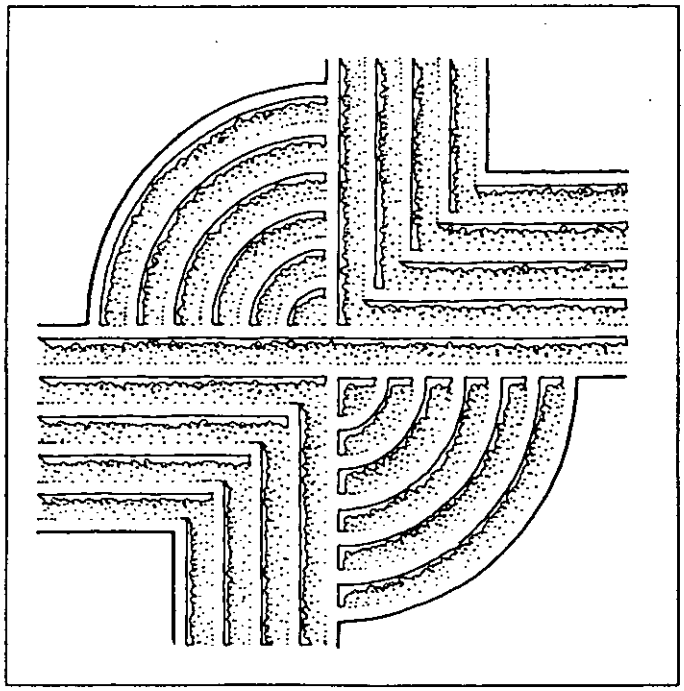
MANAGEMENT SUMMARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA RECOVERY, 38CH173 AND 38CH175, CHARLESTON NATIONAL GOLF COURSE, CHARLESTON COUNTY, SC



RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION 119

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA RECOVERY, 38CH173 AND 38CH175, CHARLESTON NATIONAL GOLF COURSE, CHARLESTON COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

Prepared For:
Mr. Walter Mueller
Charleston National Golf Course
3375 Highway 17 N
Mount Pleasant, SC 29464

Prepared By:
Natalie Adams

Chicora Research Contribution 119

Chicora Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 8664 ▫ 861 Arbutus Dr.
Columbia, South Carolina 29202
803/787-6910

October 14, 1993

Introduction

Charleston National Golf Course is situated in Charleston County, north of the City of Mount Pleasant (Figure 1). It is bordered to the north by Stratton Place development, to the east by Copahee Sound, to the south by Oakland Plantation, and to the west by U.S. Highway 17.

The investigations of site 38CH173 and 38CH175 were conducted by Ms. Natalie Adams of Chicora Foundation, Inc. for Charleston National Golf Course between August 10 and 27, 1993 and on September 13, 1993. The sites are located in the south central portion of the development, adjacent to Copahee Sound, in Charleston County, South Carolina (Figure 2).

These sites were initially located by Trinkley and Carter (1975) and were subsequently re-surveyed by Brockington and Associates in 1987. Both sites were determined by the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SC SHPO) as eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

Chicora Foundation was requested by the developer's representative, Mr. Walter Mueller, to prepare a technical and budgetary proposal for review and approval by the S.C. SHPO. A proposal for data recovery was submitted to and reviewed by the SC SHPO on April 14, 1993 (letter from Mr. Lee Tippett to Dr. Michael Trinkley). An agreement to perform the work was signed by Charleston National Golf Course on June 29, 1993.

This management summary has been prepared upon the completion of the fieldwork at 38CH173 and 38CH175 and does not contained detailed information on artifact or subsistence analyses, or any detailed midden evaluations. It is intended solely to provide a brief descriptive statement of the work conducted by Chicora and to allow the SC SHPO to verify that the proposed work has actually been accomplished. The management summary may minimally be necessary for Charleston National Golf Course to continue with the development of the land encompassing 38CH173 and 38CH175. This construction will destroy the sites and, of course, created the need for archaeological mitigation activities initially.

