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YEMASSEE-RIDGELAND SURVEY

by

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Prepared by the
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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
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INTRODUCTION

During the second week of September, 1973, the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina, undertook an archeological survey of the South Carolina Electric and Gas Company's proposed 115,000 volt overhead power line between Ridgeland and Yemassee, South Carolina (Fig. 1). The proposed route of this power line, AX-1760, is approximately 20 miles long. The purpose of the survey was to locate and record any historic or prehistoric archeological sites that might be endangered by construction of the power line and to make recommendations for preservation of sites of significant value that might be found.

This survey was conducted as a joint project sponsored by the South Carolina Electric and Gas Company and carried out by the Institute. It was initiated as an Environmental Impact Statement concerning the archeological resources of the area.

The site files of the Institute were searched for information relative to this area. Records of three significant sites in the general area under consideration were on hand but no sites had been previously recorded in the direct line of either of the proposed routes of the power line.

The three sites consist of a burial mound and adjacent village (38JA14) of the Woodland Period; an earlier campsite-village complex (38JA12) of the Archaic-Transitional Period; and a village (38JA13) of the Transitional Period. All three of these are major archeological sites. Their locations in terrain similar to that traversed by the proposed power line indicated that other sites would likely be found along the right-of-way.

THE SURVEY

The survey began with an examination of the proposed route directly northeast from Ridgeland to Yemassee running east of Interstate Highway 95 for most of its route. It was then learned that this route had been eliminated and the proposed route was to extend in an arc from Ridgeland to near Gillisonville to Yemassee (Fig. 1). This second route was then surveyed.

Dense vegetation in the wooded areas and high water in the swamp area, resulting from recent rains, made this a difficult survey. Some sections of the route could not be traversed because of high water and other sections could not be searched as thoroughly as desirable because of the dense vegetation. Only four archeological sites were located.

THE SITES

38JA16 The Grahamville Site:

This site is located just south of the junction of the proposed right-of-way with U.S. Highway 278 along an existing power-telephone line. It appears to be a Late Archaic to Early Woodland Period site of multiple occupation. Quartz tempered pottery sherds and quartz flakes were collected from the surface of the site but not in sufficient quantity to provide diagnostic data for the site. Additional surface collecting is recommended in order to more adequately identify the site. Enough was found, though, to indicate a significant occupation at this site.

38JA19 The Oak Tree Site:

Approximately 100 yards north of the intersection of county road 175 and the proposed right-of-way, this small site of less than a half acre appears to be a campsite or flint-knapping area. The few flint chips collected here were not diagnostic of a particular time period but suggested that further examination of the site would be warranted, though, extensive investigation is not recommended.

38JA20 The Fossil Site:

This significant site of the Woodland Period is located immediately southeast of the intersection of county road 39 and the proposed right-of-way. It appears to be a village area of approximately one to three acres. A quantity of pottery sherds, numerous chipped stone flakes, a projectile point, and a stone scraper were recovered from the site. It is recommended that this site be extensively examined both on the surface and by test trenching.

38JA21 The Bees Creek Site:

Located on a high bluff overlooking Bees Creek, this Woodland village site of 3-4 acres appears to be a site of major potential. Pottery recovered is both plain and stamped and stone artifacts include a projectile point, a scraper, and numerous chips. This site should be thoroughly investigated including test trenching.

HISTORICAL AGENCIES CONSULTED

As a regular part of the Environmental Impact Statement preparation, the state and local agencies normally concerned with the area were consulted for possibilities of documented historic sites in or near the right-of-way. The office of the State Liaison Officer was consulted. Mrs. Christie Fant of that office reported that no sites have been recommended for the National Register of Historic Places in or near the right-of-way, nor did her office have records of any sites endangered by it. Mrs. Carol Collyar of the Low Country Regional Planning Commission was consulted about the possibility of historic sites in the area. She knew of none that would be endangered. Thus the historical agencies knew of no sites that would interfere with the proposed construction.

CONCLUSIONS

The right-of-way of this proposed power line was partially surveyed for archeological values to be endangered. Parts of the area could not be covered due to high water and dense vegetation. Pertinent historical agencies were consulted.

Four archeological sites were located along the peripheries of the right-of-way but none of these appear to be endangered by the proposed construction. The general nature of the terrain through the areas where the survey was not sufficiently detailed, suggests that other sites may exist but, like those located, would be expected to be out of danger of destruction from the project.

Since areas of the right-of-way have not been thoroughly searched it is strongly recommended that the Institute be kept advised of construction progress along this line. Other sites might well be located during construction, and the Institute will expect to be notified if this occurs. Special attention should be directed to the confluence of the Coosawhatchie and Tullifinny Rivers. A local informant, Mr. Leslie Gibson of Yemassee, reported two large mounds just north of the confluence of these rivers that may be near enough to the right-of-way to be of concern.

If ~~unnatural-appearing~~ hummocks on the surface of the terrain are found or if arrowheads, stone chips, pottery fragments or other artifacts are found by construction crews or others in the course of the clearing for or building of the power line, the Institute will expect to be notified. With this caution, though, the area can be cleared for construction without anticipated danger to archeological or historic values.