

# **SURVEY AND RESEARCH REPORT**

**on the**

## **Cashion and Moore Family Cemetery**



**1. Name and location of the property:** The property known as the Cashion and Moore Family Cemetery is located northwest of the intersection of McAuley Rd. and Hwy. 73, near Davidson, N.C.

**2. Name, address and telephone number of the present owner of the property:** The owner of the property is:

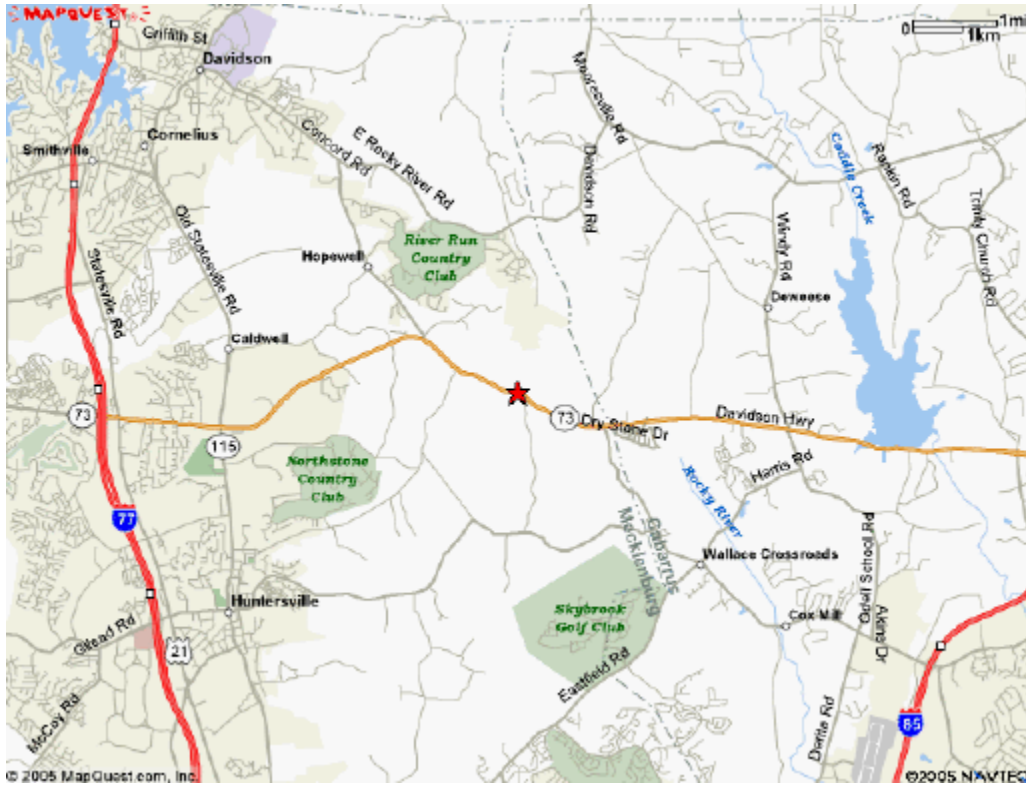
Hugh Allen White and Laura Anne White

PO Box 1431

Huntersville, NC 28070-1431

**3. Representative photographs of the property:** This report contains representative photographs of the property.

**4. A map depicting the location of the property:** This report contains maps which depict the location of the property. The U.T.M. coordinates of the property are 17 519842E 3922531N



**5. Current Deed Book Reference to the property:** There is no individual deed recorded on the property. The property was willed to the White's by their father. The Tax Parcel Number of the property is : 007-451-01.

**6. A brief historical sketch of the property:** This report contains a brief historical sketch of the property.

**7. A brief physical description of the property:** This report contains a brief physical description of the property.

**8. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets criteria for designation set forth in N.C.G.S. 160A-400.5:**

**a. Special significance in terms of its history, architecture, and /or cultural importance:** The Commission judges that the property known as the Cashion and Moore Family Cemetery does possess special significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations:

1. The Cashion and Moore Family Cemetery is representative of burial practices of a certain strata of early white settlers in the region.

2. The Cashion and Moore Family Cemetery is a rare survivor of a family burial ground in the Davidson vicinity.

3. The Cashion and Moore Family Cemetery contains an instructive collection of early and mid-19th century funerary art.

**b. Integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and/or association:** The Commission contends that the physical description included in this report demonstrates that the Cashion and Moore Family Cemetery meets this criterion.