Archaeological investigations were begun at the two sites by a crew of four on August 10, 1993 and continued through August 27, 1993. Site stripping and mapping at 38CH175 took place on September 13, 1993. A total of 106.5 person hours were spent in the field at 38CH173. At 38CH175, 262 person hours were spent in the field with an additional 34 person hours spent on laboratory analysis and field processing. As a result of this work, 400 square feet of site were opened at 38CH175 and 200 cubic feet of soil were moved in

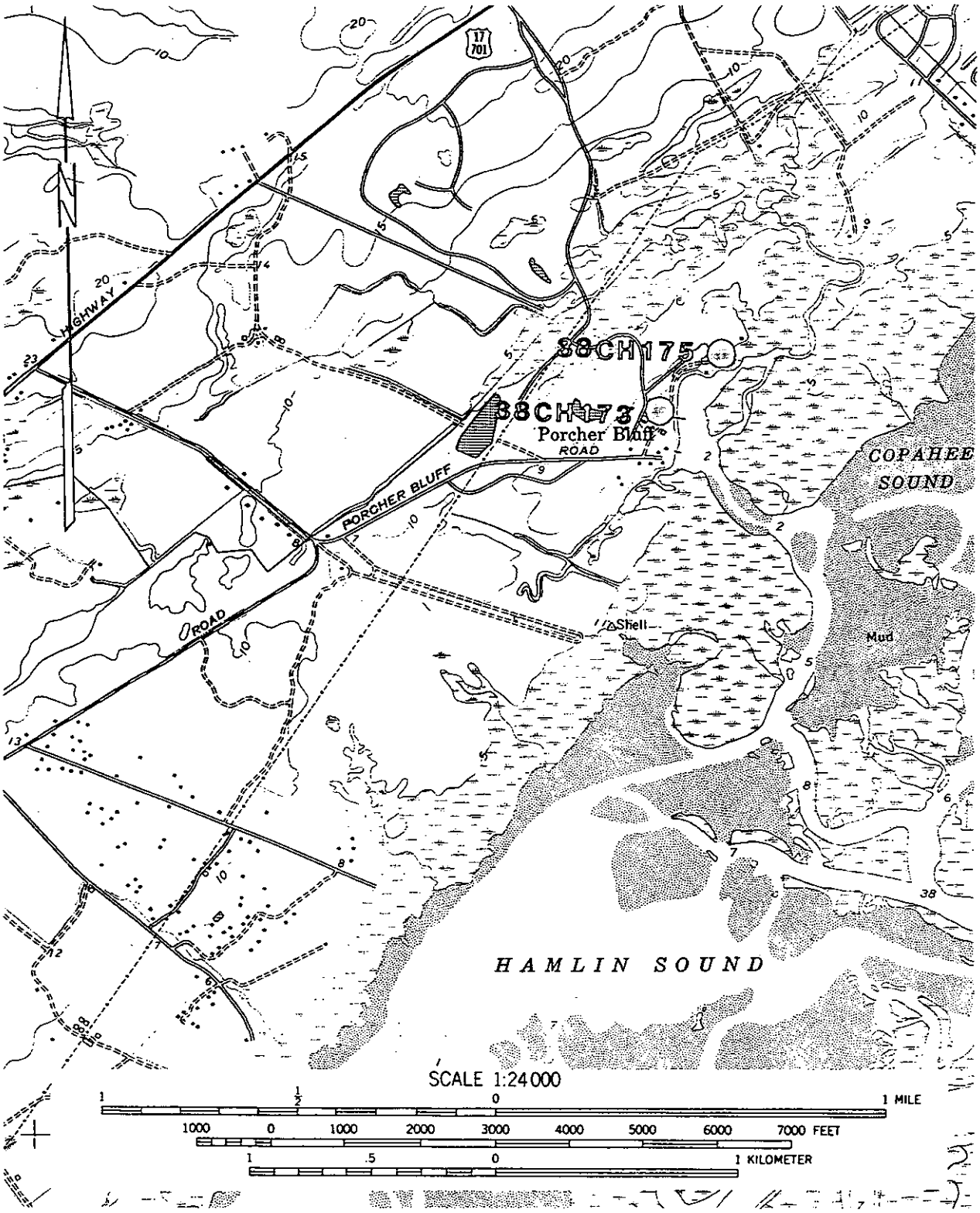


Figure 1. Location of 38CH173 and 38CH175 on the Fort Moultrie USGS Quadrangle.

