

A Report of Archaeological Investigations
along the Bynum Tap 230kV Transmission Line Corridor,
Chatham County, N.C.

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March 1984

Management Summary

During March 1984, the Research Laboratories of Anthropology spent 4 man-days surveying 3 mi of the proposed Bynum Tap 230kV transmission line corridor. The areas surveyed consisted of four transects, 100 ft wide, located between Pittsboro and Bynum in Chatham County. All cleared areas were subjected to a pedestrian survey and shovel tests were dug on a limited basis. The project was initiated at the request of Carolina Power and Light Company and resulted in the identification of 6 prehistoric archaeological sites. None of the sites are considered significant in terms of National Register criteria, and consequently, archaeological clearance is recommended for the project.

Introduction

At the request of Carolina Power and Light Company, the Research Laboratories of Anthropology spent 4 man-days between March 6 and March 16, 1984, conducting an archaeological survey of approximately 3 mi of the Bynum Tap 230kV transmission line corridor. The corridor will be 100 ft wide, and areas surveyed consisted of 4 transects located between Pittsboro and Bynum in Chatham County (Figure 1). The 4 transects represent roughly half of the total length of the transmission line. The Division of Archives and History considered the remainder to have low archaeological potential, and survey was not required. The authors and Dan Simpkins, a UNC doctoral student, conducted the field survey. Maps and aerial photographs were generously provided by Carolina Power and Light Company.

The objectives of the survey were to locate and evaluate the research potential of as many archaeological sites as possible within the corridor segments. A "site" is defined as at least two spatially related artifacts or features that are indicative of prehistoric or historic activities. This definition is meant to exclude isolated "spot-finds" which sometimes occur and could result from any number of fortituous events.

Sites were located by carefully inspecting all areas with surface visibility. Shovel testing was not systematically conducted because of its limited success in locating sites in past surveys (Davis and

