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## The Grove and Flagg Plantations Survey

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THE GROVE AND FLAGG PLANTATIONS SURVEY

by

Michael O. Hartley and Robert L. Stephenson  
Research Manuscript Series No. 72

An Archeological Survey of the Proposed  
Amoco Chemicals Corporation's Plant by the  
Institute of Archeology and Anthropology  
for Dames and Moore Consultants

Prepared by the  
INSTITUTE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
April, 1975

## INTRODUCTION

The Institute of Archeology and Anthropology at the University of South Carolina contracted with Dames and Moore, Consultants in the environmental and applied earth sciences, to examine a tract of land twelve miles north of Charleston, South Carolina for archeological remains. This survey was undertaken to determine what archeological sites, if any, would be affected by proposed construction on the tract by Amoco Chemicals Corporation. Although the proposed construction will directly involve only a small portion of the tract of land, the entire area was considered in the survey.

The agreement to conduct this survey was reached through correspondence between Dr. Robert L. Stephenson of the Institute and Dr. Merlin E. Horn and Mr. Kevin J. Ruesch of Dames and Moore. The field work took place during the week of March 17-21, 1975. Dr. Stephenson and the writer conducted various examinations during that week and the results of the survey are contained in this report.

As a separate agreement, the Consultants also contracted with Dr. Elaine B. Herold of the Charleston Museum to investigate the historic aspects of this area. Dr. Herold researched the documentary records and examined the historic sites on the property. Her report will be submitted separately as a part of the total archeological Environmental Impact Statement.

We would also like to take this opportunity to express our thanks to Dr. Merlin Horn, Mr. Kevin Ruesch and others of Dames and Moore for their interest in the archeological aspect of the Environmental Impact

Statement. Supportive interest like theirs aids in the successful completion of a survey.

Thanks also to Dr. Herold and her crew for various kinds of assistance.

Stanley South, Leland Ferguson, Darby Erd, Sandy Anderson and the others of the Institute staff, as always, provided the base and assistance necessary for the production of a report. Our thanks to them.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

The area of the survey lies in the Atlantic Coast Flatwoods of South Carolina near the port city of Charleston. It is comprised of from 2,000 to 3,000 acres of woodland, tidal marsh and cultivated fields located some twelve miles north of Charleston, on the east side of the Cooper River. Two plantations, Grove and Flagg, are found in the area which is generally bounded by Grove Creek on the north, Flagg Creek on the south, Clements Ferry Road (S.C. Highway 98) on the east and Cooper River tidal marsh on the west.

The irregular belt known as the Atlantic Coast Flatwoods is from thirty to seventy miles wide, extending from the beach strand inland to the Coastal Plain, and incorporates the area of the survey. The Flatwoods has an elevation ranging from sea level to two hundred feet, and the elevation within the survey area ranges from five feet at the marsh edge to thirty five feet in the interior. Climate ranges from warm temperate to subtropical with a two hundred sixty to two hundred eighty day growing season. Average annual precipitation is fifty inches (Army Corps of Engineers 1973: 5).

A large portion of the survey area falls into the coastal and inland marsh category. Waterfowl and shorebirds such as ducks, geese, coot, heron, ibis, and oystercatcher are supported by the marsh. Marshhawks, osprey and bald eagles prey in the marshlands, and deer, alligator, marsh rabbit and raccoon are also found there (Corps of Engineers 1973: 6-7).

Fish found in the estuarine zone are black drum, flounder, sheepshead, shad and striped bass, among others. This zone also provides an environment in which shrimp, crab and other shellfish multiply (Corps of Engineers 1973: 6-7).

This description is given depth through time when we read John Lawson's notes taken on nearby Bull's Island, December 31, 1700...

At our return to our Quarters, the Indians had Killed two more Deer, two wild Hogs, and three Raccoons, all very lean except the Raccoons. We had great Store of Oysters, Conks, and Clanns, a large Sort of Cockles. These Parts being very well furnished with Shell-Fish, Turtle of several sorts, but few or none of the green, with other Sorts of Salt-water Fish, and in Season good Plenty of Fowl, as curleus, Gulls, Gannets, and Pellicans, besides Duck and Mallard, Geese, Swans, Teal Widgeon &c (Lawson 1952: 5).

It is against this environmental background, or rather enmeshed with this background, that prehistoric populations moved, in forests and marsh that now make up Grove and Flagg Plantations.