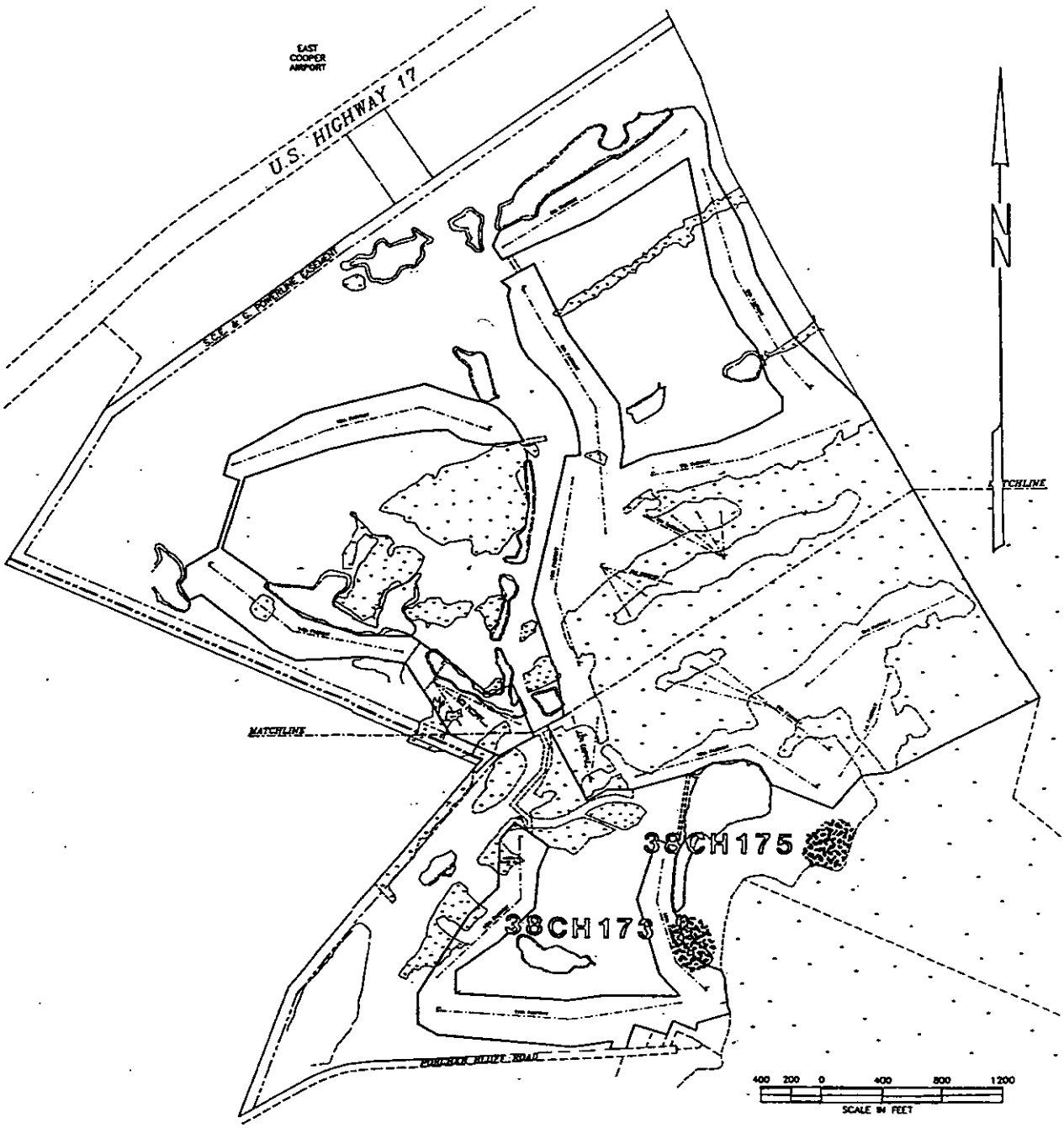


Figure 2. Location of 38CH173 and 38CH175 within the Charleston National Golf Course.

primary excavations. A total of 503 pounds of shell were recovered at 38CH173. At 38CH175, 350 square feet of site were opened and 707 cubic feet of soil were moved in primary excavations. Non-midden and disturbed midden soils were screened through ¼-inch mesh, while midden soils were screened through ⅛-inch mesh. A total of 3,952 pounds of shell were recovered at 38CH175. At the conclusion of field work, both sites were stripped so that cultural features could be plotted.

The proposed investigations at 38CH173 were to include the excavation of 400 square feet in the vicinity of Brockington and Associates test unit (Poplin 1987). Following this field work, the site was to be mechanically stripped. At 38CH175, investigations were to include the excavation of 300 to 400 square feet in the area Brockington and Associates identified as containing the highest archaeological integrity. At the end of excavations, the 50 by 115 foot intact area was to be mechanically stripped. Features encountered during stripping were to be mapped, but not excavated.

The work conducted by Chicora Foundation met these requirements. This management summary will initiate the consultation process with the S.C. SHPO.

