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AN ARCHEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE SEABOARD
COAST LINE RAILROAD COMPANY'S PROPOSED
HARDEEVILLE-LEVY, SOUTH CAROLINA CONNECTOR

by

Travis L. Bianchi
Research Manuscript Series No. 65

Abstract

An archeological site survey was conducted by the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology of the route of a proposed railroad connector in Jasper County. This survey revealed nine previously unrecorded sites, three of which may warrant further investigation as part of a contiguous prehistoric habitational area. On the basis of presently available information the Institute does not feel that construction will destroy any sites that may be considered of archeological significance. However, since the right of way will pass in close proximity to the three above-mentioned sites, it is possible that undetected portions of those sites may extend into the construction zone. Because of this factor Institute approval is contingent upon the presence of a representative when clearing operations are initiated. The Institute also desires to investigate the areas from which fill dirt will be obtained.

Prepared by the
INSTITUTE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
August, 1974

INTRODUCTION

At the request of the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad Company an archaeological site survey was conducted by the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology during the last week of May 1974 of the 7.53 mile route of a proposed railroad connector between Hardeeville and Levy in Jasper County. Such a reconnaissance for archeological remains is a requirement of the National Environmental Policy Act and information gathered therewith will be used in the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement that must precede approval of any project involving federal funding.

The primary purpose of this survey was to locate and record any archeological sites, either prehistoric or historic, that might be destroyed or endangered by construction activity, and to make recommendations regarding the preservation or salvage of those sites.

A secondary result of this project is the acquisition of additional information regarding both aboriginal and historic settlement patterns in the area. Although a few sites on the Lower Savannah have been excavated knowledge of the aboriginal occupants of that area remains scant and very little work has been done regarding the historic settlement of the area. The results of this survey, although confined to a limited area, will be of value to future, more in-depth investigations of the archeological resources of the Lower Savannah.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SURVEY AREA

The survey area lies in southern Jasper County within a landform type described as Atlantic Coast Flatwoods. These are composed of

fertile but not always well-drained soil, a warm, temperate to subtropical climate and a growing season as long as 280 days. Mean annual precipitation is 44 to 46 inches. The survey line intersects three major environmental zones: (1) riverine wetland (2) forested (3) interspersed grasslands, croplands, woodlots and orchards and borders on a fourth, coastal and inland marsh (Corps of Engineers 1972:5,6,9; Kronberg and Purvis:11).

The topography of the survey route is extremely flat, varying from approximately 10 feet to 25 feet above mean sea level with most of the 7.53 mile route lying between 10 and 20 feet of elevation.

Almost the entire survey route is forested although the growth varies from wooded and shrub swamps and seasonally flooded bottomlands to upland pine plantations. In every portion of the route understory and ground cover is exceedingly thick; so much in some areas as to make them literally impassable on foot.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND DOCUMENT RESEARCH

This section of Jasper County lies in a part of the Savannah River Valley containing a number of sites important to the prehistory of man in North America. An ecologically rich zone, it evidently appealed to the earliest Paleo-Indian hunters, to the bands of hunter-gatherers of the Archaic and Woodland Periods and to the agriculturists of the Late Woodland Period. Several important prehistoric sites have been excavated in the Savannah region and a far larger number have been recorded but not investigated. (see Table 1)

Within historic times, the area around the mouth of the Savannah was occupied by the various tribes of the Cusabo group and by the Yemassee,

TABLE 1

Prehistoric Cultural Sequences of the Lower
Savannah River Valley, Adapted From Griffin:1967

<p>Late Woodland ca. 500 A.D. to ca. 1600 A.D.</p>	<p>more intensive agriculture making large concentrations of population possible and supporting complex social and political structures; resulted in historically known tribes</p>
<p>Middle Woodland ca. 1 A.D. to ca. 500 A.D.</p>	<p>hunting and gathering with some agriculture and a more complex social organization; probable introduction of maize into south-east; emphasis on large burial mounds and elaborate grave goods in some areas</p>
<p>Early Woodland ca. 1000 B.C. to ca. 1 A.D.</p>	<p>hunting and gathering along with the beginning of small-scale gardening of native and introduced plants; construction of burial grounds</p>
<p>Late Archaic ca. 4000 B.C. to ca. 1000 B.C.</p>	<p>increasingly sophisticated fabrication of utilitarian and ceremonial objects; finger-weaving of plant fibers into cloth; introduction of ceramics into North America occurred in Southeast around 2500-2000 B.C.</p>
<p>Middle Archaic ca. 6000 B.C. to ca. 4000 B.C.</p>	<p>development of more sophisticated stone tools and implements for collection and preparation of foodstuffs; intensive hunting, gathering, trapping, netting</p>
<p>Early Archaic ca. 9000 B.C. to ca. 6000 B.C.</p>	<p>transition from big-game hunting to a more diversified utilization of animals and plants due to changing post-glacial environmental conditions</p>
<p>Paleo-Indian prior to 9000 B.C.</p>	<p>big-game hunting and gathering of foodstuffs by nomadic bands; possible utilization of now-extinct large mammals</p>

the latter serving as a buffer against the Spanish in Florida (Milling: 35,98; Wallace:12).