**9. Ad Valorem Tax Appraisal:** The Commission is aware that designation would allow the owner to apply for an automatic deferral of 50% of the Ad Valorem taxes on all or any portion of the property which becomes a designated "historic landmark." The total amount of acres in the tract of land on which the Cashion and Moore Family Cemetery is located is 69.81. The total appraised value of the Tax Parcel is \$20,288. The property is zoned R3.

**Date of Preparation of this Report:** December 18, 2005.

**Prepared by:** Dr. Dan L. Morrill

## Historical Overview

### Summary Statement of Significance

Though not well kept or preserved over the years, the Cashion and Moore Family Cemetery, also known as the Rocky River Baptist Church Cemetery, is representative of burial practices of a certain strata of early white settlers in the region. At this writing there is reason to believe that the Cashion and Moore Family Cemetery is a rare survivor of what was essentially a family burial ground in the Davidson vicinity. The cemetery contains a small but instructive collection of early and mid-19th century funerary art. Until now the cemetery has survived largely because it has been hidden from public view. As development comes ever nearer, the site is worthy of protection as an important link to Mecklenburg County's earliest white settlers.

### Historical Context Statement

One can best understand the historical significance of the Cashion and Moore Family Cemetery by considering its place within the society and culture that emerged in Mecklenburg County with the arrival of white settlers. A fundamental transformation of

the Yadkin-Catawba territory occurred in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when the era of Native American domination of the region came to a precipitous end. European civilization became predominant within a very few years. The initial white settlers drove their covered wagons into the Carolina Piedmont in the 1740s, mostly along ancient Indian trading paths. First in a trickle then a virtual flood, these immigrants, who were mostly from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware, came swarming down the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road to establish farms and homestead. Unlike the white traders who had preceded them, these families planned to stay.<sup>1</sup>

Most of the pioneers who moved into the Piedmont in the mid-1700s were Scots-Irish Presbyterians or German Lutherans. About 250,000 Scots-Irish immigrated to the New World in the first quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, most entering through Philadelphia, Baltimore, or Lewes, Delaware. Learning that the land near the coast was already taken, the former residents of Ulster trekked inland and created farms until they reached the Alleghany Mountains. They then turned south and began filtering into Virginia and the Carolinas. Although both arrived in the Yadkin-Catawba region during the same years, the Germans and the Scots-Irish did not live side by side but settled in separate church-centered communities, the former along Buffalo Creek in what is now Cabarrus County and the latter in the southern reaches of the Catawba territory along the banks of Mallard Creek, Reedy Creek, Sugar Creek, Long Creek and the Catawba River. The population of Mecklenburg County reached 11,395 in 1790.

The great majority of the early settlers of Mecklenburg County scratched out a meager living in the fields they labored to keep free from unwanted trees. Almost all of their humble log dwellings have long succumbed to insects or the hands of man. These subsistence farmers grew what they ate and made what they wore. The staple crop they raised on the land they owned or rented was corn, either eaten directly or indirectly after it had been used as fodder for the animals, mainly pigs. Some farmers did raise livestock that they turned loose to graze on the open range of the Piedmont and herded periodically for drives to coastal markets. Some corn was distilled into whiskey and sold. But most settlers knew nothing about commercial agriculture. They were poor and malnourished. Infectious diseases like measles, influenza, whooping cough, and dysentery could easily take anyone away. The Cashion and Moore Family Cemetery most probably contains the grave of at least one child.<sup>2</sup>

The invention of the cotton gin in 1793 was a transforming event for Mecklenburg County and the entire South. Thereafter, farmers could ship about twelve times as much cotton to market than they could before, and the world price decreased by approximately one half. This meant that industrious individuals, even in the Piedmont, who owned substantial amounts of land and the requisite labor supply could increase their annual income by 600 percent. One such enterprising person was Thomas Cashion, a native of Chesterfield County, Virginia, who moved with his wife, children, and cousins to Mecklenburg County in 1800 or 1801.<sup>3</sup>

Most slave owners in Mecklenburg County, like their counterparts elsewhere in the South, owned relatively small numbers of bondsmen and bondswomen. "In rough terms," states Peter Kolchin, "about one-quarter of Southern slaves lived on very small holdings of 1 to 9." The percentage in such peripheral cotton growing areas as Mecklenburg County was even higher. The majority of Mecklenburg farmers simply did not have enough money to compete with the planter elite. Representative of this sizeable group was Thomas T. Sandifer, a physician, whose house still stands on Moore's Chapel Road.