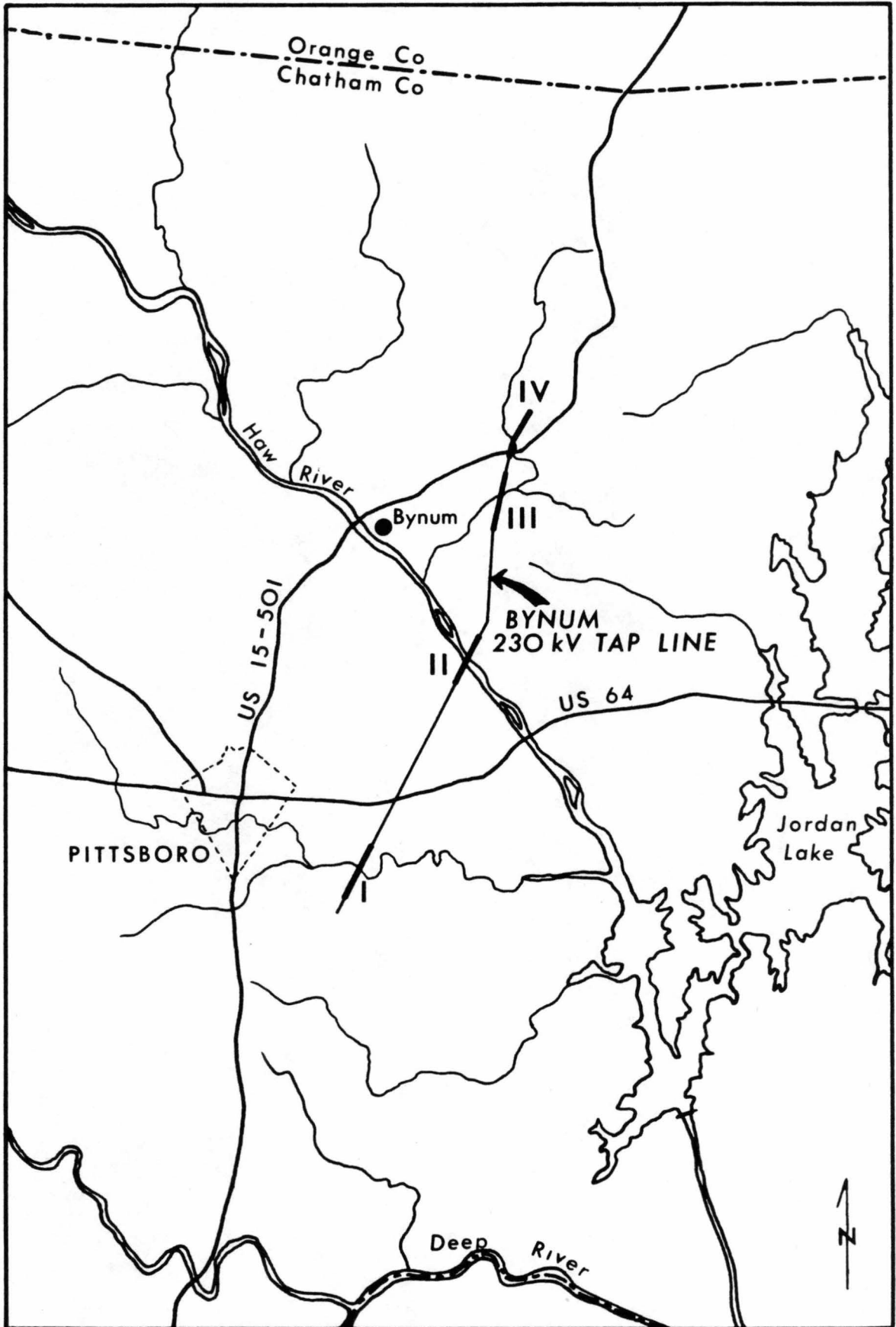


Figure 1. Map locating the Bynum 230kV Tap Line and four survey sections (Scale: 1" = 2 mi).

Ward 1983). However, some shovel tests were dug in high probability environments that lacked surface visibility, and other shovel tests were excavated along the wooden margins of Ch492 in an effort to define the site's southeastern limits.

The evaluation of a site's research potential or significance was guided by criteria of the National Register of Historic Places, which state that archaeological resources are considered significant or potentially eligible for inclusion in the National Register if they have "yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history" (36 CFR part 800.1). Minimally, a site should have spatial and depositional context sufficiently preserved to permit behavioral analysis beyond classification and chronological determinations.

A total of 6 new prehistoric archaeological sites were recorded as a result of the survey. Data from four of the sites were insufficient to allow fine-grained chronological assessments. One of the remaining sites contained evidence of a Middle Archaic occupation, whereas the other produced specimens indicating a multicomponent occupation of the Middle Archaic to the Late Woodland periods. Although these sites add to our general understanding of prehistoric Piedmont cultures, none meet minimal standards for consideration for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

Environmental Factors

The project area is located in the heart of the North Carolina Piedmont. Most of the terrain is undulating, with low rounded hills and ridges. This general pattern, however, does not hold true for all the survey transects. The three segments that cross Roberson Creek, Haw River, and the lower (southern) section of Pokeberry Creek are characterized by steep relief. This is particularly true for ridges adjacent to the streams. In these areas, floodplains are narrow to nonexistent. The only level to gently sloping terrain is in the transect that lies along Pokeberry Creek, north of U.S. 15-501. A moderately wide floodplain also has developed along this segment of Pokeberry Creek. Highway 15-501 demarcates a well-defined boundary between the steep hills and ridges to the south and east and the more undulating slopes to the north and west.

The dominant soils reflect the differences in topography. South of U.S. 15-501, most of the soils in the survey tracts belong to the Georgeville and Davidson series, whereas north of the highway, Appling series soils occur with the greatest frequency.

Along the Haw River and Roberson and lower Pokeberry creeks, Georgeville gravely or stoney silty clay loam predominates. Davidson hilly phase soils also are common in these areas. Georgeville soils consist of a reddish brown clay that grades into a red, stiff silty clay. The gravely and stoney soils contain numerous quartz and slate fragments that sometimes make up as much as 30 percent of the soil mass. Davidson hilly phase soils consist of a thin strip of clay

loam overlaying soft saprolite. Small bolders often dot the surface of these soils (Jurney 1937:17, 34).