The lower Savannah River has been historically important as one of the centers of tidal rice culture on the Atlantic Coast. The survey area lies adjacent to this rice culture region and between two important colonial settlements, Savannah and Purrysburg, the latter being the site of an early eighteenth century Swiss Huguenot settlement.

In preparation for the archeological site survey of the area document research was carried out in the files of the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology and the office of Mrs. Christine Fant, Coordinator, Historic Preservation Division, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, representing the South Carolina Historic Preservation Officer.

Sources consulted were:

Archeological site files at the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology, Columbia.

Environmental Reconnaissance of the Charleston District, prepared by the United States Army Corps of Engineers, Washington, 1972.

A Map of South Carolina and part of Georgia...composed from a survey taken by William Bull and Captain Gascoign...republished with considerable additions by William Fadden, 1780, on file at the South Caroliniana Library, Columbia.

Historic sites records of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia.

Mills Atlas of South Carolina, by Robert Mills
Robert Pearce Wilkins and John D. Keels, Jr. Columbia, 1965.

Navigation Charts of the Savannah River Below Augusta
United States Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah, 1966.

The Waring Papers, S. Williams, Editor, Cambridge, 1968.

Although a number of important sites are in the general area, none were determined to lie within the survey route. Examination of the William

Fadden map of 1780 revealed several dwellings in the vicinity of the survey route. Further documentary research would be necessary to determine whether any of the historic sites recorded coincide with those on the Fadden map.

SURVEY TECHNIQUE

The method employed for locating archeological sites was visual examination of the ground and surface collection of artifacts. The survey route was covered on foot with emphasis placed on the examination of any exposed areas such as road cuts, washes or fields. Unfortunately the extremely thick undergrowth and heavy ground cover of this subtropical region prevented as thorough a reconnaissance as was felt necessary to give a reliable indication of the archeological resources present.

SITE DESCRIPTIONS

The accompanying map (Figure 1) illustrates the site locations. Table 1 gives a brief description and temporal sequence for the cultural periods mentioned.

38JA26

Located on a low knoll overlooking a small, unnamed creek this site occupies a vantage point of the surrounding area. It is approximately 200 yards southwest of the centerline, the nearest point on which is 23,639 feet from the Levy end of the connector and 15.5 feet above mean sea level. Prehistoric ceramic and lithic material collected indicated Early to Late Woodland occupation or from about 1000 B.C. to 1000 A.D. or

