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AN ARCHEOLOGICAL RECONNAISSANCE OF THE BOBBY JONES
EXPRESSWAY CORRIDOR, AIKEN COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

by

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and Stephen M. Perlman*

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Prepared by the
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MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

On September 28 and 29, 1977, at the request of the South Carolina Département of Highways and Public Transportation, the highway archeology staff of the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology conducted a reconnaissance survey of the section of the proposed Bobby Jones Expressway route running from the South Carolina side of the Savannah River northward to the junction of U.S. 25 and Interstate 20. This project was funded through the general highway archeology budget for 1977.

During the survey 5 archeological sites were discovered, of which only two were located within the direct impact zone of the proposed expressway route. Both of these sites were adjudged non-significant for future scientific research. The remaining three sites, which are located outside of the right-of-way zone, are situated along the edge of a bluff overlooking the Savannah River near the adverse impact zone of the proposed route. Each of these sites contains valuable scientific information which should be conserved. Consequently, the descriptions and locations of these sites have been recorded in this report to guard against possible secondary impact activities.

From an evaluation of the archeological resources within the direct impact zone of the proposed route it cannot be recommended that further archeological investigation be undertaken before construction of the expressway. However, two precautionary recommendations concerning construction activities are put forth. First, it is recommended that secondary impact activities such as borrow pitting be restricted from the area of the bluff edge where a number of significant archeological sites are located. Secondly, because of the high probability of disturbing buried sites on the floodplain during foundation drilling for bridge support columns, an archeologist should be on hand to examine the impact such activity might have on the archeological record.

INTRODUCTION

On September 28 and 29, 1977, John Cable, Charles Cantley, James Michie and Stephen Perlman of the highway archeology staff of the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology conducted an archeological reconnaissance of the South Carolina side of the proposed Bobby Jones Expressway. This reconnaissance was undertaken as a continuation of the archeological reconnaissance of the southeastern section of the Bobby Jones Expressway that runs along the southeastern limits of Augusta, Georgia and North Augusta, South Carolina. The Georgia side of this portion of the Expressway stretches from Dean's Bridge Road (U.S. 1) to a point at the banks of the Savannah River about 1.5 miles northwest of Sand Bar Ferry Bridge. This section of the route was surveyed by the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology under contractual agreement with Wilbur Smith and Associates (Ferguson and Widmer 1976) primarily during October, 1975. Additional fieldwork was sporadically done during January and February, 1976. The reconnaissance of the South Carolina side of the corridor covers an area of approximately 7.0 miles (11.3 km) in length and stretches from the South Carolina bank of the Savannah River southward across U.S. 1 and State Highway 25 to the intersection of U.S. 25 and Interstate 20 (Fig. 1). The South Carolina side of the proposed route was surveyed under contractual agreement with the South Carolina Department of Highways and Public Transportation and funded through the general highway budget for 1977.

Subsequent laboratory analysis of the artifactual material collected during this survey was performed by James L. Michie and John Cable during the week of October 9, 1977. The following report describes the results and recommendations of the survey of the South Carolina portion of the proposed Bobby Jones Expressway route.

