Archaic of the Savannah River:
A History of Research from 1773 to 1993

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Report Number 109*

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PREFACE

This publication is a slightly revised version of a manuscript prepared in 1993 for a symposium on Archaic studies in South Carolina. Many of the papers in that symposium were published as a volume of contributed papers, but this paper was not included in that volume. It is presented here with only minor grammatical corrections.

INTRODUCTION

The history of Archaic research in the Savannah River valley is a tragic comedy. It is a story of excavations unpublished and sites plundered or destroyed by giant reservoirs. The problems that plague this data set would fill a book, yet it has become one of the most intriguing research subjects in southeastern archaeology. The Savannah River valley was selected for study for several reasons. From a practical standpoint the region suffers from a poor understanding of previous work conducted there and a synthesis of research in the region serves as an important research aid. The Savannah River valley is central to any study of evolving technologies among North American aboriginal cultures, particular for studies of cooking technology, food storage, and the development of the ceramic arts. The earliest pottery identified thus far in North America is from the Savannah River valley, and many sites in the region have yielded clues to the refinement and spread of pottery. In some cases, early pottery sites in the Savannah River valley have been destroyed and our only information about these sites comes from early excavations. It is important to develop a context for interpreting and maximizing the results of these early studies rather than to discount them as "bad archaeology".

This presentation is based on a search of records prior to 1993, pertaining to the Savannah River region at the University of Georgia, Athens; University of South Carolina, Columbia; National Park Service's Southeast Archeological Center (SEAC), Tallahassee; and the Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. All available published literature from the region was examined and the brains of my colleagues were picked. Because so many of the surveys and excavations of Middle and Late Archaic sites are not well reported, some primary research on older collections was necessary.

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF MIDDLE AND LATE ARCHAIC RESEARCH IN THE SAVANNAH RIVER VALLEY

The developmental history of Archaic period archaeological research in the Savannah River valley roughly parallels that of modern American archaeology and the developmental scheme offered by Gordon Willey and Jeremy Sabloff in their history of the discipline (1974). Their scheme was chosen because it is corroborated by historical developments in the archaeology of the Savannah River region. While slight differences were observed in the timing of the developmental periods compared to Willey and Sabloff's dates, the overall research trends were
very similar. Since the publication of their volume, archaeology began a shift in paradigms, and entered new ground in the history of the discipline.

**Age of Discovery**

It begins with an age of discovery, or the Classificatory–Descriptive Period, which Willey and Sabloff place from 1840 to 1914. On the Savannah River it was slightly later, from 1855 to 1935. There were four key players on the Savannah River who dealt with Middle and Late Archaic sites during this period: C.C. Jones, Roland Steiner, C. B. Moore, and William Claflin. Aside from their common love for archaeology, these four shared a common trait—they were wealthy and had a lot of free time!

International attention was drawn to this region following the Civil War by the work of Charles C. Jones, Jr., who was a pioneer in the field of archaeology and a contemporary of Ephraim Squire and other early archaeological explorers. Jones wore many hats: he was the son of a south Georgia preacher, a husband and father, a Confederate officer and veterans' advocate, a world renowned student of history and archaeology, a relic collector, a prolific author, a politician, and a New York lawyer. His writings relating to the Savannah River include several books and journal articles (Jones 1861, 1873, 1880). Jones conducted surface collections and made extensive excavations at Stallings Island, and possibly excavated at other sites in the region such as Price's Island and the Great Kiokee Creek shell midden.

Despite his publication record, few artifacts or other records pertaining to his specific sites in the Savannah River valley were located during a recent search by this author. A collection of artifacts collected by Jones found their way into the Smithsonian Institution's collection through direct donation by Jones, indirect donation by way of former Smithsonian curator, Charles Rau, and through purchase following Jones' death (The American Museum Journal, Volume 1:1900-1901). My preliminary search of the Smithsonian's current holdings indicate that this collection has greatly dwindled in size through the years. As of 1968, portions of Jones' collection were in possession of the Claflin family in Belmont, Massachusetts (Williams 1977). Other material collected by Jones formerly in the Heye Museum now may be in dead storage in Washington, D.C. The portion of Jones' collection that was examined for this study at the Smithsonian Institution includes Late Archaic pottery, projectile points, soapstone, and shell beads from Stalling's Island and Price's Island. The primary contribution of C. C. Jones to the Savannah River Archaic, however lies not in the quality of his fieldwork or in well provenienced collections, but in the attention to the region his work created for subsequent scholars.