Georgeville and Davidson soils are very different from the Appling sandy loam that is encountered along the transect north of U.S. 15-501. The Appling soil consists of a light brown sandy loam that is underlain by a sandy red clay. Only a few small pebbles are found in the soil matrix.

The forest cover along the transmission transects is typical of the Oak-Pine sere that is found throughout the Piedmont. Oak, hickory, gum, and poplar dominate as overstory trees, whereas dogwood, ironwood, and maple make up the understory. The lower slopes and narrow floodplains contain stands of river birch, willow, cottonwood, and sycamore, interspersed with oaks and hickories. If the modern communities reflect in a general way the virgin stands exploited by prehistoric populations, an abundance of wild plant and animal foods would have been available.

Prehistoric and Historic Background

Archaeologists usually divide the prehistory of North Carolina into three periods: Paleo-Indian, Archaic, and Woodland. The Archaic is further broken down into three subperiods--Early, Middle, and Late--which are based on the forms and methods of manufacturing chipped-stone tools, especially projectile points. The Woodland period is divided into several phases. North of the project area, the Vincent, Clements, and Gaston phases have been defined (Coe 1964). These

Piedmont phases are similar to the Deep Creek, Mt. Pleasant, and Cashie phases of the northeast Coastal Plain (Phelps 1979).

Immediately South of the project site, the Badin, Yadkin, Uwharrie, and Pee Dee phases have been identified. The early historic Caraway phase has been isolated at Keyauwee village near Asheboro. Styles of pottery, as well as other material culture traits, provide indices for differentiating these Woodland phases (Coe 1964).

The Paleo-Indian period is represented by the Hardaway complex which is characterized in its earliest form by a lanceolate projectile point with a thin concave base. This early variety evolved into a Dalton-like point with broad, shallow side notches and serrated edges. Terminal Hardaway is represented by a projectile point with narrow side notches and a concave recurved base. Hardaway peoples occupied the Piedmont region perhaps as early as 12,000 B.C. (Coe, personal communication).

The Late Paleo-Indian and Early Archaic periods are represented respectively by the Palmer and Kirk complexes, which are again distinguished by projectile point styles. Palmer points are rather small, averaging 35 mm long and 20 mm wide. These points typically have serrated triangular blades, notched corners, and a straight ground base. Kirk specimens are the largest, with some varieties averaging 100 mm long and 35 mm wide. Blades are again triangular and serrated, whereas the bases are straight to slightly rounded but never ground. Corner-notching, characteristic of early Kirk specimens, is replaced by broad square stems in late varieties. Palmer may date as early as 10,000 B.C., while the Kirk complex appears to span the millennia between 6000 and 8000 B.C. (Coe, personal communication).

The beginning of the Middle Archaic is marked by the appearance of the Stanly complex, which displays continued evolution of stemmed projectile points. During the Stanly phase, blades became wider and stems narrower, although the basic form still resembled the later Kirk types. The Stanly complex also contains the first evidence for extensive use of polished-stone implements. A continuity of projectile point styles was interrupted at the end of the Stanly phase by the introduction of two new types, both of which appear stylistically to be unrelated to the Piedmont sequence. The earliest type is represented by the Morrow Mountain point, which has a small blade and short tapering stem. Following the Morrow Mountain phase, a long thick lanceolate point, the Guilford, was introduced. This type is widespread over the Piedmont but not frequently found outside the area. Stanly dates from 5000 to 6000 B.C., Morrow Mountain from 5000 to 4500 B.C., and Guilford from 4500 to 4000 B.C. (Coe 1964: 122-125).

The late Archaic period began with a return to the manufacture of broad bladed, stemmed projectile points, characterized by the Savannah River complex. During this phase, full-grooved axes and soapstone bowls made their first appearance. The Savannah River complex, which began about 4000 B.C., persisted in some areas of the Piedmont until about 500 B.C. (Coe 1964:123-124).

The Woodland period began with the introduction of pottery and agriculture and lasted in most areas of North Carolina until European contact. The earliest of these Woodland occupations are

represented by the Badin and Vincent complexes, which include well-developed ceramic techniques and large triangular projectile points. The pottery is well made, with a fine sand or non-tempered paste, and typically has a cord- or fabric-impressed exterior surface (Coe 1964:28).