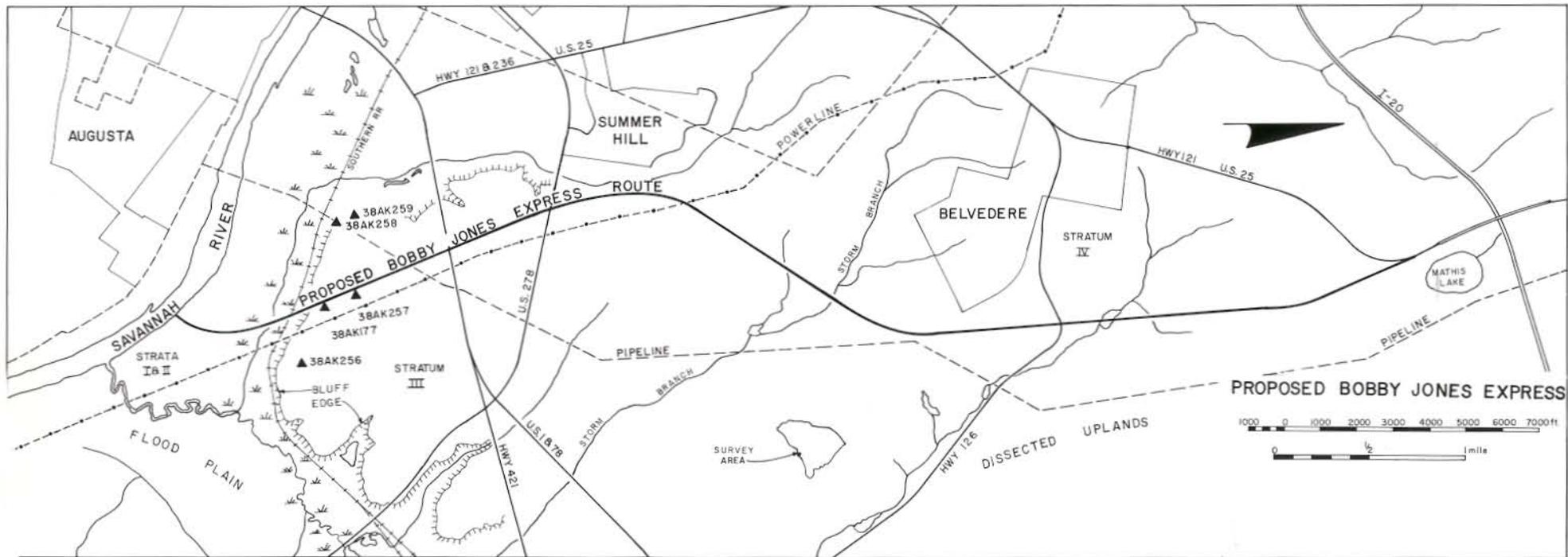


FIGURE 1. Proposed Bobby Jones Expressway Route in South Carolina.

ENVIRONMENT

Introduction

Environmental conditions in a specific region are important to an archeological survey in that region on at least three levels of archeological research. Information on the general environmental setting of the Bobby Jones Expressway will be presented because it will first, place the highway corridor within a regional and statewide environmental framework. Second, this data will provide the rationale for a diversified methodological strategy for survey, and third, it provides a data base for formulating and testing hypotheses on the differential exploitation of natural resources by prehistoric populations.

Physiographic Provinces of South Carolina and the Study Area

Two distinctive physiographic provinces, the Piedmont Plateau and the Atlantic Coastal Plain, are located within the bounds of South Carolina. The Piedmont Plateau encompasses the mountainous terrain of the Western part of the State and extends to the Fall Line, a transition zone where crystalline rocks are overlain by unconsolidated sediments, near the center of the State. The plateau is a dissected peneplain surface that slopes from elevations of about 1,000 feet in the northwest to nearly 300 feet along the southeast boundary. The Piedmont is underlain by Paleozoic age igneous and metamorphic rocks. Close to the Fall Line, these rocks of Paleozoic age dip to the southeast and are overlain by more recent Atlantic Coastal Plain deposits.

The Atlantic Coastal Plain, extending from the Fall Line to the sea, is composed of nearly flat-lying unconsolidated sands, clays, and soft limestones ranging in age from Cretaceous to Recent. The Atlantic Coastal Plain can be subdivided into three distinct physiographic zones, roughly parallel to the Atlantic Ocean: the Upper Coastal Plain, near the Fall Line; the Middle Coastal Plain; and the Lower Coastal Plain, located adjacent to the present shore line.

The proposed Bobby Jones Expressway corridor lies within the Upper Coastal Plain physiographic zone. A further subdivision of this zone is made by Langley and Marter (1973). Specifically, they identify the terraces of the Savannah River floodplain as the Pleistocene Coastal Terraces and the Aiken Plateau. Langley and Marter describe the Pleistocene Coastal Terraces as those terraces lying below the 270 foot contour and including three separate terrace sequences: the Wicomico, Sunderland, and Brandywine. These are defined as:

The lowest terrace [Wicomico] is the very broad floodplain of the Savannah River; it is largely covered with dense swamp forest.

The higher terraces [Sunderland and Brandywine] have a level-to-gently rolling topography and were extensively cultivated in those areas where soils and drainage were favorable (Langley and Marter 1973: 17).

The second physiographic region occurring in the Highway corridor is the Aiken Plateau. Located near the town of Aiken, the plateau ranges from 550 to 500 feet above sea level and slopes gently to the southeast. The northernmost portion is highly dissected by numerous intermittent streams of the Savannah River. These streams have in some places cut valleys up to 300 feet deep. In the southern parts near the bluff line of the Plateau, the relief is not as great. In contrast to the lush vegetation of the Pleistocene Coastal Terrace, the Aiken Plateau is characterized by scattered longleaf pine with a scrubby understory of turkey willow, upland willow, and dwarf post oaks. The Plateau reveals great species diversity represented by comparatively few individuals. This can be explained by the scarcity of water, hot summers, poor shading, and nearly sterile soils.