Previous Investigations

The sites referenced in this report as 38CH173 and 38CH175 were first identified by Trinkley and Carter in 1975. Based on that survey the two sites were originally recorded as 38CH175 and 38CH174 respectively. During the Brockington and Associates (Brockington et al. 1987) surveyed over a decade later the site locations were misplaced, resulting in transposed numbering. Because of the confusion correcting these inconsistencies would cause, Chicora Foundation has elected, in consultation with Mr. Keith Derting at the S.C. Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology to maintain the numbering scheme proposed by Brockington and Associates. Researchers, however, should be aware that this scheme differs substantially from the numbering used by the Trinkley and Carter survey.

Trinkley and Carter described 38CH173 (orginially designated 38CH175) as shell midden debris exposed by the digging of a marina or lagoon. Most of the site was believed to have been destroyed by this excavation. Vegetation consisted of new pine forest in an area believed to have been plowed at one time. A 1967 areal photograph reveals that, indeed, the site had been plowed (Figure 3) and apparently was placed in planted pines during the mid-1970s. This aerial photograph also reveals that the pond was eventually excavated in an high ground area and does not reflect any prehistoric slough or marsh area.

Site 38CH175 (originally designated 38CH174) was described by Trinkley and Carter as a Thom's Creek period site located on a bluff adjacent to Copahee Sound. They described disturbances as consisting of house construction and possible plowing. The 1967 areal photograph (Figure 3) indicates that the area was not plowed at that time, but a substantial house once occupied the site area.

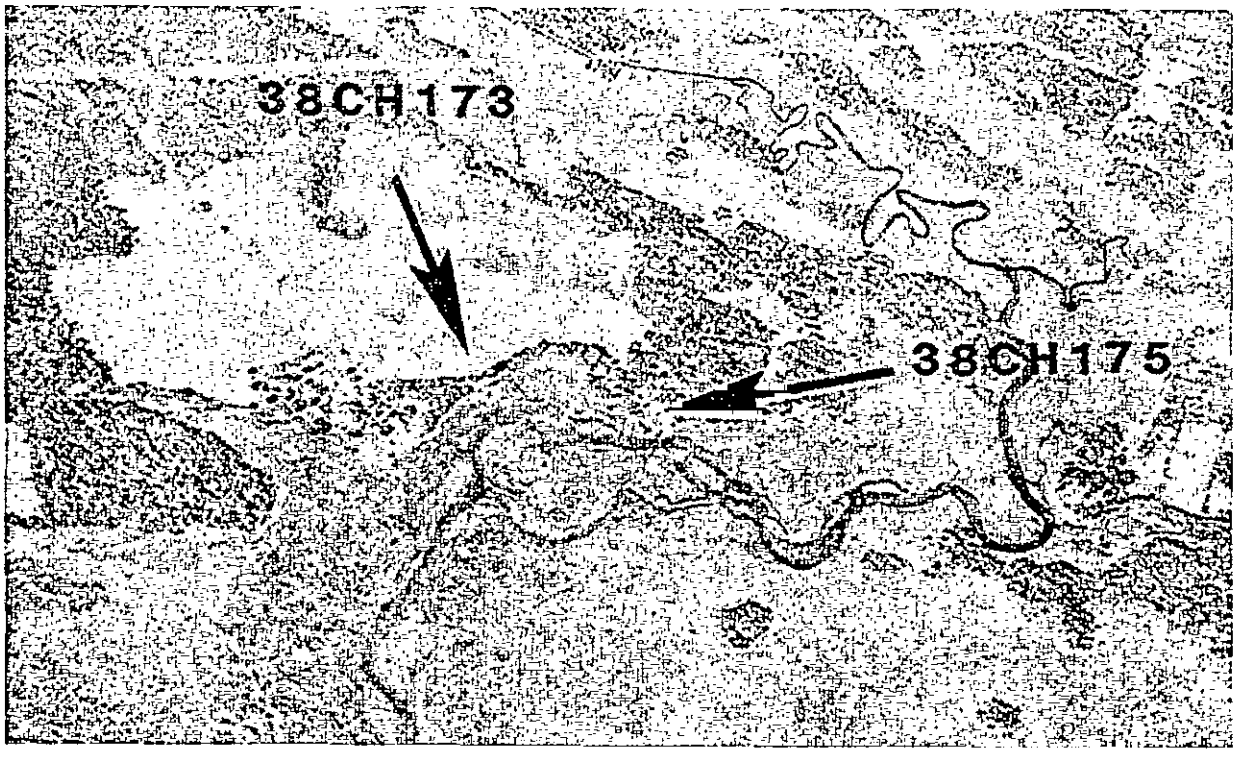


Figure 3. 1967 areal photograph of showing 38CH173 and 38CH175.

