

10-1977

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Recommended Citation

Cable, John; Michie, James L.; and Perlman, Stephen M., "An Archeological Reconnaissance of the Gaffney By-Pass, Cherokee County, South Carolina" (1977). *Research Manuscript Series*. Book 107.

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Keywords

Excavations, Gaffney, Cherokee County, South Carolina, Archeology

Disciplines

Anthropology

Publisher

The South Carolina Institute of Archeology and Anthropology--University of South Carolina

Comments

In USC online Library catalog at: <http://www.sc.edu/library/>

AN ARCHEOLOGICAL RECONNAISSANCE OF THE
GAFFNEY BY-PASS,
CHEROKEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

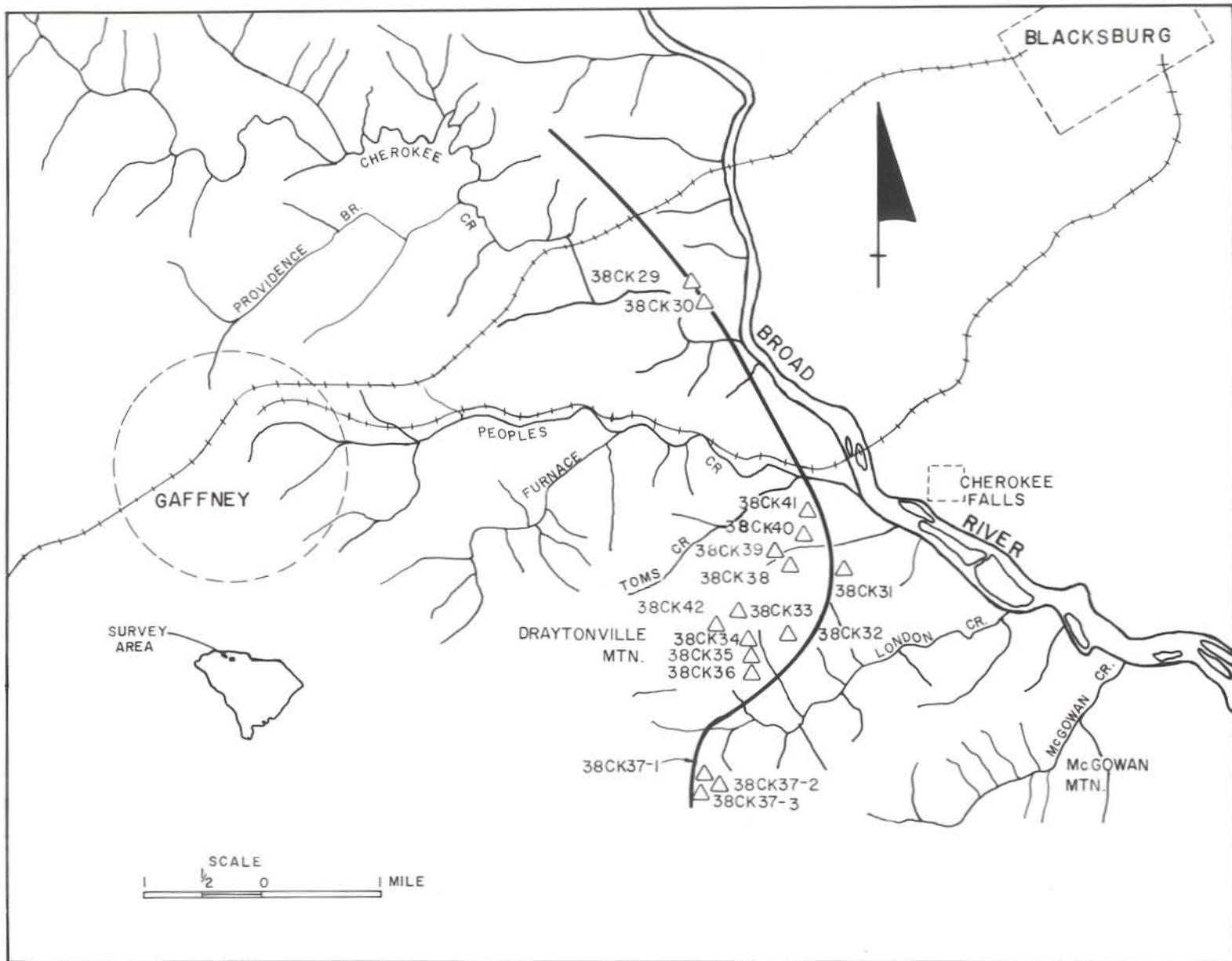
by
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Research Manuscript Series, No. 121