As can be seen from the above, there is great environmental diversity within the proposed route of the Bobby Jones Expressway. This diversity lends itself to a number of analytical questions. After particular environments have been delineated and proven to have been preferred by prehistoric peoples for specific activities, a researcher gains insights into past human behavior and the reflection of these activities in the archeological record.

METHODS

Contract and Methodological Requirements

The contract requirements specified by the South Carolina Highway Department established the parameters for the types of work to be done on the Bobby Jones Expressway. These requirements were to locate and assess the significance of all known archeological resources within the proposed highway corridor. Field methods derived for the highway survey were implemented to obtain precise information on site location and relative probabilities on site density between diverse environmental zones and to assess significance by the research standards established by Goodyear (1975) in the General Research Design for Highway Archeology in South Carolina.

Environmental Constraints on Field Research

The two physiographic zones, the Pleistocene Coastal Terraces and the Aiken Plateau, each required a distinct survey methodology due to the different geomorphic processes affecting each zone. The Pleistocene Coastal Terraces are subject to periodic flooding. This is especially true for the Wicomico or lower floodplain terrace, which floods on a seasonal basis. The Sunderland and Brandywine terraces are inundated by floods on a less frequent basis; however, alluvium may still obstruct any visibility of sites on or near the present ground surface. It was therefore recommended that subsurface testing be done on these terraces to locate any archeological resources that may have been buried by more recent flooding of the Savannah River. The Aiken Plateau provided an area of easier access to archeological resources than did the Pleistocene Coastal Terrace zone. This area is not subject to flooding; consequently, archeological resources may be located on or near the present ground surface.

Due to the different geomorphic processes--flooding vs. no flooding--acting on each of these zones, it was necessary to adopt research strategies appropriate for each zone. Only in this way was it possible to maximize the chance of discovering archeological resources. Below, Table 1 demonstrates the diversity of environmental zones and the constraints this diversity placed upon the field survey. The major physiographic zones are further divided into subzones so as to give more accurate descriptions of the diversity of environments encountered during the survey.

Table 1

<u>Physiographic Zones</u>	<u>Constraints Affecting Survey</u>
Pleistocene Coastal Terraces	Frequent flooding, consequently sites are well below present surface. Dense vegetation and crops.
A. Lower Terrace-Wicomico (Stratum 1)	
B. Higher Terraces-Sunderland and Brandywine (Stratum 2)	Dense vegetation and crops with occasional swamps. Area subject to infrequent flooding resulting in buried sites.
Aiken Plateau	
A. Undissected Bluff Edge (Stratum 3)	Moderate to light vegetation prairies. No flooding. Some downslope movement of the loose soils.
B. Dissected Uplands (Stratum 4)	Moderate vegetation. High relief caused by downcutting of intermittent streams.

The Bobby Jones Expressway Survey

The methods employed by the authors were to walk and observe all areas of the Bobby Jones Expressway corridor that provided adequate ground visibility and accessibility. The corridor was divided into four separate strata according to terrain.

Although Stratum 1, the Lower Terrace, was thoroughly surveyed, no sites were discovered. All of Stratum 1 was planted in widely spaced soybean rows, permitting good ground visibility in most areas. The absence of sites in this stratum was anticipated due to the frequency of flood deposition of alluvium over the sites. Debailou (1965), working on the Savannah River floodplain in Georgia, stated that sites may be buried up to five or six feet deep. Future recommendations concerning this stratum will be discussed below.

Stratum 2, the Higher Terraces, was surveyed on foot where terrain and vegetation permitted. The highway corridor crossed over a large swamp in this stratum. Ground visibility was poor and no sites were discovered.

Stratum 3, the Undissected Bluff Edge, was believed to be the area where sites could be found on or near the ground surface. Five sites were located and collected. The sites were small, permitting a total recovery of all observable artifacts.

A survey of Stratum 4, the Dissected Uplands, failed to produce any sites. Much of this hill and valley terrain is densely forested. An old road, used by loggers today, parallels and cross-cuts the highway corridor in several areas. This road was surveyed and periodic stops were made where ground visibility was good.