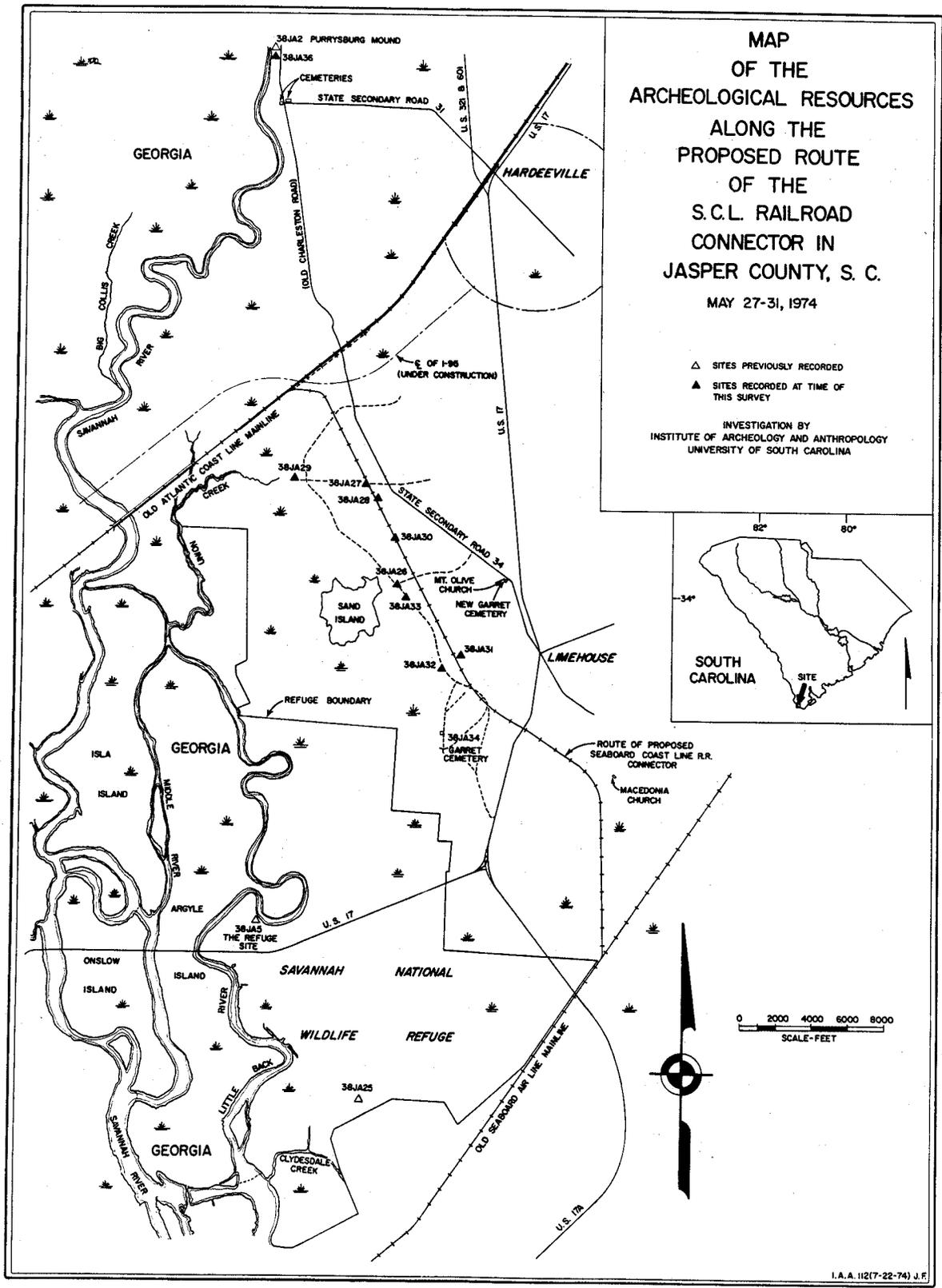


FIGURE 1

later. Eighteenth and nineteenth century ceramics were collected indicating historic occupation concentrated in the eighteenth century.

38JA27

Revealed in the cut of the Union Landing Road, this site is located 29,284 feet from the Levy end of the connector and is 22.1 feet above mean sea level. It is situated on the edge of a natural terrace of the Savannah River Valley and is close to a small stream. Prehistoric material collected dates from the Early and Middle Woodland Periods or an occupational range of from approximately 1000 B.C. to around 500 A.D. Historic ceramic material dating from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was collected but the presence of a nearby roadside dump indicates that this may not necessarily be an historic habitation site.

38JA28

Located 29,270 feet from the Levy end of the connector route, this site appears to be a nineteenth century habitation site. A double line of oak trees and brick rubble indicates that it was possibly a sizable farm or plantation. Historic ceramic material collected indicated probable nineteenth century occupation.

38JA29 Union Landing Site

Located on Union Creek at the terminus of the Union Landing Road, this site is on file in the South Carolina Department of Archives and History as being the landing place of the last group of Africans brought to this country as slaves. Historic occupation is indicated by eighteenth and nineteenth century ceramics. The Fadden-Bull map of 1780 shows land at or near the landing as being owned by persons named

Montague and Fitz. Prehistoric material collected indicated aboriginal utilization of the site from about 1000 B.C. to around 1000 A.D.

38JA30

Located 29,656 feet from the Levy end of the connector and at an elevation of 21.0 feet above mean sea level, this site was indicated by the presence of historic ceramic material and a probable cellar hole. Ceramics collected indicate probable occupation during the nineteenth or early twentieth century.

38JA31

Revealed by brick rubble, embankments and two perpendicular lines of oak trees, this historic habitation site lies approximately 100 yards east of the centerline of the proposed connector, the nearest point on which is 18,975 feet from the Levy end and 15.4 feet above mean sea level. Historic ceramic material collected indicates nineteenth century occupation. Most of the artifacts have been subjected to intense heat or flame.