This is the Thomas T. Sandifer House. The Cashion Plantation House might have resembled this structure since Sandifers and the Cashions came from the same social strata.

In 1860, Sandifer's "personal estate was worth \$7,000.00, and he held three slaves," writes historian Frances P. Alexander. "Sandifer's slaves included two men, ages 33 and 20, and one woman age 31." The relationship of Sandifer and his slaves would have been personal and intimate. "On farms with fewer than ten slaves," says Kolchin, "masters could typically be found in the field, toiling alongside their slaves while bossing them and casually interacting with them."

### **The Cashion and Moore Family Cemetery**

Thomas Cashion (sometimes spelled Cashion) was born in 1758 and married Tabitha Traylor in 1780, by whom he had 8 children. Thomas was a member of the Virginia militia in the American Revolutionary War and fought at Portsmouth, Camden, and Gum Springs. It is reasonable to infer that Thomas Cashion became a slave owner of modest economic means. At the time of his death in December 1834 he willed to his son Thomas "the plantation on which I live," "the negro Janet" to his son Joby, and \$30 each to his grandchildren. Even the family burial ground, in which he and Tabitha Cashion are buried (she died in 1844) bears witness to the fact that Cashion did not belong to

the planter elite. The grave markers, although distinctive, are much less ornate than those found in the John Dinkins Family Cemetery in southern Mecklenburg County, for example.<sup>4</sup> Dinkins owned 34 slaves. There are seven graves in the Cashion and Moore Family Cemetery, four of which belong to the Cashions. In addition to the graves of Thomas and Tabitha, their daughter-in-law Sarah Cashion is interred there as well as their granddaughter Sarah L. Cashion.<sup>5</sup> The other three belong to the Moores, most likely members of Rocky River Baptist Church.<sup>6</sup> At least one of the graves is that of a young girl, based on name and age at time of death. According to Allen White, a direct descendent of Thomas and Sara Cashion, Thomas Cashion first became aware of the attractiveness of the land in this area because he traveled through Mecklenburg County during the American Revolutionary War. He purchased the farm on which the cemetery is now located in 1802. White conjectures that the cemetery was initially a family burial ground and later was used by Rocky River Baptist Church, which led to the Moores being buried in the cemetery.<sup>7</sup>

## Physical Description





The property known as the Cashion and Moore Family Cemetery is located northwest of the intersection of McAuley Rd. and N. C. Highway. 73, near Davidson, in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. It is hidden from the road by a grove of trees. At this writing, it is next to a white house that is a private residence on an adjacent parcel of land not owned by the owners of the cemetery.



**Intersection of McAuley Rd. and Highway 73**



**Grove of Trees surrounding Cashion Cemetery**

The cemetery is situated on a relatively flat parcel among a grove of trees, and there is no formal entrance. It is most accessible from the west. The Cashion and Moore

Family Cemetery is laid out like most cemeteries of the period. The headstones face east (roughly) toward the rising sun. The graves are arranged in rows roughly running north/south with the burial plots parallel to one another. All the graves have headstones and footstones. They are meager in design and do not have elaborate carvings. The majority are simple rectangular slabs of stone with information about the deceased providing the only decoration. Two of the headstones have the decedent's name carved out in the shape of an arch.

The simple design of the funerary art suggests that the Cashions were not among the planter elite of Mecklenburg County. Cultural folklorist Wade B. Fairey writes: "Besides the cost of carving, there was a hauling fee and other funeral costs. Therefore, for those few people who could erect a tombstone, it became a statement of economic and social superiority, and the examples ... read like a guide to the area's social circles."<sup>8</sup> There are trees that have grown over burial plots, and the roots have undermined some of the headstones. There is a thick covering of vines on the ground of the cemetery. These vines often obscure the footstones. The dates of death on the headstones range from 1834 to 1854, with Thomas Cashion being the first interred.