In conclusion, as expected, recent alluvium and dense forest stands obstructed the view of any sites that may exist in the Pleistocene Coastal Terraces and the dissected uplands of the Aiken Plateau. The Bluff Edge, which was expected to be the most productive stratum for discovering sites, given the survey conditions, produced the five sites found on the survey.

SITE DESCRIPTIONS

As indicated in the previous section, all five of the sites located during the reconnaissance survey were situated on the undissected bluff edge that overlooks a linear swamp formed by Horse Creek and the constricted floodplain terraces of the northern bank of the Savannah River (Fig. 1). Only two of those sites, 38AK177 and 38AK256, are located within the direct impact zone of the proposed corridor; however, all five sites are reported here to guard against possible secondary impact.

38AK177. This site lies directly within the impact zone of the proposed route. The location of the site approximates the coordinates of a site discovered and reported by Dr. Donald Sutherland on April 15, 1976, and therefore is assumed to represent the same site. Artifactual material consisted of one small Coastal Plain chert flake of bifacial retouch, which exhibits a texture indicative of heat treatment, and a larger decortication flake of a clear crystalline quartz. Sutherland's previous survey produced a Thelma Point (Early Woodland) and two flakes of bifacial retouch from the surface of the site.

38AK177 sits at the end of a flat, recently plowed soybean field approximately 125 meters from the edge of the bluff. Subsurface testing with a shovel failed to produce additional artifactual material. Testing revealed that the fill in the immediate area of the site was composed of medium quartz sand particles, all of quite regular size and shape. The plow zone extended from the surface to approximately 15 cm in depth and consisted of darkly stained quartz sand. Four 30 cm x 30 cm test pits were excavated to a depth of approximately 50 cm without encountering clay substrate. The paucity of artifactual material suggests a brief occupation.

38AK257. 38AK257 is also located within the direct impact zone of the proposed route and, similar to 38AK177 it represents a brief occupation. The site is situated in a sandy soybean field approximately 400 meters from the bluff edge (Fig. 1). Artifactual material recovered from the area is restricted to an isolated Coastal Plain chert flake. The texture of the chert is again indicative of heat treatment. Both lateral margins of the elongated flake exhibit evidence of retouch and use.

Subsurface shovel testing failed to produce additional artifactual material. The character of the fill in the immediate vicinity of the site parallels that described for 38AK177.

38AK256. This site is located at the edge of the bluff, about 100 meters east of the proposed centerline of the expressway (Fig. 1). At the time of the survey, the site lay in a recently plowed soybean field. Artifactual debris was thinly scattered over an area of approximately 100 meters east-west by 50 meters north-south.

The only temporally diagnostic material recovered at this site was 31 ceramic sherds. All 31 sherds contain a coarse, quartz sand temper with frequent inclusions of hornblende crystals, feldspar and mica. Temper grain size is highly heterogenous ranging from particles of less than 1mm to particles in excess of 5mm in thickness. Surface color ranges from reddish brown to light tan. Interior walls are frequently smudged or carbonized. Sherd cores are variable in color, but many are dark brown to black.

Only four of the sherds retain evidence of surface treatment. The only solidly diagnostic sherd in this group is represented by a linear check stamped example which corresponds to the Deptford ware as described by Caldwell and Waring (1939) and Sears and Griffin (1950). Two sherds exhibit evidence of zone incising on interior walls and may correspond to Deptford ware described by Williams (1968). An additional sherd with a brushed exterior was not diagnostic of a particular temporal period.

The lack of diagnostic lithic material makes the identification of any other components at the site impossible. The presence of highly deteriorated chert flakes with a thick, white patina suggests however, that the site may contain earlier components than the Deptford ceramics indicate. In addition, our current knowledge of the surficial material correlates of site function (see House and Ballenger 1976; House and Wogaman n.d.) suggests that this site may represent a permanent or semi-permanent habitation site (i.e. fire-cracked rock and ceramics).

The results of the artifact analysis of the surface collection are tabulated below:

Lithics

Fire-cracked Rock: 3 quartz (292.2 gms.)
Shatter or chunks: 18 quartz (169.8 gms.); 4 Coastal Plain chert (13.1 gms.)
Other Flakes : 4 quartz (43.1 gms.)
Flakes of Bifacial Retouch: 18 quartz (11.4 gms.);
11 Coastal Plain chert (4.8 gms.)
Flake cores : 1 quartz (135.2 gms.)
Anvil (Nutting Stone): 1 igneous-metamorphic (250.7 gms.)
Unifacial Flake Tool : 1 Coastal Plain chert (2.7 gms.),
angle of retouched edge: 71°
Bifacial Tool : 1 Coastal Plain chert (5.7 gms.)