Roland Steiner is one of the lesser known figures in early research in the Savannah River valley, but he conducted extensive fieldwork in the region. Steiner was born into a wealthy family in 1839 or 1840 in Burke County, Georgia and he died in 1906. He was awarded a medical degree in 1864 from the Medical College of Georgia in Augusta, but did not work as a doctor. Steiner was an avid collector whose 78,000+ artifacts were purchased by the Smithsonian Institution at the turn of the century. Steiner's collection includes more than 20,000 artifacts from the central Savannah River region in Columbia County. A large portion of these came from four specific localities on Big Kiokee Creek, areas that have significant Middle and Late Archaic components. His writings consist of one short article about the Kiokee Creek site and a chapter in Warren K. Moorehead's *Prehistoric Implements* (Steiner 1899; Steiner 1900). While his published record is
scant, Steiner was a prolific letter writer (Steiner 1892-1905). Each of his artifact shipments to the Smithsonian was accompanied by lengthy letters that provided maps and descriptions, and other details pertaining to the collections. In these letters Steiner described his excavation at the Kiokkee Creek shell midden, and included a map of the Kiokkee Creek region. Steiner's collection at the Smithsonian is largely unanalyzed and awaits research.

C. B. Moore, and the crew of his paddle wheeler *Gopher*, plied many of the navigable rivers of the southeast for aboriginal remains, mostly dating to the Woodland and Mississippian periods. An account of his trip up the Savannah River was published, but it includes no discussion of Archaic sites other than to mention the chert quarries at Stony Bluff, where he made a small collection (Moore 1898). Moore was more interested in burial mounds from the Woodland and Mississippian periods that contained complete pots and other exotic items. Fortunately, the *Gopher* was unable to negotiate the shoals that separated him from Stallings Island. It does not appear that Moore gathered any significant amounts of Archaic material on his voyage.

William Claflin's excavations at Stallings Island, later aided by the Peabody Museum and the husband and wife Cosgrove team, were extensive and the report on this effort served for several decades as the type site report for the Savannah River Late Archaic (Claflin 1931). He also conducted informal survey of other shell midden sites in the surrounding region during his early years. The Peabody Museum contains the materials gathered by Claflin from Stallings Island. A small collection, attributed to Claflin's earlier excavations, found their way into private hands, and finally to the University of South Carolina (Sassaman and Lewis 1990). Chester DePratter, a later excavator at Stallings Island, considers that many of the artifacts unearthed by Claflin were left at the edge of the excavation pit (Chester B. DePratter, personal communication 1993).

**Historical Descriptive Era**

The Classificatory–Historical Period, defined by Willey and Sabloff, dates from 1914 to 1960, but for the Savannah River Archaic it was more like 1936 to 1960. During this period there was concern for chronology and the cultural sequence revealed through stratigraphy. It was a time when researchers focused on ceramic complexes and pottery typology, while Middle Archaic and preceramic Late Archaic assemblages received little attention in the Savannah River valley.

The 1930s were a time of rapid development for the discipline of archaeology in North America, boosted primarily by Roosevelt's new deal. Major milestones in the development of archaeology as a discipline elsewhere in the country were the Pecos Conference in 1927; the McKern Classification system in 1935; and later Gordon Willey's *Prehistoric Settlement Patterns in the Virú Valley* (1953); Walter Libby's application of radiocarbon dating in the 1950s; Willey and Phillip Phillip's *Method and Theory in American Archaeology* (1958); Joseph Caldwell's *Trend and Tradition in the Prehistory of the Eastern United States* (1958); Willey's summary of southeastern archaeology (1966); and James Ford's study of formative cultures (1969).

In the southeastern states, the formation of the Society for Georgia Archaeology (SGA) and the Southeastern Archaeological Conference during the 1930s focused scholarly attention on the archaeology of the region. Woodland and Mississippian sites near Macon and Savannah were the main focus of this research (Caldwell and McCann 1941; Caldwell and Waring 1977; DePratter 1991; Kelly 1938; Waring 1977a-e; Williams 1977). The excavations at Bilbo mound,
Dulany mound, and the Refuge site were exceptions, but these excavations were not reported until years later. Bilbo, a shell mound near Savannah River excavated in 1939 or 1940, yielded some of the first radiocarbon dates for the Late Archaic period (Waring 1977a). William Haag returned to the site to conduct additional excavations in 1957 as part of the Atlantic Coastal Survey, which were described in a thesis by David Dye (1976). Another shell site near Bilbo, the Dulany site, was first excavated by Antonio J. Waring, Jr. Lewis Larson conducted additional excavations prior to 1968, but these have not been reported (Williams 1977).

