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AN ARCHEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE
PROPOSED GAFFNEY SEWER IMPROVEMENTS

by

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INTRODUCTION

At the request of L B C & W - Harwood Beebe, the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina, agreed to submit a proposal for and to conduct an archeological site survey of the proposed Thicketty Creek Treatment Facilities in Cherokee, County, South Carolina (Fig. 1). The survey was undertaken September 1-5, 1976, in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act as part of the Environmental Impact Statement which must be completed prior to construction of any project that is being funded in whole or part by the Federal government.

The primary goal of this survey was to locate any archeological manifestations in the area to be impacted by the construction of the proposed sewer facilities. In addition, should any archeological sites be recorded during this survey, that may be endangered by the development, recommendations for appropriate measures to mitigate the damage would be set forth. In a project such as this, mitigation can take any of a number of forms.

At present, knowledge of the archeological resources of Cherokee County is quite limited. The entire Piedmont is indeed poorly understood, as little archeological work has been undertaken in the region until recently. Two recent surveys, by the Institute, of highway corridors in the Piedmont (House and Ballenger 1976; Goodyear, Ackerly and House n.d.) will, upon completion of the analyses of the data retrieved from them, do much to remedy this situation.

One archeological survey has been previously performed in Cherokee County. This survey (Bianchi 1974) was located east of Gaffney on the Broad River. Data recovered during this survey indicated prehistoric occupation during the Middle and Late Archaic and Woodland periods. The