Brockington and Associates excavated a total of 27 shovel tests and one test unit at 38CH173, dating "to the Mississippian period (with earlier components present)". According to Brockington et al. (1987) the site contained shell midden which was disturbed to a depth of 10 cm below surface. The site was recommended as eligible for inclusion on the National Register based on its ability to address research questions relating to Mississippian lifeways, in spite of only 15 (or 11%) of the sherds dating to this period.

At 38CH175 Brockington and Associates excavated a total of 48 shovel tests and one 1-meter test unit. Artifacts recovered dated to the Thom's Creek period, although a minor historic component was also noted. Shovel testing and "minor topographic relief" at the site suggested that it may have originally been a shell ring. Shovel testing also revealed that the area of highest archaeological integrity was located within a 50 by 115 foot area. 38CH175 was recommended as eligible for inclusion on the National Register based on its ability to address a number of research questions relating to the Thom's Creek Period.

Excavations at 38CH173

The work at 38CH173 involved the excavation of four contiguous 10-foot units placed in the area proposed by Brockington et al. (1987) to contain the highest degree of integrity (Figure 4). Mr. Walter Mueller indicated that the site had eroded significantly in the area

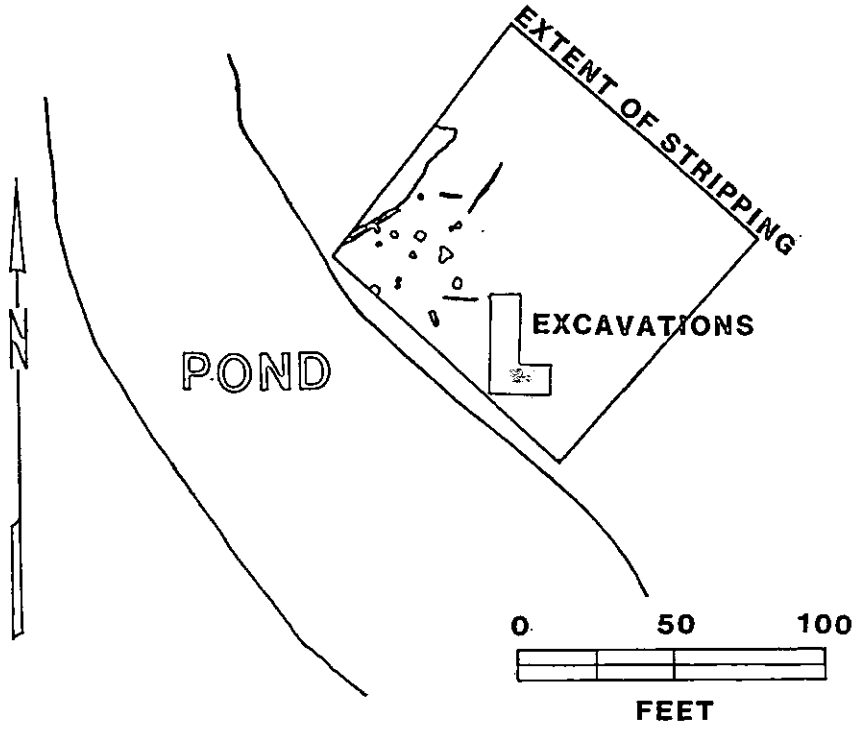


Figure 4. Location of excavation units and stripped area at 38CH173.

around the pond during hurricane Hugo. A culvert which originally extended only one or two feet beyond the bank now extends about eight to ten feet beyond the bank (Walter Mueller, personal communication 1993). The initial unit was placed adjacent to a small eroding intact midden area adjacent to the pond. The additional units were placed in the same vicinity to expose a larger area to understand the eroding midden's relationship to the rest of the immediate area. The site grid, oriented with magnetic north, was tied into a survey marker installed by Southeastern Surveying in order to maintain long term horizontal and vertical control. The elevation of the survey marker was 9.28 feet mean sea level.

Units were excavated in natural stratigraphic zones. The site evidenced heavy plowing and other disturbances, not identified in the testing by Brockington et al. (1987). Additional disturbances to the site may have occurred when overburden was placed in the area during golf course construction. Since 38CH173 had been plowed to the subsoil, the units were removed as one zone. The plowzone consisted of a very dark grayish brown (10YR3/2) soil intermixed with plowed shell midden. Artifacts consisted of prehistoric pottery dating from the Early Woodland Period to the Mississippian Period.