Robert Wauchope's WPA survey and excavation of northern Georgia, finally published in 1966, barely touched on Savannah River valley (Wauchope 1966). The bulk of Wauchope's collection was apparently discarded, but a small type collection remains at Tulane University, in New Orleans. The most pertinent site was Price's Island, an important Late Archaic midden site later flooded by Clark Hill Lake.

Joseph Caldwell and Antonio J. Waring, Jr. made a large collection of artifacts from the surface of Stallings Island during the late 1930s (Williams 1977). In 1940, two WPA archaeologists, Myers (first name unknown) and Charles Fairbanks, led successive excavations at Stallings Island resulting in a published trait list, but little else (Fairbanks 1942). The primary shortcoming with the WPA investigations, and other projects prior to the mid 1970s, was the lack of adequate reporting. Other details of the WPA work at Stallings Island were found in unpublished field notes at the Park Service's Southeast Archaeological Center in Tallahassee and the artifacts from the WPA work are housed at Ocmulgee National monument in Macon, Georgia (Fairbanks 1940; Myers 1940). In reviewing Myers and Fairbank's field notes, it is apparent that they exposed a probable Late Archaic pit house, possibly similar to that described by Jerald Ledbetter at the Mill Creek Site in Warren County, Georgia (Ledbetter 1991). With the apparent loss of excavation plans and site maps from the WPA work, however, only a sketchy reconstruction is possible. Myers describes the house, of which one quarter was excavated, as a saucer shaped structure with red clay walls. The Stallings Island pottery types were formally defined in 1950 by William Sears and James B. Griffin (1950).

Survey and excavation at lakes Hartwell and Strom Thurmond (Clark Hill) by Carl Miller and Joseph Caldwell were conducted as part of the Smithsonian Institution's River Basin Survey during the 1950s (Caldwell n.d., 1952, 1954, 1974a, 1974b; Miller 1949, 1974). Miller's test excavations at Lake Springs in 1948 were documented in his American Antiquity article (1949) and his river basin surveys of Hartwell and Clark Hill reservoirs are recorded in unpublished preliminary reports. Clark Hill yielded a significant amount of data on the Middle and Late Archaic, while Hartwell yielded almost none. Recent examination of 205 archaeological sites recorded by Miller in these two lakes revealed large numbers of Middle Archaic and Late Archaic components (Elliott 1993). Joseph Caldwell returned to the Lake Springs site in 1951 and conducted large block excavations. There he defined the Old Quartz culture, but no formal description of his excavations was made and the artifacts have not been located (Caldwell 1954, n.d.; Johnson 1984). Caldwell's excavation plan was recently reconstructed by Elliott from field notes on file at the University of Georgia.

Survey of the intermediate area between Lake Hartwell and Clark Hill Lake, an area that later became Lake Russell, also was instigated in the 1950s and 1960s, but this project was not to be completed until the late 1980s (Anderson and Joseph 1988; Gaines 1955; Hemmings 1970; Hutto 1970; Midgett 1968). Construction of the three Army Corps of Engineer's reservoirs (Hartwell,
Russell, and Clark Hill/Thurmond) had an overwhelming impact on Archaic resources in the region, and the scale of this impact has yet to be assessed.

The Rise of the Boy Scientists

Willey and Sabloff name their next developmental period the Explanatory Period, which began in 1960 and was still going when their book was published in 1974. It was billed as the "New Archaeology" with Lewis Binford as the flagbearer of the processual school (Binford and Binford 1968).

Research on the Archaic in the Savannah River Valley during this period was erratic, poorly documented, lacking in research direction, and generally substandard. William Edwards of the University of South Carolina apparently conducted surface reconnaissance and made three test pit excavations at Stallings Island in the early 1960s, but documentation is limited (Anonymous 1961; Gardner 1970). Edward's 1966 excavations at the Theriault site also went unreported until years later, when they were reconstructed by Paul Brockington (1971). Gordon Midgett's excavations at Theriault during the late 1960s are totally undescribed and exist only as southeastern archaeological folklore. David Hally's work at the Chennault site in Lincoln County, a small Late Archaic midden site without freshwater mussel shells, done in 1968, is unpublished. Limited work was conducted at the Hammond Mound site in Aiken County, a site with a Late Archaic midden during 1969 and 1970 (Garrow 1971; Lewis 1989). Exploits at Fennell Hill (also known as the Cox site) in Allendale County, South Carolina and various sites in lower Savannah region such as the Sweetheart Mound site are poorly described (Trinkley 1975).