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Prepared by the
INSTITUTE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY
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October, 1977

INTRODUCTION

From August 1, 1977 through August 3, 1977 the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology highway archeology staff (Stephen Perlman, James Michie and John Cable) conducted a reconnaissance survey along the proposed corridor of an Interstate 85 and South Carolina State Highway 105 connector. The right-of-way is just east of the town of Gaffney in Cherokee County, South Carolina (Fig. 1). The proposed route runs approximately 7.75 miles and cross-cuts a number of established highways. The reconnaissance was undertaken in cooperation with the South Carolina Highway Department and was funded by them in compliance with NEPA (1969) and Executive Order 11593. Laboratory analysis of the material collected on survey was undertaken by James L. Michie between August 22 and August 27, 1977. The following report will describe the results of the reconnaissance survey, evaluate the relative importance and significance of the archeological resources found within the impact zone of the proposed corridor, and suggest a strategy for further investigation of these resources.



ENVIRONMENT

The proposed Gaffney By-Pass is located in the higher elevations of the Piedmont in northwestern South Carolina (Fig. 1). This area is characterized by extremely rugged, high relief (Trimble 1974; Cable and Michie 1977). In the immediate vicinity of the proposed route, elevations range from approximately 500 feet along the Broad River floodplain to 820 feet and 1000 feet at the peaks of McCowan and Draytonville Mountains, respectively.

The actual line of the by-pass cuts across a number of ecological communities. On the northern portion of the area surveyed, the proposed by-pass runs along the small floodplain, upper terrace and adjacent ridges of the west bank of the Broad River. The Broad River begins to widen at this point and is dotted with a number of rock shoals and small islands. The southern section of the route cuts westward into the upland ridge formations of the inter-riverine Piedmont. In this area the line of the route cuts transversely across a number of intermittent drainage channels of London Creek, a tributary of the Broad River. The route ends at the headwaters of London Creek on a secondary watershed divide, approximately 4.2 kilometers inland from the Broad River.

Recent land use activities have created a major impact on the archeological resources in the area of the proposed by-pass. In addition to agricultural activities, a number of power line and road cuts, railroad and mining excavations and house foundation preparations have been responsible for major earth moving operations in the area. Although these activities can produce increased site visibility, in Gaffney

many of the exposed sites have been destroyed by erosion and topsoil displacement.

The route is of particular archeological interest because it is situated between the inter-riverine and riverine zones of the Piedmont (see House and Ballenger 1976). Of all environments in the Piedmont, the upland areas directly adjacent to major drainages, as that of the proposed Gaffney by-pass route, are the least understood in terms of prehistoric land-use patterns. The investigation of a number of transects such as the one created by this proposed corridor will contribute significantly to forming a more complete picture of site locational patterning and prehistoric adaptive strategies in this transitional environment.

METHODOLOGY

The reconnaissance survey methodology was a walking survey between known points, usually where the by-pass intersected existing roads. When sites were encountered grab samples of artifacts from large sites and attempts to completely collect small sites were made. In areas of high ground visibility (i.e. plowed fields, power line cuts, road cuts, etc.) no additional site discovery techniques were employed. In situations of low ground visibility (i.e. forested areas) subsurface testing was undertaken by sifting 1'X 1' test pits at approximately 50 foot intervals along the proposed route. The portion of the route north of U.S. 29, corresponding to the pre-existing paved State Highway 32, was not surveyed.