Stains in the subsoil indicated that not only had the site been extensively disturbed

by plowing, but also by equipment probably associated with the construction of the pond or marina in the middle of the site. These stains included rectangular gouges with clear, sharp edges, possibly made by a backhoe. One intact feature was encountered in controlled excavations. This feature represents a shell pit. The feature was bowl shaped with clear edges and had a maximum width of 3.40 feet and an estimated maximum length of 3.60 feet. The shell filled pit extended 1.09 feet below the base of Zone 1 excavations. Artifacts consisted of Thom's Creek, Deptford, and Savannah sherds. No bone or charcoal was obtained in ⅛-inch dry screening. Based on the ceramic assemblage, the feature dates to the Savannah phase.

In several small areas a thin lens of shell was encountered. The lens was generally 0.1 foot in thickness and appears to represent the basal remnants of heavily plowed middens.

All soil was sifted through ¼-inch mesh and artifacts were bagged by unit quadrant (e.g. SE quadrant of 100R100). Shell was weighed and discarded in the field, although a sample of left oyster valves was collected for analysis by our shellfish consultant, Dr. David Lawrence. Soil samples were also collected from each unit. Flotation samples were taken from features. Units were troweled, drawn, and photographed at the base of excavations.

At the conclusion of excavations the site was mechanically stripped to reveal any other intact features or stains. Most of the area contained either no stains or only plowscars. However, the northwestern portion of the stripped area revealed a number of stains including trees, plowscars, and possible posts (Figure 4). Five stains were identified as possible posts; four of which cluster in the extreme eastern portion of the stripped area. They form a roughly semicircular pattern, with the average post spacing at about three feet. These stains were plotted and photographed; based on the scope of work, none were excavated.

Excavations at 38CH175

The work at 38CH175 involved the excavation of three 10-foot units and one 5 by 10 foot unit placed contiguously to better examine midden profiles (Figure 5). The site grid, established with magnetic north, was tied into a temporary benchmark (a nail in the base of a tree). Vertical control was maintained, through the use of the Southeastern Surveying elevation point (9.28 feet MSL) located adjacent to 38CH173.

Units were excavated using a combination of natural zones with arbitrary levels. Zone 1 consisted of the humus layer of very dark gray brown soil (10YR3/2) containing historic remains and varied in depth from 0.1 to 0.3 feet. Zone 2 consisted of very dark gray brown (10YR3/2) midden soils, generally removed in four arbitrary 0.5 foot levels. Zone 2 soils varied from 1.1 to 1.8 feet in depth. The top two levels of Zone 2 had been badly disturbed by historic occupation which exhibited itself in the form of badly crushed midden and historic materials into Zone 2, level 2. Zone 3 represented a transition from midden to subsoil and contained yellow brown (10YR5/6) soil with shell. This zone was removed in