While the historic information will be more thoroughly discussed by Dr. Herold, it is pertinent to note here that historic use of available shore line was extensive and in certain cases intensive along both boundary creeks and on the western marsh shore. Substantial historic remains cover much land which would be considered potential site locations. Occupation and use of these sites for long periods by historic cultures will have disturbed, and in some cases obliterated, some evidences of prehistoric remains.

## DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

No records of prehistoric sites were found in Institute files. Historic documentation will be found in Dr. Herold's report.

## ARCHEOLOGICAL RESEARCH PLAN

The survey area falls within the Pine Barrens River Valley Biotope (Milanich 1972: 110) containing a number of deciduous tree species, many of which produce edible nuts or seeds. One major coastal cultural tradition is represented by the Deptford Phase, whose peoples may have moved inland from the coast in the fall to harvest nuts and fruits and take advantage of deer, turkey and fish to supplement their winter diet (Milanich 1972: 111). In the survey area we would expect to find Deptford and pre-Deptford cultures utilizing camp sites sporadically occupied during transhumant movements (Milanich 1972: 112).

Examination of high ground near water and marsh should be likely to show cultural remains from this seasonal exploitation of resources.

## THE SURVEY

To accomplish the purposes of this research plan the surveyor used roads, power line right of ways and cultivated areas to examine as much of the ground as possible, with an emphasis on slopes and high ground near water sources. The woodland was also examined, particularly along the western shore at the marsh edge, but with certain difficulties caused by the wet conditions due to heavy rains.

The survey area was substantially examined, and five prehistoric occupation sites were located, recorded, and investigated. One test pit was excavated in site 38BK147 and is discussed below.

38BK155 The Bird Skull Site

This site is most readily apparent in the main power line right of way running diagonally across the eastern half of the survey area (Fig. 1). From the southernmost access road the site begins approximately 3/10 of a mile northwest on the power line and continues for a little more than 2/10 of a mile, with the heaviest occupation occurring on the slope north of the northernmost of two small tributaries. The complete extent of the site has not been determined to the northeast and southwest along the tributaries.

Five sherds of fibre-tempered pottery in the Stallings Ware-group were found on this site, pottery in this ware-group being the earliest found in the southeastern United States, the type site dating 2515 B.C. + 95 (Stoltman 1966: 872). South (1973: 55) initiates his South Carolina Coast Pottery Taxonomy with this ware-group, during the Formative stage of cultural development.

Sherds from the Thom's Creek Ware-group were also found at the Bird Skull Site, a sand tempered pottery closely related to Stallings (Phelps 1968: 21, 29). South's (1973: 55) Formative Stage begins with Stallings ware-group and ends with Thom's Creek, with ware-groups occurring on this site. Phelps (1968: 29) remarks that there is little to distinguish between Stallings Island and Thom's Creek ceramics beyond the change in tempering material, with sand replacing fibre in the later Thom's Creek pottery.

Thom's Creek is replaced by Deptford and/or Wilmington pottery, according to Phelps (1968: 29), and South's (1973: 55) next stage, the Developmental is in agreement, including Deptford, Cape Fear and Wilmington Ware-groups. While no Deptford sherds occur at the Bird



Skull Site, we do have Cape fear fabric impressed sherds (South 1960: 38-41) which begins ca. 300 B.C. (South 1973: 55) and predates the Wilmington Ware-group.

The Developmental Stage at the Bird Skull Site ends with Hanover fabric impressed sherd tempered material from the Wilmington Ware-group as the marker, ending ca. 1100 A.D.

As this site is not threatened by the proposed construction no recommendations are made for immediate archeological examination. However, it should be considered for future delineation and archeological examination.

#### 38BK147 The Palm Tree Site

The Palm Tree Site contained fifteen sherds of Deptford simple stamped pottery (Griffin and Sears: Deptford type 1-1) with temper ranging from sandy temper to non-temper (South 1973: 55). Plain sherds of similar paste, sherds of Deptford linear check stamped (Griffin and Sears: Deptford type 3-1) and one complicated stamp sherd also occur. The site would fall within the Developmental Stage (South 1973: 55) at the onset of the stage with no Cape Fear or Wilmington Ware-group present in the surface collection. Deptford extends from ca. 800 B.C. to ca. 800 A.D.

A single lithic projectile point is also present from the site, a Savannah River point, which is a marker for the end of the Archaic in the Piedmont (Coe 1964: 121-124). Savannah River projectile points are also associated with both the Stallings and Thom's Creek phases (Phelps 1968: 29) which would associate this point with the Formative Stage (South 1973: 55). One projectile point is scanty evidence, however.