George Lewis and other avocational archaeologists with the Augusta Archaeological Society conducted numerous surveys and excavations in the central Savannah River area. Their efforts were particularly useful in identifying Archaic sites along the Bobby Jones Expressway route south and east of Augusta [see the History of Augusta Archaeological Society by Lewis (1989)]. Members of the Augusta Society also participated in excavations, led by Donald Cruose, at the Stallings Island mound site as part of his dissertation research on early fiber-tempered pottery (Cruose 1972; Cruose and DePratter 1976; Chester B. DePratter personal communication, 1993). Cruose's excavations at Stallings Island and coastal shell middens are briefly described in a summary article, but unfortunately no site plan of his work has been published (Cruose and DePratter 1976). A portion of the artifacts from Cruose's study are at the University of Georgia, although the pottery seems to be missing (Kenneth A. Sassaman personal communication January, 1991). Earlier amateur excavations at Stallings Island by Bruce Greene were reported by Ripley Bullen (Bullen 1961; Bullen and Greene 1970). A portion of Greene's collection, mostly ceramics, is curated in the University of Florida in Gainesville, but the location of the lithic artifacts is not known.

Researchers from the University of North Carolina began to take an active interest in the Savannah River region. Joffre L. Coe excavated and documented several stratified Archaic sites in North Carolina creating a cultural sequence that has proven to be remarkably accurate including Stanly, Morrow Mountain, Guilford, and Savannah River (Coe 1952, 1964). One of Coe's students, Richard Smith, conducted survey and test excavation at numerous sites in the central Savannah River area in 1970. Smith's excavations at the Uchee Creek site yielded three
radiocarbon dates for the Late Archaic period. Smith also defined the Kiokee Creek Stemmed point for the region. His unfinished dissertation research has remained obscure (1974). Another of Coe's students, Michael Trinkley, conducted excavations at the Love Site in Allendale County, South Carolina. This Late Archaic site was one of the first interriverine sites in the South Carolina coastal plain to be tested (Trinkley 1974).

Some of the most solid research conducted during this period was by Stoltman and other Harvard University students at the Groton Plantation in the lower interior coastal plain of South Carolina. Radiocarbon dates from the shell midden at the Rabbit Mount site that were associated with Stallings Island Plain pottery were the earliest returned thus far for North America, and their validity continues to spark discussion in the region (Stoltman 1966, 1972, 1974). Based on his work at Groton, Stoltman presented a cultural sequence for the Late Archaic period for the Savannah River region. Drexel Peterson elaborated Stoltman's sequence, but Peterson's terminology has been largely ignored by the professional community, because the phase sequences were ill-founded (Peterson 1971).

Thoms Creek wares, named after a site located in the Santee River system near Columbia, South Carolina, resemble Stallings Island pottery in thickness and decorative treatment, but differ in temper and vessel form. Thoms Creek pottery was defined earlier from sites east of the Savannah River area by James B. Griffin (1945), Eugene Waddell (1963), and Jim Michie (1969), but it was during this period that the ware was recognized in the Savannah River region. David Phelps and Rebecca Burgess conducted excavations from 1963 to 1965 at Whites Mound (9RI4), a Late Archaic midden site below Augusta, but no detailed site report was written (Olsen 1970; Phelps 1964; Phelps and Burgess 1965). Phelps' research expanded the known range of Thoms Creek into the upper coastal plain (1968). David Anderson mapped the distribution of Thoms Creek and Stallings Island pottery in South Carolina in an ambitious attempt to define the horizontal extent of these cultural markers, but his study stopped at the state line (Anderson 1975, 1980).