SITE DESCRIPTIONS

Fourteen archeological sites were discovered within or near the proposed highway corridor. These sites provide important locational information about human behavior. However, the fact that most of them are small and shallow limits the potential of these sites to yield information. The sites are not expected to provide information about intrasite patterns or to reveal undisturbed features.

38CK29 The Road Site. The Road site is located several hundred feet south of the intersection of Highways #29 and 32, on a small dirt road that leads to Cherokee Creek. This historic site yielded ceramic fragments, buttons, and glass. The assemblage seems to represent an occupation during the nineteenth century.

38CK30 Poison Ivy Site. The site is located on the same dirt road as 38CK29. It is represented by a small scatter of quartz flakes and a Morrow Mountain point. The artifact assemblage is too small to determine the extent of the site. A small test pit was dug adjacent to the scatter on the edge of the road, disclosing the site's shallow nature and the tip of a projectile point. The soil appeared disturbed.

38CK41 The Junk Yard Site. The Junk Yard Site is located on the western edge of Highway #50, at its intersection with the new railroad. The site lies within a junk yard and it is represented by a large scatter of quartz flakes and several projectile points. The points are Morrow Mountain and Savannah River Archaic. This oval deposit is approximately 250 by 75 feet. It has been completely destroyed by erosion and the dragging of junk automobiles across the area.

38CK40 The Dead Pet Site. The site, situated several hundred feet south of 38CK41 and adjacent to the east edge of Highway #50, is located

within a small cultivated field. It was indicated by a small scatter of quartz flakes and one biface fragment. The fractured biface could not be identified.

38CK39 The Old Barn Site. The site is located approximately five hundred feet west of the proposed highway corridor and adjacent to a small barn. A scatter of quartz flakes over a relatively large area, 150 feet across, characterizes the site. The area is cultivated and terraced. Diagnostic artifacts were not found.

38CK38 Eroded Site. The Eroded site, located about 100 feet east of 38CK39 is adjacent to a small stream that separates the two sites. It is highly eroded and dissected by small gullies. Within the eroded areas, which are wooded, occasional quartz flakes and a single unidentifiable projectile point were found.

The site is situated about 100 feet west of the proposed highway corridor. It borders on the edge of a large cultivated field and a pine thicket.

38CK31 Joe Z. Greene Site. The site is located at the intersection of County road #132 and the proposed highway corridor. The site size appears to have been reduced by the construction of the county road. This road dissects the site, leaving portions on the north and south edges somewhat disturbed by road construction and presently eroding.

The site produced a small number of quartz flakes and two projectile points: a Guilford and a resharpened Morrow Mountain point.

38CK32 The Cow Pond Site. The Cow Pond site is located several hundred feet behind the home of Joe Z. Greene, and adjacent to a small dirt road and watering hole for cattle. It lies very close to the

proposed highway corridor. The construction of the pond has disturbed much of the site and only a small area near the dirt road produced cultural material. Much of the surrounding areas are in pasture, providing adequate ground visibility for determining the extent of the site. Flakes of quartz are scattered in an area about one hundred and fifty feet by seventy five feet.

The artifact inventory is predominantly quartz, but one flake of banded slate was found. The artifacts represent flakes and three projectile points: one Savannah River Archaic manufactured from slate and two quartz Guilford points. Two additional bifaces were recovered; however, one is fractured and unidentifiable, while the other appears to be a preform.

38CK33 Friendly Dog Site. The site lies several hundred feet west of the Cow Pond site, and it is located between a small dirt road and the headwaters of a small stream. Presently, the site is planted in soybeans. The deposit is approximately 150 by 75 feet. It is represented by a scatter of quartz flakes, chunks, and a single Savannah River projectile point.