We know very little about the early Woodland cultures of the Piedmont (ca. 500 B.C. to A.D. 500). On the basis of information from other regions, however, we can speculate that horticulture became more important and villages were developed during this period. Some of the nomadism of the Archaic period gave way to at least semi-permanent settlements strategically located near fertile, friable soils.

In the survey area, the Middle and Late Woodland periods (ca. A.D. 500-1500) are defined by the Yadkin and Uwharrie phases (Coe 1964). The shift from Early to Middle and Late Woodland, though not abrupt, is apparent in the respective ceramic traditions. The fine sand-tempered early Woodland sherds were gradually replaced by crushed-quartz-tempered types of the Yadkin and Uwharrie phases. By Uwharrie times, check-stamped and net-impressed exteriors were added to the inventory of surface finished, and fabric-impressing was abandoned.

By A.D. 1200, agriculture was firmly established in the Piedmont (Coe 1964). Now, corn, beans, and squash were being grown to support larger populations that lived in permanent villages along the major

rivers. Hunting, however, continued to be important and would remain so throughout the Historic period (Coe 1952).

Around A.D. 1500, groups from the south moved into the Piedmont. They brought with them a distinctive curvilinear stamped pottery, now recognized as part of the Pee Dee complex, and settled in large compact villages in the Upper Pee Dee valley. Their palisaded villages were located in areas around major ceremonial centers, each of which was replete with temple mound, plaza, and special burial structures. The only such center that has been well documented is located in Montgomery County and has been developed into the Town Creek State Historic Site. The bearers of Pee Dee culture came, saw, and left the southern Piedmont without seriously changing the culture of the native population (Coe 1952).

The Siouans tribes that occupied the Piedmont during the historic period developed from Uwharrie and other Late Woodland cultures. Early explorers such as John Lederer (1670) and John Lawson (1701) provide glimpses of how the Siouans lived and coped with the ever-encroaching Europeans. From the ethnohistoric and archaeological records, we know that a diverse subsistence economy was drastically modified to accommodate European trade, and ancient social units rapidly became obsolete. So dramatic and devastating was the European invasion of the Piedmont that by 1745, when the first white settlers arrived in the project area, few Indians remained.

Most of these early settlers came from Virginia and Pennsylvania and were little more than subsistence farmers. Corn was the most

important crop, and tobacco was grown for personal use. Cotton was also important, especially after the introduction of the cotton gin. The first Chatham County gin was built at Bynum in 1872. This mill was in production until 1977 (Denatale 1980).

Chatham County was blessed with an abundance of wild quail and rabbits. Trapping and hunting these animals became big business at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. "Chatham rabbit" could be found on the menus of the finer New York City hotels during this period (Hadley et al. 1972:351-352). Wild rabbit was such a popular dish that a visiting Onslow County minister was inspired to deliver the following grace at his last Chatham County meal:

Oh, Lord, we have had rabbits warm, and we have had rabbits cold. We have had rabbits young and we have had rabbits old. We have had rabbits tender, and we have had rabbits tough. We thank Thee, Lord; we have had rabbits enough (Hadley et al. 1972:352).

In addition to hunting and agriculture, mining and smelting also have been important in Chatham County's history. As early as 1770, two primitive iron furnances were in production on the Deep River. They provided munitions for the colonists during the Revolutionary War, but were in ruins by 1811. Later in response to demands of the Civil War, the Sapona Iron Company began production at Ore Hill in 1861 and operated until 1896 (Hadley et al. 1972:372-373).

Chatham's iron industry was complemented by a fledgling coal industry, also located in the Deep River area. The first mine was opened in 1774 to supply the iron furnances. Later the Egypt shaft (460 ft deep) supplied coal for the Confederacy and was not permanently

abandoned until 1929. It was followed by the Carolina mine which produced sporadically until 1953 (Hadley et al. 1972:375).