Ceramics

Coarse Sand Tempered Plain (or eroded): 27 (127.9 gms.)
Coarse Sand Tempered Brushed: 1 (6.9 gms.)
Coarse Sand Tempered Linear Check Stamped: 1 (4.0 gms.)
Coarse Sand Tempered Zone Incised (Interior): 2 (7.1 gms.)

38AK258. Site 38AK258 is situated on the bluff edge approximately 600 meters west of 38AK177 (Fig. 1). The site was discovered during a cursory inspection of the entire bluff perimeter. Artifactual material was exposed as the result of sand mining operations by a local cement company. These activities are at present restricted to the northwest side of the bluff and have resulted in severe damage to 38AK258 in the form of both vertical and horizontal mixing of contextual data as well as the removal of a large portion of the site. Dense grass and weed cover in the immediate vicinity of the site made a reliable estimate of the extent of the artifact scatter difficult to construct. However, our ability to intermittently discover artifactual material along the bluff edge suggests that 38AK258 and 38AK259 (west of 38AK258) are in actuality proveniences of a continuous artifact deposit along the northwest edge of the bluff. Such an interpretation would produce a minimum length dimension of 200 meters for 38AK258-38AK259.

The thorough surface collection failed to turn up specifically diagnostic material; however, the occurrence of a single prehistoric pottery sherd in the assemblage establishes the presence of at least a ceramic component. The sherd contains a coarse, sand temper identical to that described for the ceramic assemblage at 38AK256. While the sherd assemblage at 38AK256 contains a consistent wall thickness range of from 5mm to 7mm, the sherd from 38AK258 is 11mm thick. This might indicate a functional difference in these two sites. In addition, the thick sherd exhibits a conical hole in the wall that could have served as a mending hole or a strap hole to facilitate the hanging or carrying of the vessel.

The lithic assemblage contains nothing in the way of temporally diagnostic material, but the occurrence of heavily patinated white chert flakes suggests the presence of early pre-ceramic components.

The artifact assemblage from the surface collection is tabulated below:

Lithics

Fire-cracked Rock	: 5 quartz (105.7 gms.)
Shatter or chunks	: 16 quartz (37.0 gms.); 1 Coastal Plain chert (0.8 gms.)
Other Flakes	: 4 quartz (38.5 gms.)
Flakes of Bifacial Retouch:	11 quartz (7.0 gms.); 6 Coastal Plain chert (1.9 gms.)
Amorphous gneissic schist:	1 fragment (8.2 gms.)
Biface Blank	: 1 quartz (18 gms.)

Ceramics

Coarse Sand Tempered Plain: 1 (10.6 gms.)

38AK259. As discussed above, 38AK259 rather than being a separate site, is more likely a provenience of a larger artifact scatter which includes 38AK258 as well. 38AK259 was exposed by a road grader cut which removed approximately 60 centimeters of soil from the ground surface immediately adjacent to the bluff edge. This cut exposed a very high density of lithic artifact material. cursory probing of the bottom of the cut indicates that still more artifacts have been left in situ. It is estimated that this area of the site may contain approximately 1 meter of stratified archeological deposits within a matrix of medium to fine grained loamy sand.

The only temporally diagnostic material recovered from the 100% surface collection derives from a Coastal Plain chert Kirk point and a fragment of a Coastal Plain chert serrated biface tentatively identified as Kirk Serrated (Coe 1964). Since these points were found at the bottom of the road grader cut, it is postulated that the approximately 60 cm. of soil above this level could contain more recent archeological deposits. The presence of heavily patinated Coastal Plain chert flakes also suggests that components earlier than the identified Kirk component are present in the deposits below the road grader cut.

