



# An Analysis of Mid-Atlantic Colonial Textiles

By Sophia Hayda

# Introduction to the William Green Plantation

- Built circa 1720 on what is now the TCNJ campus
  - William Green I died in 1722, never saw completion
  - his third son, William Green, Jr., inherited the farmstead
- All outbuildings have been destroyed, only farmhouse stands





- 4 building stages
  - 1720s: southwest portion
    - two-and-a-half story, one-room deep brick house with a divided basement, one room on the first floor, and 2 rooms on the second floor
  - Circa 1780s: post-Revolutionary War era
    - 2 rooms, a stair hall on the first floor, 2 rooms on the second floor
  - 1833: doubled the size
  - 1920s: summer kitchen

# The William Green Plantation and the Revolutionary War

- 3 miles from Battle of Trenton and near Washington's Crossing of the Delaware and the Battle of Princeton
  - "Cockpit of the Revolution"
  - Troops traveled along nearby Pennington Road
- Winter of 1777 to 1778: Casimir Pulaski's Light Infantry was billeted in the Trenton area
- William Green III and his father may also have served in the Continental Army, Phebe Green filed a pension claim, following her husband's death in 1815, alleging their service in the Continental Army
  - Rejected: "claimant failed to furnish proof of the alleged services of her husband"



# Introduction to The First Baptist Church of Philadelphia

- 2016: construction of a parking garage and a high-rise apartment in Philadelphia, human remains were suddenly unearthed
- February 2017: excavations begin
- 500 human remains recovered
- 500-1,000 additional burials may have been destroyed





A photograph showing several people wearing blue gloves and masks, working on an archaeological excavation of a burial site. They are carefully removing soil from a long, narrow wooden coffin. The bones of the deceased are visible inside the coffin, including the skull, ribcage, and long bones of the legs. The scene is set in a laboratory or field setting with a wooden table.

# First Baptist Church of Philadelphia Cemetery

- In use 1702-1859
- Funerary tradition, wealth, and social status
- Colonial (pre-1775), Revolutionary (1775-1783), and Republican (post-1783) artifacts
- “Great Awakening” heralded a decline in strict Puritanism and the beginning of the “beautification of death” in the late 1700s and early 1800s
  - Increased spending
- Members and non-members

# Historical Textiles in Colonial America

An Introduction





- Homespun textiles, imported European textiles and personal adornments, and Native American elements (tinkler cones and glass seed beads) = emerging American style
- Few complete clothing articles have survived
- What remains in the archaeological record
  - Colonial households: Buttons, buckles, lead seals, beads, hair combs, jewelry, religious medals, tools for sewing and weaving
  - Burial sites: some similar, but also shroud scraps, shroud pins, copper shroud aglets, and shroud decorations, such as shroud rings

Noew that your lordship may knowe, we are not the veriest of beggers in the worlde, our Cowe-keeper here of Iames city on Sundayes goes acowtered in freshe flaming silkes and a wife of that in England had professed the black arte not of a scholler but of a collier of Croydon, weares her rough beauer hat with a faire perle hatband, and a silken suite.

1619 letter from John Pory

Secretary of the Virginia Company at Jamestown

## Artifact Types

Type	Number
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Total n	18
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Buttons	12
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Footwear	2
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Shroud rings	2
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Shoe soles	2
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Artifact type	Artifact measurements	Excavation site	Artifact storage box information
Leather boot	Length (from toe to heel): 20.5 cm Height (from heel to bootstrap): 23 cm Width (arch of sole): 6 cm Width (toe of sole): 8.5 cm	William Green Plantation	[No storage box]
Leather shoe	Length (from toe to heel): 28 cm Height (from heel to collar): 6 cm Width (arch of sole): 4 cm Width (toe of sole): 11 cm	William Green Plantation	[No storage box]
Leather shoe sole (two fragments)	Fragment one Length: 7 cm Width: 3.8 cm  Fragment two Length: 10 cm Width: 5.9 cm	First Baptist Church of Philadelphia	G 400 F.S. 600 Area 7 Shaft of G 400 Aecom 9/14/17
Circular flat metal coin/button with no hole	Diameter: 2.2 cm	First Baptist Church of Philadelphia	G 92 F.S. 40 Area 4 Aecom 7/20/17
Circular metal domed button with one hole	Diameter: 2.5 cm	First Baptist Church of Philadelphia	G 234 F.S. 280 Area 7 Aecom 8/14/17