Considerable archaeological work has been carried out in Chatham County. Most has been concentrated in the New Hope Reservoir (now Jordan Lake) along the Haw River and New Hope Creek in north-central Chatham County. Work began in the reservoir 20 years ago (Smith 1965) and continued (McCormick 1970; Wilson 1976) until the basin was filled (Larsen et al. 1982). Today, studies are still being carried out in secondary various impact zones around the periphery of the lake. Specifically related to the present study is the Harris-Asheboro 230kV transmission line survey conducted by the authors during February, 1983 (Davis and Ward 1983).

All these surveys and excavations reflect a general Piedmont pattern, in which most of the sites date to the Middle-to-Late Archaic periods. Most are defined by small scatters of lithic tools and debris along ridges and knolls parallel to the many streams draining the area. Usually, erosion and deflation have collapsed the occupational residues into shallow homogenized deposits. These Archaic sites probably represent small, temporary camps used by hunters and gatherers during the procurement of wild food resources.

The later horticultural villages of the Woodland period were usually located on the floodplains to provide easy access to productive alluvial soils. Because deposition, rather than erosion, is characteristic of the floodplains, it is sometimes possible to find buried, stratified sites spanning most of the prehistoric period.

Because of the scarcity of floodplain environments in the Bynum Tap transmission line corridor, we did not expect to find stratified sites. The pattern of small upland sites represented by disturbed lithic scatters was expected. To some degree, these expectations were not met, since relatively few sites were found in areas where they were expected.

Survey Methods

The Bynum 230kV Tap Line was surveyed in four sections (Figure 2). All four sections, comprising approximately 3.0 mi, were examined in their entirety by pedestrian survey. Specific methods used to identify archaeological remains within the corridor included: 1) visual inspection of exposed ground surfaces; and 2) subsurface shovel testing in areas considered likely to contain archaeological sites but lacking adequate ground surface visibility. Survey conditions and methods employed within each surveyed section are discussed below.

Section I - Roberson Creek: Section I is situated south of U.S. 64 and approximately 2.0 mi east of Pittsboro where the Bynum 230kV Tap Line crosses Roberson Creek. This section is 5800 ft long. The southern half, south of Roberson Creek, had recently been clear cut; thus, surface visibility was fair to excellent (i.e., 30-60% exposure). Pedestrian survey of this area yielded one small pre-historic site (Ch491) situated on a hill top flanking Roberson Creek.