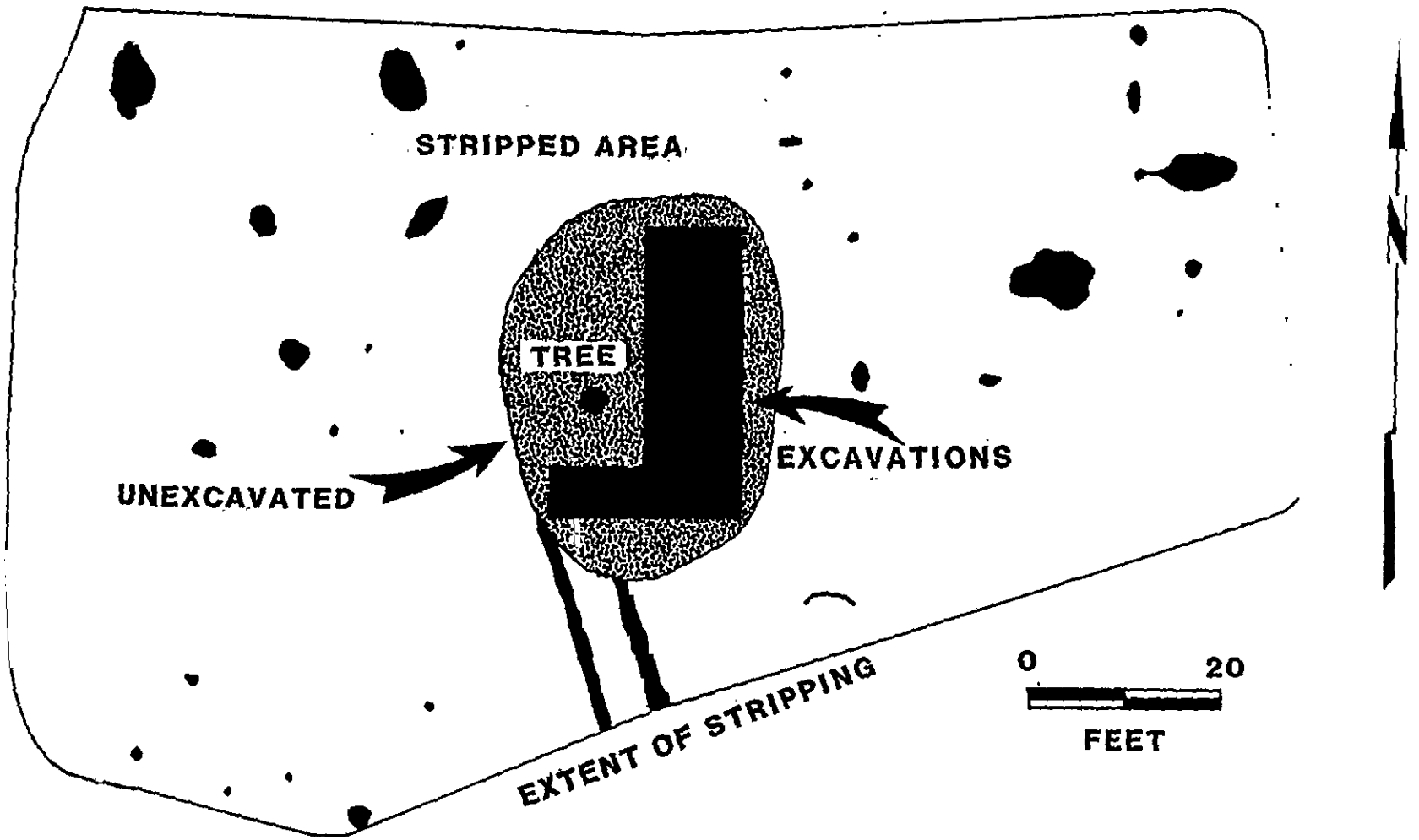


Figure 4. Location of excavation units and stripped area at 38CH175.

one level and varied in depth from 0.1 to 0.6 feet. Subsoil consisted of yellow brown sand.

After the first two ten foot units were excavated, it was decided that the disturbed midden layer would be removed and not screened since the material could not yield any reliable stratigraphic information. Crushing was evident in the midden profile and the prehistoric artifacts were generally very small. In addition, historic artifacts were found to a maximum depth of 1.3 feet. The samples obtained from the first two units were believed to give an adequate representation of this portion of the site.

Prehistoric artifacts were almost exclusively Thom's Creek pottery. A few lithic flakes and one hafted projectile point were also recovered. The disturbed zone contained a mixture of prehistoric and historic remains. The historic remains dated primarily to the twentieth century. A surface collection was made along the creek shore. Here, Thom's Creek pottery was recovered as well as one artifact which may date to the Civil War period. This artifact appeared to be a 9 pound, ca. 4½-inch shell (see Dickey and George 1980:32-38). This artifact was observed, but not collected because of its badly deteriorated condition. In addition, these items have a black powder charge which is unstable; proper conservation and defusing would have been too involved for a surface artifact.

All non-midden soils were screened through ¼-inch mesh. Midden soils were dry screened through ⅛-inch mesh. Because the top foot of midden was disturbed at 38CH175, only the lower portions of the midden exhibited evidence of individual dumping episodes. There were two clear examples and it was in these areas where shell columns were obtained and waterscreening was performed. Shell columns, measuring 2.25 by 2.25 feet (or approximately 5% of the unit) were removed from the areas which exhibited the best integrity. After dry screening, portions of these columns were waterscreened to obtain samples of materials not evident in dry screening. Although faunal and ethnobotanical materials were sparse, waterscreening allowed us to obtain evidence of fish and hickory nut in the diet of the site occupants. Soil samples were obtained from each level. Also, soil from features was collected for flotation. Units were troweled, drawn, and photographed at the base of excavations.

At the conclusion of excavations the area of the site determined by Brockington et al. (1987) to have the highest integrity was stripped to reveal additional features or stains (Figure 5). A number of stains were revealed including tree stains, possible shell pits, low midden areas, and an old road bed. Five of these stains were identified as possible shell pits because of their regular shape as opposed to the irregular, amorphous shape of tree stains. The majority of them were located in the northwestern portion of the stripped area. Two possible posts were also identified which were located about 35 feet from each other. Several of the stains uncovered in stripping were areas of low midden. This was determined through shovel shaving to determine if features exhibited depth. No areas were identified which clearly indicated structural remains. None of these stains were excavated.

Interestingly, the historic disturbance was surprisingly deep in the southern portion

of the stripped area where an old road bed was found extending into subsoil. One other historic period feature was encountered. Based on the presence of large amounts of charred wood and burnt sand, the feature appears to represent an area where trash or brush was burned.