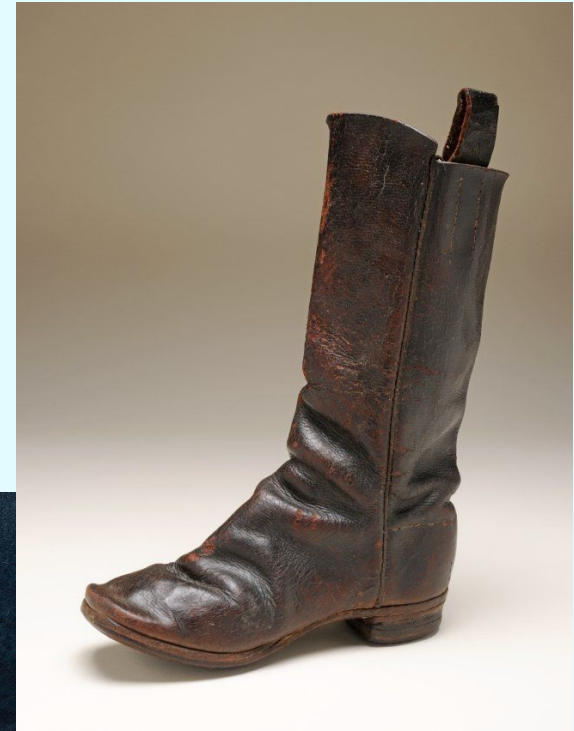


Oval wooden button with one hole and bark fragments	Major axis: 1.3 cm Minor axis: 1.2 cm	First Baptist Church of Philadelphia	G 188 F.S. 203 Area 6
Oval wooden button with one hole	Major axis: 1.2 cm Minor axis: 1 cm	First Baptist Church of Philadelphia	G 188 F.S. 203 Area 6
Oval wooden button with one hole	Major axis: 1.2 cm Minor axis: 1 cm	First Baptist Church of Philadelphia	G 188 F.S. 203 Area 6
Circular wooden button with one hole	Diameter: 1.2 cm	First Baptist Church of Philadelphia	G 188 F.S. 203 Area 6
Circular wooden button with one hole	Diameter: 2 cm	First Baptist Church of Philadelphia	G 188 F.S. 203 Area 6
Circular wooden button with one hole	Diameter: 2 cm	First Baptist Church of Philadelphia	G 188 F.S. 203 Area 6
Shroud ring fragment	Diameter: 0.9 cm	First Baptist Church of Philadelphia	G 188 F.S. 203 Area 6
Shroud ring	Diameter: 1 cm	First Baptist Church of Philadelphia	G 188 F.S. 203 Area 6

Circular shell button with four holes in a center indent	Diameter: 1.1 cm	First Baptist Church of Philadelphia	G 42 Area C F.S. 136 # 136 7/24/17
Leather Shoe Sole	Length: 16 cm	William Green Plantation	Unassociated Area C
Wooden button fragment, likely one hole	Length: 1.2 cm	First Baptist Church of Philadelphia	G 195
Circular wooden button with one hole	Diameter: 1.5 cm	First Baptist Church of Philadelphia	G 195
Circular wooden button with one hole	Diameter: 1.5 cm	First Baptist Church of Philadelphia	G 195



- WGP
- Very few work boots have survived from the 19th century
  - Typically only preserved in exceptional conditions
  - Ex. hidden behind walls or floorboards to bring good fortune
- Sturdy and functional work boots
- Well worn around the ball of the foot, showing heavy use

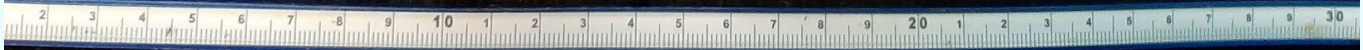








Shoe  
WG-P





# Shoe

- WGP
- Late 18th century
  - At around 1740, the short-tongued, round-toed leather shoes with large buckles over the insteps were the most popular type of shoe
- Buckle strap
- Mending





# Shrouds

- Very few people were buried on their day clothing
- Most buried in shrouds
  - burial shroud fragments, shroud pins, copper shroud aglets, and shroud decorations, like shroud rings
- Enlightenment Period: death was less something to be feared, and more as transition between two states, as a final sleep
  - Shrouds mimicked sleepwear
  - Occasionally including knitted nightcaps and bonnets in 19th century
  - Beautification of death







# Shroud Rings

- Found on a sub-adult, possibly male
- Jewelry was very rare in 17th to 19th century burials
  - Even wedding bands were rare
  - Jewelry just for decoration was exceptionally rare, and usually earrings or necklaces