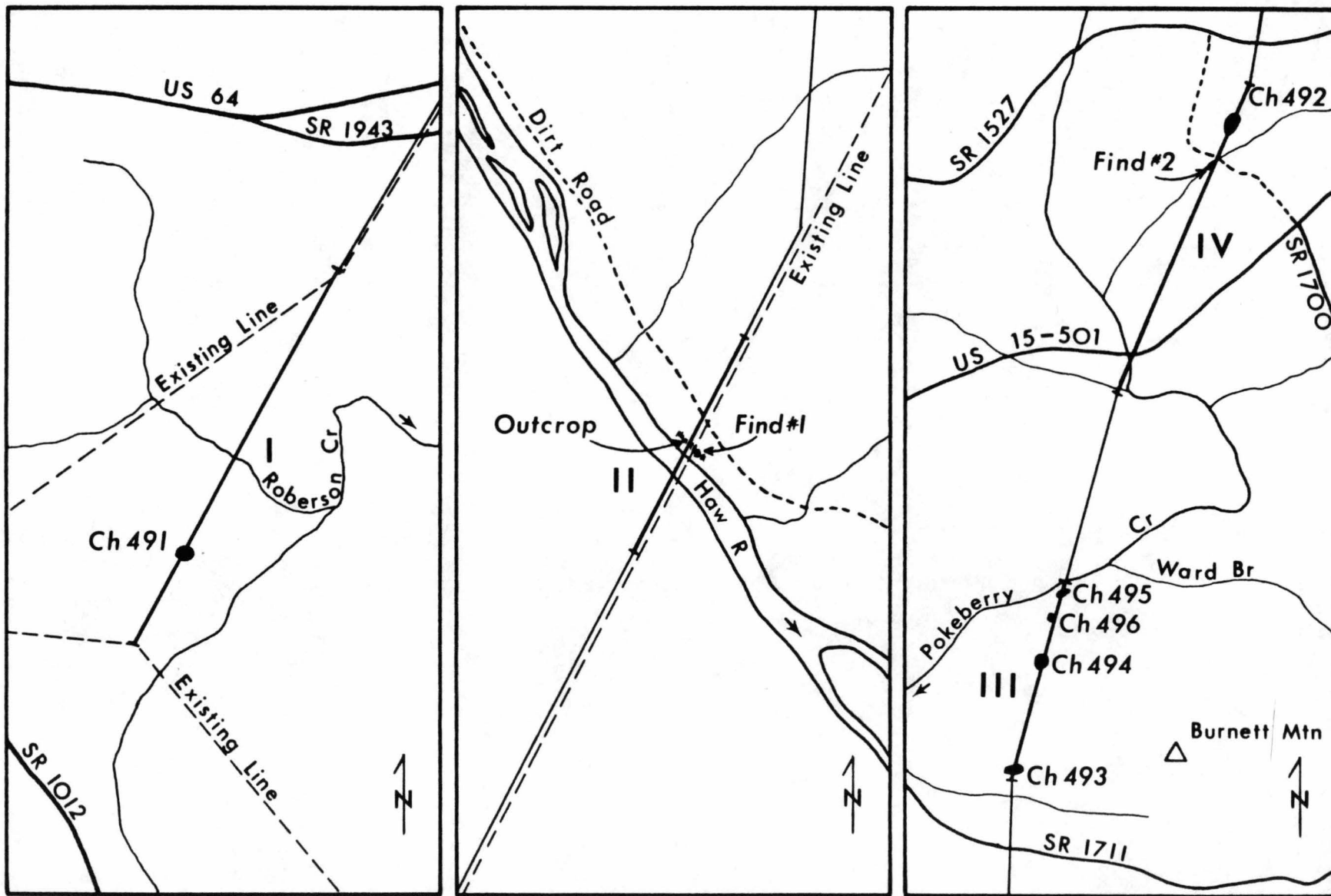


Figure 2. Maps of survey sections locating archaeological sites and finds (Scale: 1" = 200 ft).

Erosion within this area has been extensive. Except for the location of Ch491, the transmission line corridor is confined largely to moderately steep hill slopes. North of Roberson Creek, the corridor is forested except for a small pasture along the creek valley slope. This entire area was extremely rocky. Surface exposures created by recent logging were examined for archaeological remains, including a low hill top approximately 1700 ft northeast of Roberson Creek. Shovel testing was not feasible due to the rocky condition of the ground surface.

Section II - Haw River: Section II consists of a 3000 ft segment of the Bynum 230kV Tap Line where it crosses the Haw River. At this location, the proposed line parallels an existing transmission line corridor. The valley slope flanking the river is extremely steep on both sides and only a very narrow, active floodplain comprises the valley itself. Each side of the river was inspected separately. A jeep trail along the corridor on the south side of the river provided sufficient surface visibility for identifying archaeological remains. No sites were observed. On the north side, inspection consisted of examining a road cut which crosses the corridor approximately 500 ft away from the river and excavating about 35 shovel tests between the road cut and the river. Although no artifacts were found by these methods, a natural outcrop of unidentified felsic rock which would have been suitable as an aboriginal lithic source was observed near the base of the valley slope. This outcrop extends for at least 200 ft to the north and south of the transmission corridor. An

extensive search of this area yielded a single, possible core (Find #1). Other artifacts (e.g., debitage, cores or blanks) which would confirm the presence of a site at this location were lacking; consequently, no site designation was given to this outcrop. This area will not be impacted by transmission tower construction since it lies too near the floodplain. Towers for the existing line are located almost 300 ft upslope from the outcrop.

Section III - Pokeberry Creek: Section III is situated on the south side of Pokeberry Creek, flanking the western slope of Burnett Mountain (Elev: 601 ft). This section is 2800 ft long and has been recently clear cut; thus, surface visibility was generally good (i.e., 30-60% exposure). Erosion is moderate to extensive along the steeper slopes. Four prehistoric archaeological sites (Ch493-496) were identified in this section; all were situated on level to gradually sloping, well-drained spurs along the lower margin of Burnett Mountain.