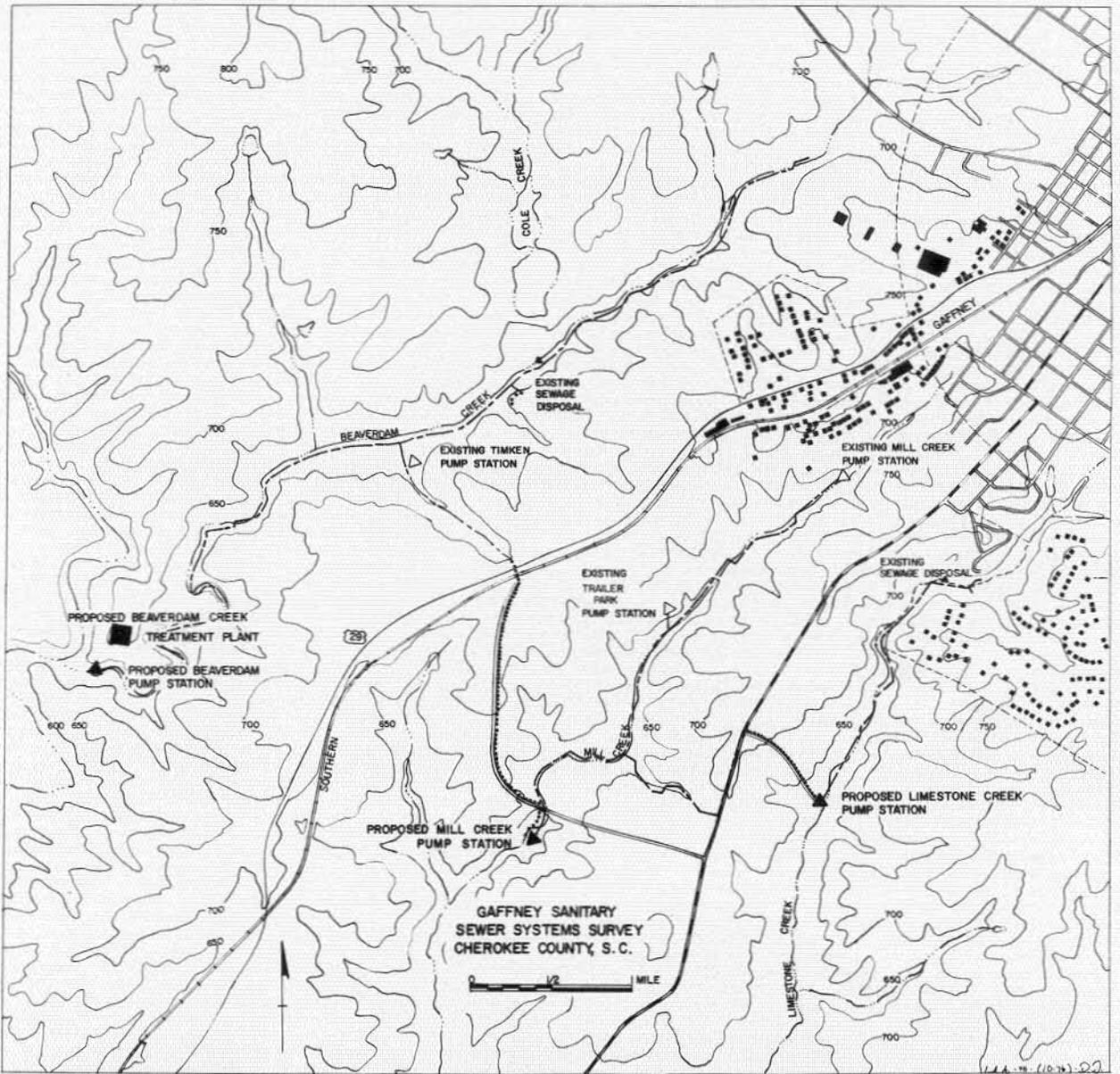


FIGURE 1

Gaffney Sewer System Survey

historic occupation seems to be confined to the nineteenth century and is most likely associated with the iron industry (Moss 1972) and cotton farming in the immediate area.

The physiographic settings of this previous survey and of the present survey are quite different, in that the area of the proposed Gaffney sewer is removed from a major river valley. In addition, the iron works which were responsible for most of the nineteenth century occupation (Bianchi 1974) are not found in the area of the present survey. For these reasons, it is not expected that the archeological resources of the proposed Gaffney sewer will be entirely analogous to those of the former survey, however, the previous survey should give a general idea of what is to be expected here.

Prior to initiating the field survey, several documentary sources were consulted to determine if there were sites of historical or archeological interest recorded in the survey area. Neither the site files of the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology nor the files of the Historic Preservation Division of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History contained records of sites in the area. In addition, the Spartanburg District map in the 1825 *Mills' Atlas of South Carolina* was checked. There were no sites in the immediate impact area.

THE SETTING

The sewer facilities are located in the Southern Piedmont Region, an area which varies in elevation from about 580' above sea level to 720'. The survey covered moderately to steeply sloping terrain which was, in large part, wooded or covered with scrub growth. Vegetation consisted of hardwoods interspersed with pines and other evergreens; along creek valleys

there was considerable undergrowth. This growth severely hampered the survey as visibility of the ground surface was limited to those areas that were exposed due to road cuts, plowing and erosion. A small amount of land has been modified for agricultural usage, however most of this is in pasture or presently lies fallow.

Recent archeological research in the I-77 corridor (House and Ballenger 1976), which lies in an inter-riverine environment in the Piedmont of South Carolina, indicates that stream rank may be an important physiographic variable in site location. Although the I-77 data did not support the hypothesis that certain types of sites are more often than not located along streams, it did indicate that the rank of the drainage was a significant variable (House and Ballenger 1976: 121-125). In the present survey, three streams (Mill Creek, Limestone Creek, and Irene Creek) were investigated. These streams were ranked according to a system proposed by Strahler (1964), in which they were assigned rank based on inspection of the United States Geological Survey Gaffney quad sheet. Each stream indicated on the map, including those shown as intermittant watercourses were assigned rank. Intermittant creeks, or other lowest level streams, were designated rank 1; progressively larger streams were given consecutively larger ranks.

Mill Creek is a rank 1 stream for the entire length surveyed. Limestone Creek is a rank 2 stream, and Irene Creek is a rank 2 stream on a portion of the length surveyed and a rank 3 on the lowest portion surveyed.

ARCHEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND IN THE PIEDMONT

Stephenson (1975) has recently reviewed the history of archeological research in the Piedmont of South Carolina. He discusses the fact that most of our knowledge of the culture-history of the Piedmont originates from research at a few stratified riverine sites in adjoining states.

The summary of culture-history in the Piedmont presented below is based on the syntheses of Coe (1964), Wauchope (1966), Caldwell (1958), Phelps (1964), and most recently, House and Ballenger (1976).

Paleo-Indian Period (14,000 - 8,000 B.C.)

The Paleo-Indian period is representative of hunting and gathering lifeways in the late Pleistocene. A low population density is suggested by the information currently on hand about this period. Research by Michie (n.d.) indicates that although there is evidence of this occupation in the Piedmont, it is quite sparse, and no materials attributable to it are expected to be found during the present survey.

