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38CL4
AN ARCHAIC-WOODLAND SITE
IN CALHOUN COUNTY, S.C.

by

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Prepared by the
INSTITUTE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY
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INTRODUCTION

On November 23, 1971, I visited a prehistoric site on the Congaree River at the request of Mrs. Herbert T. Ulmer of the Calhoun County Museum, St. Matthews, S.C. A large number of ceramic sherds was found within a plowed field on land owned by Mrs. F. C. Kellers of St. Matthews, S.C. I subsequently learned that the site had been reported to the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology in 1969 and had been given the designation 38CL4 at that time.

Because of local interest and the site's size and productivity, as well as the probability of in situ deposits from a sparsely known ceramic component, I elected to test the site. I returned on January 5 and 6, 1972 and performed testing operations, assisted by Mrs. Kellers, Mrs. Ulmer, Jim Buzzard, Randy Fogel, Ray Sigmon, and Nancy Verdery.

SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The site area is a 20 acre plowed field with artifacts occurring generally, but focused within a one hundred meter square area in the center of the field. The field itself is at an elevation of about 250 feet above mean sea level, 2,000 feet southeast of the Congaree River, which is 150' lower in elevation. Ft. Motte, S.C., is located about 2 miles to the southeast of the site. The area of the site is well drained and ready access to nearby springs, as well as to the Congaree River, is available.

METHOD AND TECHNIQUE

Since the purpose of excavation was to ascertain depositional sequence and determine the character of the site, interest focused on the surficially productive field center. Within an area 180 by 110 meters 4 stratigraphic slots and 8 test trenches comprising 54 square meters were excavated. The slots and trenches were positioned non-randomly at intervals which would allow selected coverage of the field center. The slots and trenches were aligned on a north-south axis and positioned on a master map by chain and compass reference to an enplaced datum point. Excavation was accomplished by scrape-shoveling and bagging recovered artifacts by natural stratigraphic unit.

INTRA-SITE STRATIGRAPHY AND CULTURAL DEPOSITS

All excavation units displayed a consistent stratigraphic sequence wherein an upper 10 cm. of plow zone overlies a thin, brown, often organic rich layer. These units were underlain by more than 1 meter of stratified yellow alluvially deposited sand.

Artifacts from a Woodland component were scattered throughout the plow zone and were within the underlying brown sand, which is probably based to the upper cultural component. One corner notched point was found within the yellow sand at a depth of 30 cm. below the surface in Test Pit 7, indicating an earlier, probably Archaic Period, occupation.

FEATURES

Three structural features were found.

Feature 1 (Test Pit 4)

In association with the brown sand/basal plow zone were found one probable post mold 15 cm. in diameter and one firepit 10 cm. deep and 35 cm. in diameter. Structurally integral charcoal was found and sampled in the fire pit.

Feature 2 (Test Pit 3)

A burned area 45 cm. in diameter was found at the plow zone base, as well as two 10 cm. diameter disturbances. This was recorded as a feature, but upon excavation revealed the characteristics of a burned tree. The smaller disturbances were ephemeral and are questionably definable as post molds.

Feature 3 (Test Pit 5)

An elliptically shaped disturbance covering over 3 square meters of area was found at the brown sand/yellow sand contact. The disturbance appeared as organically rich sand 10 cm. deep at the center and feathering out at the edges. A large amount of charcoal was included, as well as over one hundred ceramic sherds. The function of this disturbed area is uncertain without further excavation, but the general configuration, as well as lack of post molds, suggest that it may be a trash pit.

LITHIC ARTIFACTS

Except for the corner notched point within the yellow sand in Test Pit 7, all stone items recovered were from the Basal Plow Zone/Brown Sand level. A summary follows

Lithic Occurrence by Provenience

	<u>Test Pit 4</u>	<u>Test Pit 5</u>
Primary Flakes, chert	2	2
Primary Flakes, quartzite	2	
Secondary Flakes, chert	10	5
Secondary Flakes, quartzite	6	1
Biface Fragments, chert	1	1

Also, from the surface were recovered 2 triangular, straight base, chert projectile points and one concave base, triangular, chert projectile point.

CERAMIC ARTIFACTS

All ceramic fragments were recovered from either the plow zone or plow zone/brown sand contact zone. The ceramics were manufactured by

coiling and then treating with a hammer and anvil technique.

Ceramics were of one technological type group, that of a fine, sandy paste with coarse sand temper and occasional large particle inclusions. Firing produced a buff to red color. Sparse fire-clouding was noticed. The formal range indicates both jar and bowl form use. Within the type group, four surface treatment varieties were recognized; a summary of which follows.

Surface treatment occurrence by Provenience

	<u>Test Pit 4</u>	<u>Test Pit 5</u>	<u>Test Pit 7</u>
Check Stamp	6	4	2
Linear Check Stamp	14	18	3
Simple Stamp	92	67	6
Plain	14	12	1

Also, rims were characteristically straight with post stamping rim decoration accomplished by both horizontal, vertical, and rectangular drag-incising as well as single-row "square-cane" punctations.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The area of site 38CL4 was occupied in the Archaic Period, probably by small groups of hunter-gathers exploiting the Riverine based flora and fauna which occurred nearby. Subsequently, during the first millenium A.D., a large agricultural community was situated in the area of site 38CL4. It is probable that the occupation was temporally short and rather intense. In view of cross-areal ceramic comparisons, a tentative date of ca. 500 A.D. may be assigned for this latter occupation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Archaic levels of the site seem to have good, intact context, and may prove of interest in the future within the context of Preceramic

culture-chronology studies involving the Carolina Lowlands.

The Ceramic occupation also would give significant information regarding formative sedentarism within the province, but context is more disturbed, at least within the area tested.

Further excavations should be held in abeyance pending the development of contextual research design.