Section IV - U.S. 15-501 Crossing: Section IV is 4400 ft long and situated where the Bynum 230kV Tap Line crosses U.S. 15-501 (at the Pokeberry Creek bridge). This section was surveyed in four segments (described below from south to north). The first segment (1200 ft long) lies just south and north of the U.S. 15-501 crossing and is comprised of low, swampy pasture and woodland. Although surface visibility was poor, no shovel tests were dug due to the swampy conditions and low potential for an archaeological site being present. The second segment (700 ft long), situated just north of the

U.S. 15-501 crossing in an old field, was initially considered to have a high site potential since it crossed a low, well-drained knoll flanking Pokeberry Creek. Since surface visibility was poor, approximately 60 shovel tests were dug across the knoll. No artifacts were recovered; thus, it is unlikely that a site is present at this location (see Davis and Ward 1983). The third segment (1300 ft long) crosses a gradually sloping land surface on the south side of an unnamed stream. This area has recently been logged; consequently, surface visibility was generally good. Inspection of disturbed areas along this segment of the corridor yield a single spot find (Find #2)-- an Archaic projectile point fragment. In the absence of other artifacts, no site designation was assigned. The fourth segment (700 ft long) crosses a recently cultivated wheat field (visibility = 95%) along a low knoll on the north side of an unnamed stream. Surface collection of this field yielded a moderate number of prehistoric artifacts (designated Ch492). Approximately 15 shovel tests were also dug along the site's wooded southeastern perimeter. One of these tests yielded a single flake.

Site Descriptions

Six prehistoric archaeological sites were identified by the Bynum 230kV Tap Line survey and are described below. Maps showing site locations are presented in Figure 2; a summary of the artifacts recovered at these sites is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Artifacts Recovered by Survey.

| | Ch491 | Ch492 | Ch493 | Ch494 | Ch495 | Ch496 | Total |
|----------------------------|----------|------------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|------------|
| <u>Felsic Raw Material</u> | | | | | | | |
| Guilford Proj. Pt. | | 2 | | | | | 2 |
| Savannah River Proj. Pt. | | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| Unid. Archaic Proj. Pt. | | 4 | | 1 | | | 5 |
| Small Triangular Proj. Pt. | | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| Randolph Proj. Pt. | | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| Biface | | 1 | 2 | 1 | | | 4 |
| Bifacially Worked Flake | | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| Unifacial Side Scraper | | 1 | | | 1 | | 2 |
| Used Flake | | 15 | | 5 | 2 | | 22 |
| Amorphous Core Frag. | | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| Flake | 4 | 137 | 1 | 8 | 12 | 3 | 165 |
| <u>Quartz Raw Material</u> | | | | | | | |
| Morrow Mtn. Proj. Pt. | | | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Bifacially Worked Flake | | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| Unifacial Side Scraper | | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| Amorphous Core Frag. | | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| Flake | 1 | 12 | | | 1 | | 14 |
| <u>Pottery</u> | | | | | | | |
| Uwharrie Fabric Marked | | 2 | | | | | 2 |
| Uwharrie Indeterminate | | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| New Hope Indeterminate | | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| Total | 5 | 184 | 3 | 16 | 16 | 3 | 227 |

Ch491: This site is located atop a heavily eroded knoll, approximately 1400 ft south of Roberson Creek and 900 ft northwest of an unnamed stream (Elev: 405 ft; UTM: 17/3952300/667385). The entire site area had been clear cut, providing moderately good collecting conditions (visibility = 30%). Artifacts recovered from this site, consisting of five flakes, were widely scattered over a 200 x 200 ft area. The small number of artifacts recovered, despite generally favorable collecting conditions, suggests only limited site use. This site is considered to be not significant; no further investigation is recommended.