Archaic Period (8,000 - 1,000 B.C.)

The Archaic Period is thought to represent a long development of highly successful adaptations to the post-Pleistocene environment. This period is generally divided into three subperiods: Early, Middle, and Late Archaic. Data from the Early Archaic indicates an increase in human population, and although there seem to be technological continuities with the preceding period, some new technologies are evidenced. Middle Archaic occupations are poorly understood but there seem to be marked differences in this subperiod which set it apart from the Early Archaic.

Efficient adaptation to the environment and use of non-domesticated resources is strongly suggested by the information available for the Late Archaic (as well as for most of the earlier portions of this period). There is, however, some evidence to suggest during the last subperiod some knowledge and use of both native and tropical cultigens.

As was noted earlier, the only previous survey in Cherokee County (Bianchi 1974) recovered materials representing the Middle and Late Archaic; it is expected that should archeological materials be retrieved during this survey, they also will likely be from this period.

Woodland Period (1,000 B.C. - ca. A.D. 1,000)

Characteristic of the Woodland period is the earliest widespread use of ceramics and widespread evidence of horticulture. Woodland components are numerous at the Fall Line, and previous surveys in the Piedmont (Kelly 1972; House and Ballenger 1976; Bianchi 1974) have also revealed evidence of this period, however this evidence was sparse. There is the possibility that some materials from this period will be recovered during this survey, however it is not likely.

Mississippian Period (A.D. 1,000 - 1,600)

Mississippian societies exhibit marked dependency on maize agriculture with large, permanent settlements and more complex social organization than is evidenced during the preceding periods. The only Mississippian sites excavated in the Piedmont are large, conspicuous centers. It is not expected that sites of this period will be found during this survey.

Historical Period

Cherokee County was initially occupied by Anglo-American colonists ca. 1750 (Meriwether 1940). The Scotch-Irish immigrants who came into the area in the 1750's and 1760's were primarily farmers. During the American Revolution, there was considerable military activity in the county, and two major engagements (the Battles of King's Mountain and Cowpens) were fought in the area. There is no mention, however, of military activity in the immediate vicinity of the survey area. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the cotton boom hit the Piedmont, and environmentally detrimental cotton monoculture became a major industry in this part of the state. Severe soil depletion and erosion resulted. Another late eighteenth and nineteenth century industry, iron manufacturing, became important in the Piedmont. To the east of the present survey, on the Broad River, iron manufacturing played an important role throughout the nineteenth century (Bianchi 1974).

There is some possibility that sites of the historic period will be found during this survey, however they will likely be associated with agricultural rather than manufacturing activities.

SURVEY TECHNIQUE AND RESULTS

The survey of the proposed Gaffney treatment facilities was accomplished by walking the entire twelve mile route of the sewers and inspecting all visible ground surfaces. The extremely dense undergrowth and heavy forest litter, in addition to heavily grassed pasture lands, severely limited visibility. Special emphasis was given to exposed areas such as road cuts, eroded spots and stream banks. Due to personnel limitations and time constraints, no subsurface testing was performed. No archeological sites were found during this survey.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Several possible explanations for the lack of recovery of archeological materials may be set forth. As indicated earlier in this report, stream rank and associated environmental variables are thought to play a significant role in the location of archeological sites. House and Ballenger (1976) have shown that prehistoric sites tend to be located on the higher ranked (ranks 3, 4, and 5) rather than the lower ranked (ranks 1 and 2) streams. Except for a portion of Irene Creek which is a rank 3 stream, all of the stream valleys were ranks 1 and 2. House and Ballenger (1976) do not indicate that prehistoric sites are never located on the smaller streams, however it is suggested that sites on these streams will exist in lesser quantity. Therefore, in a survey of a relatively small impact area such as this one, there will be less likelihood of encountering sites.

There also exists the possibility that some of the sites which may have been located in the impact area have been disturbed or obliterated by previous construction on existing water treatment facilities or road construction.

It is also entirely possible, in fact, quite probable, that some subsurface testing would have revealed archeological materials. As this is the case, the only recommendation made for any future work on this project is that the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology be notified should any archeological material be encountered during construction. At that time the Office of the State Archeologist will decide whether an inspection of the area should be made. It is stressed that this will not in any way delay construction, and should it be decided that an archeologist be on the site during construction, that person will work within the schedule set forth by the contractor.

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