The Cashions who are buried on the plot are in the easternmost row of the cemetery. Thomas Cashion's grave is located farthest south, then Tabitha Cashion's, wife of Thomas Cashion, then Sarah L. Cashion's, wife of Thomas Cashion Jr., and then Sarah Cashion's, Thomas's and Sarah's granddaughter, moving northward. Thomas Cashion's grave also has a marker at his footstone erected by the D.A.R. for his service in the Virginia Militia. It is unclear when this marker was placed at the grave, though it is less worn than any of the other gravestones. It was probably erected in the early 1900s. The graves of the Moore children are in their own row located to the west of the Cashion family row. These headstones are in much greater disrepair than those of the Cashion family and are mostly undermined by tree roots.





**Graves of the Cashions**



**Graves of the Moores**



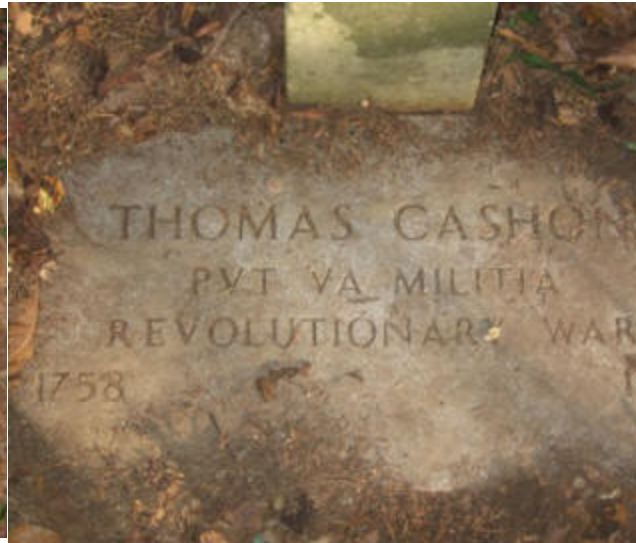
**Thomas Cashion's Headstone.**



**Tabitha Cashion's Headstone**



**Thomas Cashion served in the Virginia militia during the American Revolutionary War.**



**This marker was erected by the Daughters of the American Revolution, most likely in the early 1900s.**

1. The information in this report is largely taken from [Morrill Book/Index.htm](#) Information is also taken from Kylene Edson, "Survey and Research Report on the Cashion and Moore Family Cemetery," December 16, 2005.

2. This conjecture also results from the fact that the Moore graves are smaller than the Cashion graves.

3. The estimation of the date Thomas Cashion arrived in Mecklenburg County is based upon investigations on the internet,

see <http://archiver.rootsweb.com/th/read/NCMECKLE/1998-02/0888715965>; <http://archiver.rootsweb.com/th/read/NCMECKLE/1998-03/0889375694>; and <http://www.rootsweb.com/~ncomgs/cemetery1.htm> Other cemeteries in northern Mecklenburg County include:

Bethel Presbyterian Church Cemetery  
Bethesda Methodist Church Cemetery  
Cook's Memorial Presbyterian Church Cemetery  
Davidson College Cemetery  
Davidson Family Cemetery  
Gilead A.R.P. Church Cemetery  
Hopewell Presbyterian Church Cemetery  
Robin S. McGee Cemetery  
Ramah Presbyterian Church Cemetery  
Trinity Methodist Church Cemetery

4. The most noteworthy and talented early stone cutters in Mecklenburg County were the Bighams. Residents of the Steele Creek community of Mecklenburg County, the Bighams carved stones of intricate design, including elaborate coats of arms. One can find Bigham stones in places such as the Dinkins Family Cemetery and the cemeteries of Hopewell Presbyterian Church and Steele Creek Presbyterian Church.

5. This information has been provided by descendant. He is Stephen Allan Patrick,  
PO Box 23118  
Johnson City TN 37614.

6. At this writing the history of Rocky River Baptist Church remains undetermined. One could assume that the burial ground was originally intended for church members and later became more directly associated with the Cashion family. For details see <http://cmstory.org/cemetery/details.asp?id=38>. One of the Moore gravestones is for Juleann Moore. Another is for Mary R. Moore.

7. Interview of Allen White by Dr. Dan L. Morrill (December 20, 2005).

8. Wade B. Fairey, "The Changing York County, South Carolina, Tombstone Business, 1750-1850," *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts*, Vol. XVI, No. 2, Nov. 1990.