38JA32

This site is revealed on the edge of a large borrow pit being used in the construction of I-95 and in the cut of a dirt road bordering on that pit. Part of the site has been eradicated by borrow pit operation. Prehistoric ceramic and lithic material collected date from the Early and Middle Woodland Periods indicating occupation between approximately 1000 B.C. and 1000 A.D. A small amount of historic material collected dating from the nineteenth century may be associated with 38JA31, located approximately 200 yards to the west. The prehistoric component of this

site is contemporaneous with that of 38JA26 and due to their topographic proximity, both may be a part of the same general habitation area.

38JA33

In close proximity to 38JA26, this site is probably contemporaneous with that site and part of the same general habitation area. Aboriginal material collected indicated association with 38JA26, also.

38JA24 Garret Cemetery

A twentieth and possibly nineteenth century Black American burial ground, this site is located approximately 3500 feet south of 38JA32. Grave goods were observed but not collected.

PURRYSBURG VISITED
38JA2 AND 38JA36

Very near the route of the Seaboard Coast Line survey is the site of Purrysburg (38JA36), an early eighteenth century Swiss Huguenot settlement. Although not previously recorded as an historic site it is listed in the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology files as the location of an unverified Indian mound (38JA2), with the source of information being Mills Statistics of 1824:

There is here an Indian mound, part of which the river has undermined and washed away.

A cursory examination of the area was all that time and foliage would allow and no evidence of a mound was observed. Prehistoric and historic ceramics were collected on the river bank near a marker erected by the Huguenot Society of South Carolina. A large quantity of historic ceramic material was collected in a nearby field.

Approximately one-half mile from the Huguenot marker is a cemetery associated with the early settlement and which is still utilized by residents of the area. The Purrysburg settlement at one time evidently covered most of the area between the marker and the cemetery (Smith:1909).

The Purrysburg site bears further investigation for two reasons: first, to determine the existence of the Purrysburg mound and the extent of aboriginal occupation in the area; second, because of its significance as one of a half dozen French and Swiss Huguenot settlements in the state during the eighteenth century that have not been investigated or recorded. More intensive survey work, testing, and further documentation should satisfy the basic needs of getting this site properly recorded.

SUMMARY

Nine sites were located and recorded as a result of this survey. Three of these (38JA27, 38JA28, and 38JA30) are located in the right of way of the proposed connector but are not considered of significant value to warrant further investigation. One site (38JA31) lies approximately 100 yards east of the right of way and should not be disturbed unless that area is used as a source of fill dirt. Two sites (38JA29, 38JA34) are sufficiently removed from the construction area to be completely safe unless endangered by borrow pit operations. The three remaining sites (38JA26, 38JA32, and 38JA33) lie outside the right of way but are considerable in extent and the possibility exists that undetected portions of those sites may extend into the right of way.

All of the nine sites located on this survey contained historic components. Three of these contained eighteenth and nineteenth material, three appeared to contain only nineteenth century material and the

remainder contained both nineteenth and twentieth century material with the earlier material predominating.

Five of the sites contained prehistoric material and all of these appeared to fall within a temporal range of approximately 1000 B.C. to 1000 A.D. or later. No architectural features were observed in any of the prehistoric sites and on only three of the historic sites.

CONCLUSION

As a result of this archeological survey it does not appear that construction of the proposed Seaboard Coast Line Railroad connector will damage or destroy any archeological sites that may be considered of significance.

Approval of this project by the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology is contingent upon two requirements. First, a representative of the Institute should be present when clearing operations are initiated. Inordinately thick undergrowth and heavy ground cover prevented the terrain on the survey route from receiving as thorough an examination as was felt necessary. Thus, the possibility exists that unrevealed sites may lie within the right of way. Also, the construction route will pass in very close proximity to three significant sites and it is possible that undetected portions of those sites may extend into the right of way. If, in the process of clearing for construction, further archeological remains are revealed, examination and possibly testing would be required to determine if salvage excavation should be initiated.

The second requirement is that an archeological survey be conducted of the areas from which fill dirt will be taken. This step would involve preliminary investigation of these areas as soon as their location is

determined and a second examination once ground cover is removed if such is felt to be warranted.

The writer of this report would like to make a special note of appreciation to Mr. Tom Mallard, Assistant Engineer with the Seaboard Coast Line construction office, without whose help this survey would have been physically impossible. Mr. Mallard gave needed assistance in combating the Savannah River swamps and in locating a centerline obscured in places by the thickest possible undergrowth. Special thanks go also to Leslie Beuschel and Robert Asreen of the Institute staff for their aid with artifact identification and analysis and to Leland Ferguson for assistance with preparation of parts of this report.

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