# Buttons

- Most often used as closures for men's clothing
  - jackets, coats, vests, greatcoats, banyans, waistcoats, shirts, breeches, and frocks
- Relatively large number of round, one-holed wooden buttons is uncommon in other colonial archaeological sites
  - Regional feature that exhibits the unique style of the NJ and eastern Pennsylvania region
- Difficult to date
  - Button fashion did not change often, especially among the lower third of society
  - Dated mostly through provenance

Article of Clothing	Approximate Number of Buttons	Size of Button
Banyan	6	Small
Breeches	7-10; 2-3	Small; Large
Coat and frock	12-26	Medium
Great coat	9	Large
Shirt	1-2	Small
Waistcoat and vest	20	Small or Medium

Large = 18.5 mm to 35 mm

Medium= 14 mm to 19.5

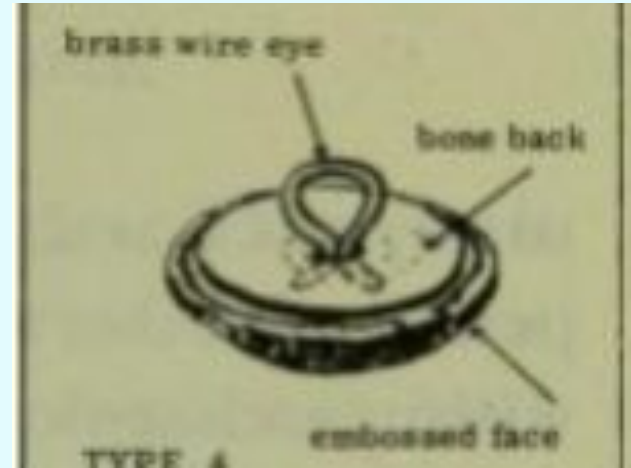
Small = smaller than 14 mm

# Button Types

Type	Number
Total n	12
Shell button with four holes	1
Metal flat button with no hole	1
Metal domed button	1
Small wooden button, > 1.4 cm diameter	5
Large wooden button, $\leq 1.4$ cm diameter	4



- FBCP
- 1740 to 1760
- Most likely imported, like other metal buttons
- Most likely used on a frock coat
- Separate back that was soldered or brazed together

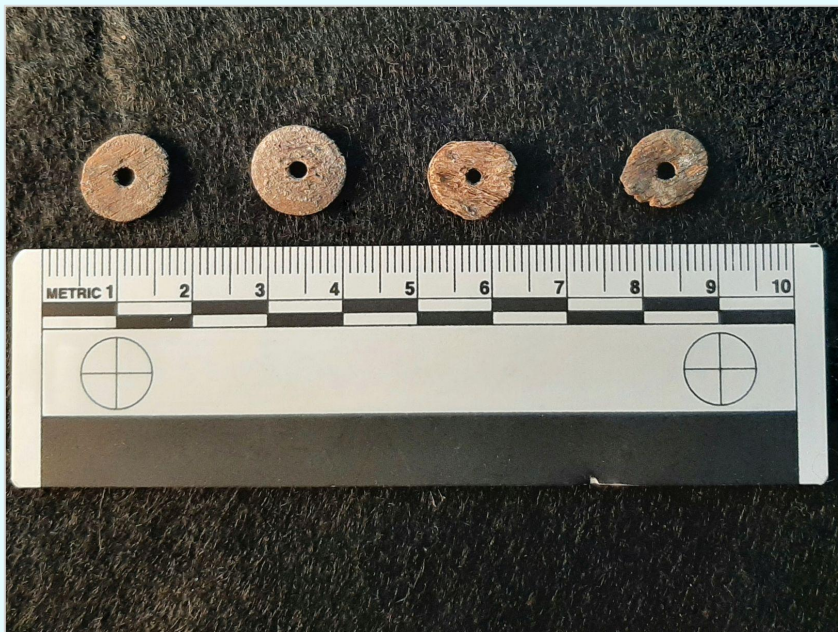


# Flat metal button

- FBCP
- 1760 to 1800
- 2.5 cm diameter
- Missing shank (separately cast?)