Ch492: Ch492 is located on a low knoll within a recently cultivated wheat field (Elev: 415 ft; UTM: 17/3962950/671380) and was by far the most productive of the six sites recorded by the Bynum 230kV Tap Line survey. The site is situated approximately 300 ft northwest of an intermittent stream which flows into Pokeberry Creek. Ch492 is about 150 x 250 ft in dimension and, at time of survey, had excellent surface visibility (95%). A total of 183 artifacts were surface collected from the site; an additional artifact was recovered from one of 16 shovel tests excavated along the wooded southeastern perimeter of the site. The shovel tests indicate that soil at the site consists of a light brown sandy loam with water-worn gravel inclusions (ca. 0.8 ft thick), underlain at the base of plow zone by clay. These artifacts are summarized in Table 1 and include both projectile points and pottery representative of Middle Archaic, Late Archaic, and Late Woodland cultural periods. The Archaic

material is probably indicative of site use as a temporary hunting camp. The Late Woodland material, particularly the pottery, suggests that Ch492 may have been used later as a small residential site.

Evidence from the shovel tests indicate no subsurface features, and given the limited impact upon the site that will result from transmission line construction, no further work is recommended. Present archaeological evidence indicates, therefore, that Ch492 is not significant.

Ch493: This site is situated on a gradually sloping spur along the western flank of Burnett Mountain, approximately 1900 ft east of Pokeberry Creek and 300 ft north of a small, intermittent tributary of Pokeberry Creek (Elev: 415 ft; UTM: 17/3960220/670550). The site area has been recently clear cut, providing moderately good visibility (40%) for surface collecting. Ch493 is about 50 x 100 ft in dimension and was defined by two biface fragments and one flake retrieved from the surface. The small number of artifacts suggests only limited site use. Given that the site is heavily eroded, the presence of intact, subsurface archaeological deposits is unlikely. Therefore, this site is considered to be not significant. No further work is recommended.

Ch494: Ch494 is situated on a level to gradually sloping spur flanking the west side of Burnett Mountain, about 1000 ft southeast of Pokeberry Creek (Elev: 380 ft; UTM: 17/3960680/670660). The site area has been recently clear cut; thus, visibility for surface collecting

was generally good (40%). Soil erosion at the site is moderate. Ch494 was defined by the collection of 16 lithic artifacts dispersed within a 200 x 200 ft area. Temporally diagnostic artifacts include a Middle Archaic Morrow Mountain projectile point and an unidentifiable Archaic point fragment. Due to the small number of artifacts (indicating limited site use) and a low potential for subsurface site integrity, this site is considered to be not significant. No further work is recommended.

Ch495: Ch495 is defined by a small scatter of lithic artifacts (n=16) situated within a 50 x 100 ft area on a gradually sloping spur along the western flank of Burnett Mountain, approximately 200 ft south of Pokeberry Creek (Elev: 350 ft; UTM: 17/3960970/670740). Surface exposures created by clear cutting were generally good at time of survey (visibility = 40%). Soil erosion at the site is moderate to extensive. No temporally diagnostic artifacts were recovered. Given the disturbed site condition and low artifact density suggesting only limited site use, this site is considered to be not significant. No further work is recommended.

Ch496: Ch496 was defined by three flakes collected from a 50 x 50 ft area just south of Ch495 (Elev: 360 ft; UTM: 17/3960870/670700). The site is situated on a gradually sloping spur along the western flank of Burnett Mountain, approximately 350 ft south of Pokeberry Creek. The site was recently clear cut and soil erosion is moderate. Surface

visibility (30%) was generally good at time of survey. Due to the low artifact density and disturbed condition of the site, Ch496 is considered to be not significant. No further work is recommended.

Summary and Recommendations

The chronological range of artifacts and the overall richness of Ch492 make it the most important site recorded during the survey. The fact that its location coincides with that of a restricted soil type within the survey area may not be fortuituous. The correlation between certain soils and archaeological sites has been well established (e.g., Ward 1965), and the relationship suggested at Ch492 should be recognized in formulating future models of Piedmont settlement.

Individually, however, none of the sites met minimum standards for consideration for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places (36CFR60.6). All lack contextural integrity. Instead, they represent shallow, mixed assemblages of artifacts that do not warrant mitigation beyond recording and surface collecting. As a consequence, archaeological clearance is recommended for the project.

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