Because the site is situated on relatively flat ground, a few test pits were excavated to determine the site's depth. The excavation revealed a plow zone about six inches deep that terminated on residual clay. This site is similar to the many other sites within the region, and like many of those, portions of it are terraced.

38CK34 Old House Site. The site is located about 150 feet west of the proposed highway centerline, and within a small patch of pine and oak, extending out into the fringes of a cultivated field. The open

patch of woods apparently represents an old house site, as indicated by the remains of bricks, fractured ceramics and glass. The cultural material appears to represent a nineteenth century occupation.

The site is situated several hundred feet west of the home of Mr. Ed McKown on his property near Cherokee Lake.

38CK35 The Soybean Site. The Soybean site is located about 250 feet west of Ed McKown's home, between 38CK34 and McKown's home. It lies in the corridor of the proposed highway, and is situated on residual clay and field rubble. The site is scattered over an area roughly 100 by 75 feet, and it is characterized by a thin scatter of quartz flakes and a single Guilford projectile point. Other artifacts include a broken preform and debitage of quartz.

38CK36 The Wildcat Site. This site, located in the yard of Ed McKown's home, was seen as a thin scatter of flakes and two broken projectile points, suggestive of either Morrow Mountain or Guilford types.

The yard is eroded and dissected by small rain gullies that have developed in areas without grass. Other areas within the yard have been disturbed by various vehicle traffic. Predictably, the entire site is eroded or disturbed.

38CK42 Cherokee Lake Site. The site is located near the highway corridor on a small knoll between the lake and a dirt road leading to the lake. The knoll is composed of a sandy residual clay containing rubble. The site is presently cultivated in soybeans, and it represents a multicomponent occupation of Middle Archaic, Woodland, and Historic periods. The Middle Archaic is represented by a broken Savannah River point and two Guilford points. The Woodland occupation is identified

by a Yadkin point; the historic occupation was indicated by fractured ceramics typical of the nineteenth century. Other artifacts include flakes and chunks of quartz. The site, however, is small, covering an area roughly 100 by 80 feet, and the scatter of material culture is thin.

38CK37 The Ridge Runner Site. The Ridge Runner site is a continuous deposit that extends from the headwaters of London Creek to the soybean field south of Highway #13. The three collections (Loci #1, #2, and #3) represent the remains of three areas of this site, not three distinct sites.

Locus 1. This locus is situated on a large ridge of residual clay with small amounts of sand overlooking the headwaters of London Creek and Highways #13 and #105. It is presently cultivated in soybeans.

The locus is large, covering an area 450 feet by 100 feet, and is represented by the occurrence of cultural materials including projectile points, flakes, unifacial tools, hammerstones, and nutting stones. In addition, it also yielded Coastal Plain chert, Ridge and Valley chert, and silicified slate. The cultural material includes representatives of the Early Archaic, Middle Archaic, Late Archaic and Woodland periods, spanning more than 6000 years.

The human occupations were extensive in this area as evidenced by the continuous scatter of debitage. The diversification of tools indicates that the inhabitants used the area for long periods of time, perhaps as a base camp.

Locus 2. This area is located at the intersection of the proposed highway corridor and Highway #13. It is situated on a field of residual clay, and is presently cultivated in soybeans. The occupation is

represented by a thin scatter of quartz flakes and historic ceramics, neither of these in large numbers.

The historic component, as indicated by two ceramic sherds, represents a nineteenth century occupation. The lithic remains, which are also poorly represented, contain no diagnostics.

Locus 3. The third locus of the Ridge Runner site is situated within the corridor of the proposed highway on the south side of Highway #13 in a soybean field. It covers a rather large area with diffuse cultural remains.

The occupation represents at least three periods: the Early Archaic, Middle Archaic, and Woodland, as reflected in projectile point types. The points include Palmer, Kirk, Morrow Mountain, and Caraway. Other remains of material culture include flakes, broken bifaces, preforms, and unifacial tools.

EVALUATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Although 14 sites were discovered during the reconnaissance, only one of these, 38CK37, can be considered appropriate for mitigation. Information from the other sites was obtained either by near 100% surface collections of artifacts at the small sites or by grab sampling of larger artifact scatters. Most of the sites are judged to be too severely eroded to provide reliable information about prehistoric behavioral patterns. As a consequence, surface collection data was considered to be an adequate representation of these sites' information potential.

38CK37, in contrast to the other sites, can provide information on two distinct levels of analysis, intra- and intersite variability. At the present time, prehistoric behavioral variability in the Piedmont is not well understood. While it is generally agreed that the prehistoric economic behavioral systems in the Piedmont were relatively simple and restricted (House and Ballenger 1976), ascertaining how these systems were organized in space is a complex analytical task.

Recent research in the South Carolina Piedmont (c.f. House and Ballenger 1976; Wogaman 1977; Goodyear, Ackerly and House n.d.; House and Wogaman n.d.; Most 1977; Cable and Michie 1977) has succeeded in discriminating variation in the inter-riverine zone. Sites tend to be located on ridges near the headwaters of small tributaries. While most sites are small and composed of diffuse scatters of flakes and occasional bifaces, a small proportion of sites is characterized by large, dense flake scatters with large numbers of bifaces. Some of these large sites, like 38CK37, also exhibit a more diverse tool inventory including hammerstones and milling stones.

This observed variation in the archeological record fits two opposed behavioral interpretations. On the one hand, the larger sites could have been formed by the several episodes of duplication of behavior of small extractive camps by groups returning, time after time, to locations with consistently higher production probability. According to this model, the larger sites are the result of accretion and represent essentially the same behavior (i.e. the same resource exploitation pattern) as that responsible for the formation of the smaller sites. House and Wogaman (n.d.) suggest that Windy Ridge (38FA118), an example of a larger site in the Piedmont, may be the result of this type of accretionary, duplicative behavioral pattern.

As a consequence of the Gaffney By-Pass reconnaissance a totally different interpretation of some of these larger sites has been postulated. Although most Archaic sites in the Piedmont are located at the headwaters of tributaries or minor streams, the Ridge Runner site (38CK37), in contrast, is located at the interstice of a number of small drainages and additionally at the headwaters of a major tributary of the Broad River (London Creek). This location provides optimal access to a large number of essentially identical resource zones that are also the locations of the smaller sites. This optimal location could support a large population during the same or other seasons than those represented by the smaller sites. The larger population would entail a totally different spatial and social organization of people than the previous model implies. These differences in behavior should correspond to maintenance and social interaction differences and not to the type of extractive task performed at the site (which could remain the same).

Since the optimal location of 38CK37 should have only produced the same inventory with larger counts as suggested for large sites under the first model, an independent test of the second model is necessary. The hypothesis to be tested is: Do sites in the same productive zones for the same extractive tasks produce contrastive inventories that are a consequence of the sites' social intensity? In order to test this hypothesis at the Ridge Runner site, an excavation strategy is required that will allow us to derive a representative sample of the activities that occurred at the site. If indeed the Ridge Runner site is the result of the social aggregation stipulated in the second model, then it is expected that behavioral contrasts between the Ridge Runner site and the other smaller sites and the Windy Ridge site should be reflected in site content--both in artifactual material and site features. A two-stage excavation strategy involving a systematic stratified unaligned random sample stage and a contiguous block excavation stage similar to that employed by House and Wogaman (n.d.) for Windy Ridge would provide the best data to test this hypothesis.

In conclusion, it can be seen that mitigation of the Ridge Runner site can inform on two analytical levels. Initially, it can provide a better understanding of the internal structure of single Piedmont sites. Secondly, it has the potential for relating this intra-site information to the development of regional site locational and subsistence-settlement models for the Piedmont. As such, 38CK37 represents a critical, high research potential site to archeologists.

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