# Wooden buttons

- Especially unique to NJ (and perhaps Philadelphia) sites, not in its form and material, but in its ubiquity
  - Metal buttons more common in other states/sites
- The Pennsylvania Gazette Jan. 18, 1770: Benjamin Randolph
  - “The people of New-Jersey (in general) wear no other kind of buttons, and say they are the best and cheapest, can be bought, both for strength and beauty, and he doubts not that they will soon recommend themselves to the public in general”
- Descriptions of escaped enslaved people, apprentices, prisoners, and servants in “runaway” notices
- Most commonly used on outerwear such as coats, jackets, and breeches
- All the one-holed, wooden buttons from the assemblages are likely to predate or were from the early eighteenth century, since overall, wooden buttons were not commonly used in the eighteenth century, and those that used had four holes instead of one



# Large Wooden Buttons

- 2 cm diameter
- Most likely worn on a coat or great coat
- Could possibly be for breeches





## Small wooden buttons

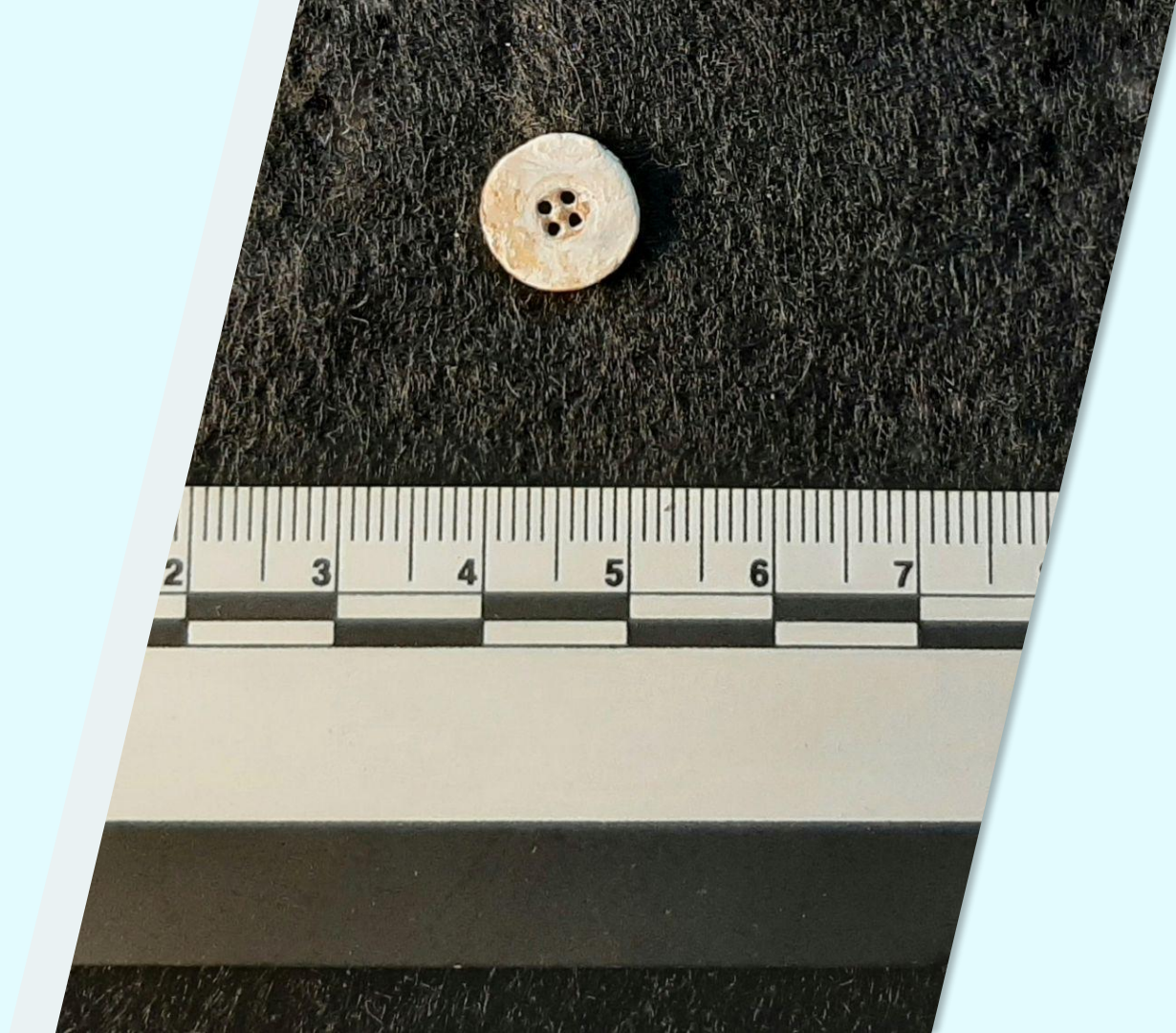
- Less than 1.4 cm diameter
- Most likely: legs of breeches
- Less likely: banyan, shirt





# Shell button

- FBCP
- Very difficult to date
- One of the most common types of button found at other colonial sites
- Shirt cuff buttons



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