack from the interior of the state.51

As mentioned before, because of its importance as a transportation node, Confederate forces constructed fortifications at Combahee Ferry and on the causeway leading to the northeast. Figure 4 is an undated map of the Confederate defenses at

50 Christopher Ohm Clements, Steven R. Wise, Steven D. Smith, and Ramona M. Grunden, Mapping the Defenses of the Charleston to Savannah Railroad: Civil War Earthworks in Beaufort and Jasper Counties, South Carolina (Columbia, SC: SCIAA, 2002), 14.

Combahee Ferry. In the summer of 1863, the Union Army conducted operations along the Combahee River in an effort to test a new strategy of raiding the inland waterways and targeting plantations for destruction and slaves for freedom. By 1863, several commanders of Union African American units advocated raids behind the Confederate lines, with the primary goals of recruiting freed slaves into the army and gathering supplies. Colonel James Montgomery, a former Kansas Jayhawker and follower of John Brown, led a regiment of former slaves on the first of what was to be a series of raids. Additionally, Montgomery was supported by the intelligence work of Harriet Tubman, the former Underground Railroad leader, who also accompanied the raid.

Figure 4. An undated map of the Confederate defenses at Combahee Ferry (Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration).
In June 1863, Union forces traveled up the Combahee River to attack the plantations along the river. There were three landings along the river: Field’s Point, Tar Bluff, and Combahee Ferry. The raid of the plantations resulted in massive destruction of private property and the freedom of between 750 and 800 slaves. Of the slaves rescued, more than 400 enlisted in a new regiment formed at Hilton Head, the 3rd South Carolina Infantry. Later, the unit became part of the 21st United States Colored Infantry. Additionally, property damage for the entire raid, exclusive of slaves, was estimated to be around $2 million. Figure 5 presents a drawing of the raid from Harper’s Weekly.

Figure 5. A drawing of the raid from Harper’s Weekly (Courtesy the Avery Institute, College of Charleston Collection).

The Decline of Combahee Ferry

After the Civil War, the Combahee Ferry remained important because of its location along the King’s Highway (present-day US Highway 17). Archival records indicate that the Middleton family operated a store at the ferry site well into the twentieth century. However, with the growth of the railroads in the state, ferries continued to lose their importance, and by the early twentieth century, were no longer vital. Historian
Frederick Paxton argues that while the construction of new highways during the Progressive Era was important to the development of the infrastructure, geography created bottlenecks. Rivers needed bridges, not car ferries, which “slow down traffic at the water’s edge.”

In 1872, the General Assembly granted a fourteen-year charter the Combahee Ferry to Arthur Middleton, his heirs and assigns. The tolls for the charter also required that Arthur Middleton, his heirs or assigns, to maintain “one or more good, substantial ferry boats, together with a suitable rope or chain” at the ferry site. In addition, the charter required that children attending school, and voters going to and returning from the polls on election day, were not required to pay a ferriage. In March 1874, the General Assembly changed the charter by striking out the name of “Arthur Middleton,” wherever the same may occur, and inserting in lieu thereof the name of “Henry A. Middleton.”

In 1917, the General Assembly passed local laws to continue the operation of the Combahee Ferry. The Highway Commissioner of Colleton County was required to provide a free ferry over the Combahee River, where Mr. Jaycock had operated a toll ferry. The General Assembly appropriated $200 for the construction of a new flat, and $150 to pay the salary of the ferryman. The law required that Beaufort County raise the same amount of money, and that the ferry would be joint property of Colleton and Beaufort counties.

On November 8, 1924, the South Carolina Highway Department began construction of a concrete and steel bridge over the Combahee River. Sanford & Brooks and Roanoke Iron & Bridge Company served as the contractor for the construction of the bridge. According to the annual reports, the contractors completed two percent of the

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work in 1924, 88 percent of the work in 1925, eight percent in 1926, and completed the final two percent of work on April 5, 1927. The Highway Department had estimated the construction cost of the bridge at $161,789.39; however, the actual construction cost was only $146,896.01.\textsuperscript{55}

With the expansion of the highways in the state after World War II, the Highway Department constructed a new bridge over the Combahee Ferry in the mid-1950s. McMeekin Construction Company received a contract in 1954 to replace the earlier bridge. They completed the bridge in 1956 for a cost of $103,797.69.\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{55} South Carolina State Highway Department, \textit{Annual Report of the South Carolina State Highway Department to the General Assembly for the fiscal year ending 31 December 1925} (Columbia, SC: None Given, 1926); South Carolina State Highway Department, \textit{Annual Report of the South Carolina State Highway Department to the General Assembly for the fiscal year ending 31 December 1926} (Columbia, SC: None Given, 1927); South Carolina State Highway Department, \textit{Annual Report of the South Carolina State Highway Department to the General Assembly for the fiscal year ending 31 December 1927} (Columbia, SC: None Given, 1928).

\textsuperscript{56} South Carolina State Highway Department, \textit{Annual Report of the South Carolina State Highway Department to the General Assembly for July 1, 1954-June 30, 1955} (Columbia, SC: None Given, 1955); South Carolina State Highway Department, \textit{Annual Report of the South Carolina State Highway Department to the General Assembly for July 1, 1955-June 30, 1956} (Columbia, SC: None Given, 1956).