As the Palm Tree Site lies in a cultivated field proposed for the construction of storage tanks, (Fig. 1) a test pit was placed on a rise twenty five feet north of the palm tree which gave the site its name. The pit, five feet square, was excavated to a depth of two feet. The plow zone was a clearly defined dark humus layer .6 to .8 of a foot below the surface. Orange-yellow sand occurred beneath that to a depth of two feet and below. No artifacts were found in either zone and no architectural features were present.

From the information gained in this test pit and because of the proposed construction we would recommend that the plow zone be stripped in selected areas with heavy machinery. Any existing architectural features could be observed and plotted and salvage excavations undertaken if necessary.

#### 38BK156 The Silver Seed Site

This is a small site located on the main power line approximately 2/10 of a mile southeast of Grove Cemetery (Fig. 1). A small number of Cape Fear fabric impressed sherds (South 1960: 38-41) and several associated nondescript sherds of untempered plain material were found. This site would fall into the Developmental Stage ca. 300 B.C. to ca. 1000 A.D. (South 1973: 55). This site lies on a rise above a small tributary.

No recommendations are made at this time as the site is not directly threatened.

#### 38BK157 The Thirty Buzzard Site

This site contains twelve complicated stamped sherds and three simple stamped sherds. Nothing can be said about this small sample

beyond this at this time (Ferguson, personal communication). Further collecting may yield more information. The site could fall anywhere from the late Developmental Stage to the Decline Stage (South 1973: 55).

No recommendations are made at this time as the site is not directly threatened.

#### 38BK150 The Hard Landing Site

Here we have one site which shows what is probably Decline Stage material. This site has been used during the historic period as a landing and historic artifacts have been recovered from this site. This aspect of the Hard Landing Site will be dealt with in the report on the historic components of the survey area.

In association with the historic artifacts are several sherds of Indian pottery which have been identified as possibly Colono-Indian (Baker, personal communication). This ware was produced in historic times in imitation of European forms for sale and trade (Baker 1972: 3-30). The sherds may also represent a somewhat earlier burnished ware.

Also present on this site was a grooved baked clay object similar to the melon-shaped baked clay objects from Charles Towne Landing (38CH1) (South 1970: 9). These are probably also related in time and space to Poverty Point objects from Louisiana and are dated ca. 2000 B.C.

No immediate recommendations are made concerning the prehistoric component as the site is not threatened by the proposed construction. It should be considered for further archeological examination as circumstances indicate.

## SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Within the project area only one prehistoric archeological site was found that appears to be endangered by the proposed construction of the Amoco Chemicals Plant. The Palm Tree Site (38BK147) is located in an area selected for construction of a storage tank field. As mentioned in the discussion of this site, certain mitigation of adverse archeological effects is in order for this site.

We know from the surface collection that the site was occupied during the Deptford Phase of cultural development and probably within the early portion of the Deptford phase; probably within the time span of 800 B.C. to 300 B.C. We do not know the length of time the site was occupied but judging by the stratigraphy in the one test square excavated the duration may not have been very long. A single Savannah River projectile point suggests an earlier occupation before Deptford times but a single specimen may well be an intrusive element into the site.

The surface indications are that the site is diffuse and occupies an area of two to three acres. The stratigraphy of the test squares suggests that most or all of the occupation is vertically confined to the top foot or so of the site.

Thorough investigation of a site of this kind; a single occupation scattered over a considerable surface area within the Pine Barren River Valley biotome (Milanich 1972: 110) could be expected to provide a wealth of information about the cultural lifeways of the people of this area at a time of which we are very poorly informed. Stripping the plow zone from this area with carefully controlled heavy machinery followed by careful hand excavation of archeological features and specimens, we may expect to find, in this kind of excavation, evidence of village pattern, living areas, house outlines, etc. that would

explain the kind of life that people were living at that time as well as the ways in which they were putting the environment to use to serve their own purposes.

Such an excavation may actually not provide as much data as expected. On the other hand it may provide even more than expected. It is never possible to fully anticipate all of the potential of any archeological site before excavation. Yet one must make the best estimate possible in order to prepare for the optimum mitigation of adverse effects to a site that may be destroyed. It is in this view that the following project of archeological research effort is proposed for the Palm Tree Site (38BK147).

It should require a minimum of one week of the use of heavy equipment plus four weeks of hard labor with a crew of ten laborers and an archeologist. This together with necessary equipment, vehicles, supplies, camp facilities, etc. should require about five weeks of field work. Following the field work laboratory analyses and research and preparation of a report should require approximately fifteen weeks of the time of an archeologist and two assistants. The total cost of such an operation would be in the neighborhood of \$15,000. As indicated above, initial investigations at the beginning of the field work could well scale this downward but probably would not scale it upward.