Excavations revealed one cultural feature. This feature consisted of a shallow shell pit in the eastern wall of 260R200. Another large stain was identified in 260-270R200, but upon excavation it was evident that it represented tree disturbance. This conclusion was based on its irregular form, the large number roots in the area, the presence of burnt soil and wood, and the irregularity of its base.

Field notes were prepared on pH neutral, alkaline buffered paper and photographic materials are being processed to archival standards. All original field notes, with archival copies will be curated at the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology.

Interpretations

These investigations have explored a relatively small percentage of sites 38CH173 and 38CH175. Approximately 0.4% of 38CH173 and 0.3% of 38CH175 was explored by formal excavations, while site stripping examined approximately 9.5% of 38CH173 and 10.6% of 38CH175.

Excavations at 38CH173 indicated that the site has been heavily disturbed by plowing and, possibly, excavation for the adjacent pond. The pottery indicates that the site was occupied from the Early Woodland through the Mississippian periods. One clear feature was encountered during regular excavations. This feature represents a shell pit. Stripping of the site located a number of both natural and cultural features, primarily plowscars, tree and root disturbances, and possible postholes. These stains were encountered primarily in the eastern portion of the stripped area, adjacent to the pond.

38CH173 was occupied by a number of different groups of people, although the pottery suggests it was most intensively used during the Middle and Late Woodland periods. In fact, the pit featured excavated from 38CH173 yielded Savannah, Deptford, and Thom's Creek pottery. No clear evidence was encountered for structures (since features encountered during stripping were not excavated), although five possible posts were located during stripping.

Excavations at 38CH175 indicated that the top one foot of midden has been heavily disturbed by historic period occupation. The prehistoric pottery recovered in the excavations is primarily Thom's Creek. One feature was encountered which was a shallow shell pit. Stripping located a number of other features consisting primarily of tree and root stains, possible shell pits, low midden areas, possible posts, and historic features.

Brockington et al. (1987) suggested that 38CH175 may represent a shell ring based

on minor topographic details and midden arrangement noted during the survey. Shell rings normally exhibit a preserved humic zone, since the shell is deposited quickly as opposed to over a long period of time. Shell rings also exhibit a wide diversity of artifacts including pottery, lithics, and bone and shell tools (see Trinkley 1980:166). The vast majority of artifacts at 38CH175 consisted of pottery, with a very minor amount of lithics contributing to the assemblage. No bone or shell tools were recovered, although small amounts of antler were found. The soil profile does not exhibit a "pre-ring humus" common to shell ring sites. Therefore, 38CH175 does not represent a shell ring. Rather, it probably represents a seasonal camp since the shell was deposited slowly over a period of many years. Also, the artifacts are not diverse, suggesting that fairly limited activities took place there.

Unlike 38CH175, data recovery at the Thom's Creek period Bass Pond site (38CH124) on Kiawah Island, yielded a wide variety of remains including pottery, lithics, bone and shell tools, impressive amounts of faunal and ethnobotanical remains, as well as coprolitic material. The conclusion, based on the food remains, was that this site was primarily used during the fall and winter, and represents a seasonally permanent base camp (Trinkley 1993). Although evidence of fall and winter food remains (eg. nutshell and deer antler) exist at 38CH175, these remains are few in comparison to the Bass Pond site. Shellfish analyses may indicate that the site was used primarily during the spring or summer months. The absence of a diverse artifact assemblage at 38CH175 suggests that the site was used for relatively short periods of time over a number of years. This would result in the dense midden with little artifact diversity.

Sources Cited

Brockington, Paul E., C.T. Espenshade, L.F. Stine, and R.S. Stine
1987 *Archaeological Survey of the Morgan's Pointe Tract, Charleston County, South Carolina*. Brockington and Associates, Inc., Atlanta, Georgia.

Dickey, Thomas S. and Peter C. George
1980 *Field Artilery Projectiles of the American Civil War*. Arsenal Press, Atlanta.

Trinkley, Michael
1980 *Investigation of the Woodland Period Along the South Carolina Coast*. Department of Anthropology, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Trinkley, Michael (editor)
1993 *The History and Archaeology of Kiawah Island, Charleston County, South Carolina*. Chicora Foundation Research Series 30. Chicora Foundation, Inc., Columbia, South Carolina, in press.

Trinkley, Michael and Jacqueline Carter
1975 *Preliminary Survey of the Charleston County, South Carolina Coastline.* Paper presented at the First Annual Conference on South Carolina Archaeology, Archaeological Society of South Carolina, Inc., Columbia, S.C.