The artifact assemblage resulting from the 100% surface collection of 38AK259 is tabulated below:

Lithics

Fire-cracked Rock	:	9 quartz (230.1 gms.)
Shatter or Chunks	:	100 quartz (181.4 gms.); 7 Coastal Plain chert (47.0 gms.); 1 slate (14.2 gms.); 5 quartzite (12.5 gms.)
Other Flakes	:	3 quartz (21.5 gms.)
Flakes of Bifacial Retouch	:	67 quartz (51.8 gms.); 83 Coastal Plain chert (40.0 gms.); 2 slate (0.5 gms.); 7 quartzite (10.7 gms.)
Bifaces	:	1 Kirk Point (heat treated, fossiliferous Coastal Plain chert) 1 Serrated Biface fragment (Kirk Serrated, heat treated Coastal Plain chert)
Bone	:	1 Charred tibia head fragment (deer)

A large portion of this end of the site (provenience 28AK259) is still virtually undisturbed and contains a relatively deep deposit of cultural material. The presence of large amounts of fire-cracked rock (House and Ballenger 1976) suggests that 38AK259 may represent the location of a cluster of features such as hearths or subsurface ovens. The determination of site function is a complex problem, but it is suggested that the artifact scatter that includes 28AK258 and 38AK259 may represent behavior directed toward the specialized exploitation of the diverse habitat that the bluff edge provided in prehistoric times.

SITE EVALUATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The negative results of the subsurface shovel testing of the two sites, 38AK177 and 38AK257, directly within the impact zone of the proposed Bobby Jones Expressway corridor, indicate that the surface artifacts represent either isolated or extremely limited cultural outputs. As a result, further investigation is adjudged unnecessary. This decision is based on the high probability that further testing at those sites would fail to generate additional scientific information capable of contributing to the problem domains of the general highway archeology research design (Goodyear 1975).

In spite of this, several cautionary notes concerning the future construction activities for the Expressway need to be set forth. Initially, the erection of a bridge across the Savannah River, the floodplain and the swamp of Horse Creek will require deep core drilling for the setting of support columns. This activity runs a high risk of impacting buried sites within the floodplain region. Ferguson and Widmer (1976) report sites from the opposite bank and floodplain of the Savannah River that extend as deep as five to six feet below the present surface. It is recommended that an archeologist be on hand at the time of drilling to examine the materials brought up by this activity. Second, the highway department should avoid secondary impact to the three sites off the proposed corridor. These sites are located at the edge of the bluff within a very short distance of the proposed expressway route.

Although the survey failed to produce any sites requiring mitigation of adverse effect, a site distributional pattern was observed that will aid in the formulation of research designs for future work in the middle Savannah River Valley. The two banks of the Savannah River exhibited significantly different densities of prehistoric human settlement. The Georgia side of the transect, surveyed by Ferguson and Widmer (1976), contained a high frequency of site occurrence. In stark contrast, the South Carolina side produced only five sites. An explicit attempt to deal with the problem of differential bank settlement in an archeological context comes from Flannery's (1976) study of linear Formative settlement patterns along rivers in Mesoamerica. Flannery drew heavily upon geographer Andrew Burghardt's (1959) conclusions which were derived from an analysis of modern settlement patterns along the extensive river system of the central United States. In particular Flannery relied upon Burghardt's observation that "Local factors being equal, the side of the river chosen by a town [site] may depend on where its more distant sustaining hinterland is located."

Investigation of the extent and composition of ecological strata on each bank of the Savannah River reveals two totally different hinterland situations. The Georgia bank, along the line of the transect, is characterized by an extensive floodplain and terrace stretching approximately 10 km. into the interior where it abuts the more xeric upland hills of pine. Also, a good portion of this alluvial area is covered by Phinizy swamp which provides additional ecological variation in the immediate hinterland.

The South Carolina bank, in contrast, supports a very restricted floodplain (less than 1 km. in width) and a very small swamp formation. The primary topographic feature on this side of the river is the bluff which generates a small amount of ecological variation due to altitude and edaphic conditions. The bluff edge is the only area on the survey that exhibited significant prehistoric activity; although in comparison to the high incidence of settlement on the opposite bank of the river, this activity is minimal. The remainder of the hinterland on the South Carolina bank is composed of sandy, xeric uplands which support a low food resource community of pines.

Thus, from cursory observations of the relative ecological compositions of adjacent banks of the Savannah River, it appears that Burghardt's (1959) hinterland hypothesis has applications to the explanation of settlement pattern phenomena along the Savannah River. More explicitly formed research designs need to be formulated to sufficiently test this hypothesis, however.

In conclusion, this report is not recommending that mitigation phase research be instigated along the South Carolina side of the proposed Bobby Jones Expressway corridor. However, cautions should be taken to guard against secondary impact to the bluff sites discussed in this report. Also, an archeologist should be present when foundation drilling for bridge support columns is performed to examine the impact such activity might have on buried sites in the floodplain.

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