The Institute requests that it be kept informed of any ground clearing operations and alterations to the ground surface that may be done in connection with proposed construction. As new ground is broken in areas like Grove and Flagg Plantations new information may become available that will benefit the search for man's past. The sooner the archeologist is made aware of the archeological potential, the sooner research can be done that will clear the way for construction.

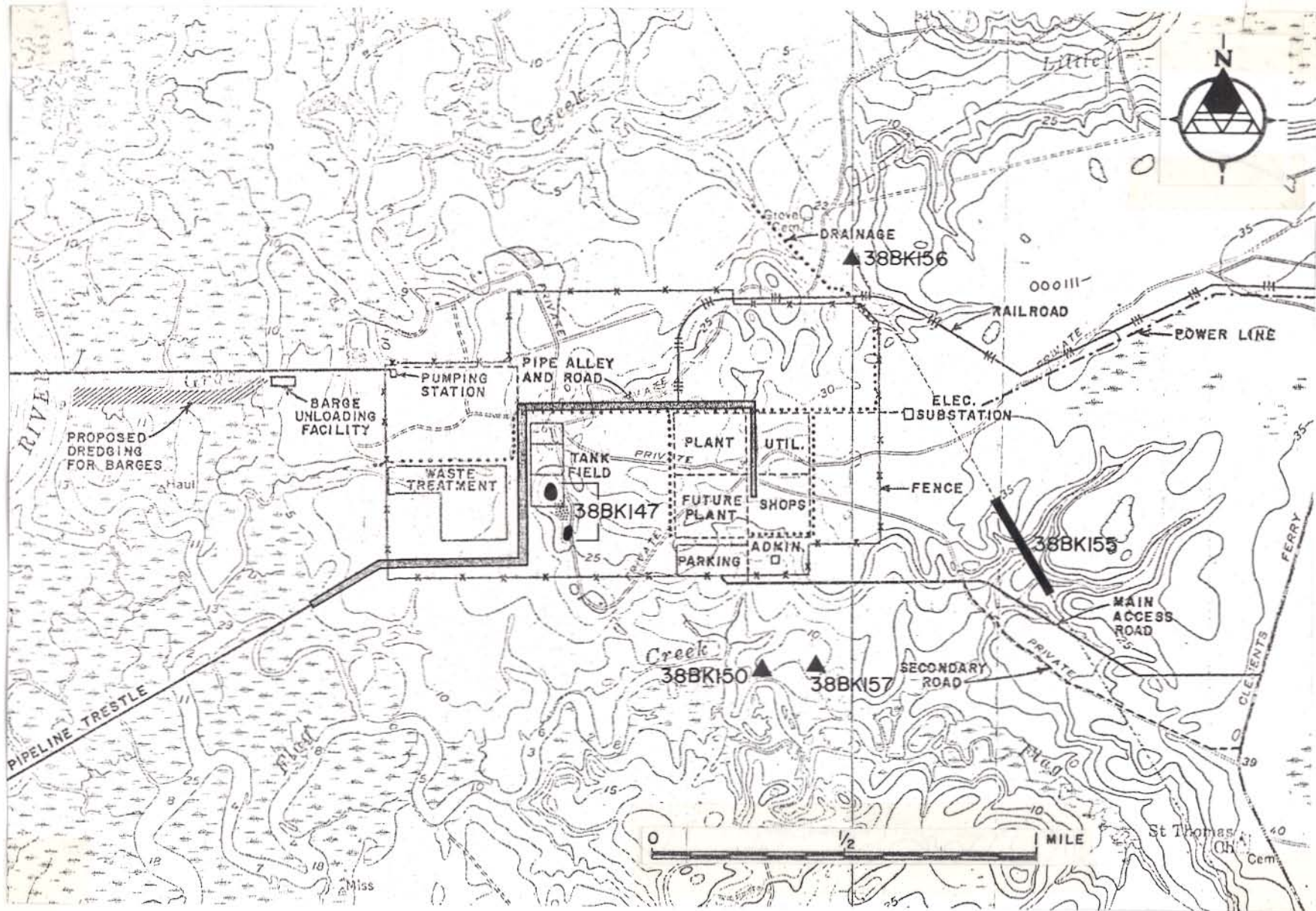


FIGURE 1. Generalized Layout of the Proposed Facility.

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