The "Modern Age" of Archaeology

The modern age is where we find ourselves now, but it is only modern in chronological terms. For the most part southeastern archaeologists continue to dig with shovels and other archaic implements and to wander through the hell forsaken swamps without the benefit of modern, and increasingly affordable global positioning (GPS) and geographical information systems (GIS) technology. The Modern period can be divided into Early and Late Modern, loosely corresponding to the amount of financial support that was available for research. The onset of the modern age occurred sometime around 1978. New cultural resource legislation in the mid 1970s led to a rapid increase in the number of archaeologists, cultural resource management (CRM) firms, archaeological surveys, and archaeological excavation dubbed the CRM era. One of the most significant differences between this and earlier periods is that researchers were being forced to look for sites in localities that were previously unthought of; that is, areas away from major river floodplains. This resulted in a completely different picture of site variability during the Middle and Late Archaic periods. Since CRM archaeologists were mandated to describe all sites, not just the Woodland and Mississippian sites containing pottery, a whole new research universe was opened up.
The intensity of survey became increasingly rigorous through time, and there is a great deal of variability evident in the quality of this early CRM work. See, for example, differences in survey methodology employed in the Richard B. Russell Lake project (Anderson et al. 1993; Elliott and Blanton 1985; Fish and Gresham 1990; Gardner et al. 1983; Hemmings 1970; Hutto 1970; Taylor and Smith 1978). Anderson and Joseph (1988) provide a good summary of Richard B. Russell archaeology, which included excavations of several important Archaic sites. Early CRM surveys in South Carolina such as the Laurens-Anderson and I-77 highway surveys introduced a rigor into surveying for sites in the region, and these early studies began to demonstrate the density of upland Archaic sites in the Savannah River drainage basin (Goodyear et al. 1979; House and Ballenger 1976). Since 1980, survey coverage in the region has expanded greatly, principally the result of compliance surveys on the U.S.D.A. National Forests; the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site; and U.S. Army's Fort Gordon Reservation. The trend has continued to the present resulting in several thousand previously unknown Archaic sites and tens of thousands of acres surveyed. A recent summary of research on the Savannah River Site has been prepared, and a synthesis of the U.S.D.A. Sumter National Forest is in progress. The rate at which new site data accumulates with CRM-mandated inventory, however, will soon make these synthesis outdated (Sassaman et al. 1990).

Studies of specific Archaic sites in the region also expanded during the late 1970s and 1980s. Rowe Bowen's survey and excavation at 9Ri(DOT)3 and the Lover's Lane site was among the first reported examinations of a non-shell Late Archaic site in the Augusta area (1978). Later excavations at the Lover's Lane (9RI86), Augusta Levee (9RI88), and Taylor Hill (9RI89) provided a better understanding of Archaic settlement in the fall zone section of the valley (Elliott and Doyon 1981; Ferguson and Widmer 1976).

Another example of an Archaic site excavated early in the Modern Age is the Moody Site. The Moody Site is an anomaly, located on a heavily dissected ridge top in the lower piedmont uplands of Edgefield County, South Carolina. The nearest stream to the Moody site is some distance and is a mere trickle. The site, however, contained an abundant and diverse deposit of Late Archaic artifacts including stemmed points, drills, atlatl weights, and soapstone perforated slabs. The site was excavated by members of the Archaeological Society of South Carolina and two papers were presented describing the site (Beard and Moody 1979; Moody et al. 1985).

The Richard B. Russell Reservoir project, directed by the National Park Service, resulted in major advances in Archaic research in the valley. The lack of coordination between the dozens of excavation teams including a large number of universities and private companies created a situation somewhat analogous to the construction of the Tower of Babel. Survey and testing by Thunderbird Research, Inc., as well as geomorphological, palynological, and pedological studies of the river valley should have set the stage for an excellent research project. Unfortunately, the results of these studies were not available to the archaeological teams until after the excavations were completed and the lake waters were rising. Consequently, this information was not used to intelligently select areas for excavation [See Anderson and Joseph 1988 for a thorough review of Russell Reservoir research].

Gilbert Commonwealth conducted excavations of several Late Archaic sites, the most noteworthy was the Rocky River site (Anderson and Schuldenrein 1985; Anderson et al. 1985). Other significant excavations of Archaic sites include work by the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology at Gregg Shoals (Tippitt and Marquardt 1984). Excavations at
Sara's Ridge in Anderson County, South Carolina, revealed evidence of a Late Archaic structure and associated activity areas, and provided radiocarbon dates (Wood et al. 1986). Excavations at Paris Island in Elbert County, Georgia produced an artifact rich midden from the Late Archaic period that suggested incipient craft specialization in the manufacture of soapstone perforated slabs. The Paris Island stemmed point was a medium sized stemmed point identified in an aceramic Late Archaic midden deposit at the Paris Island site (Whatley 1985; Wood et al. 1986).

An Archaic soapstone bowl industry extended the full length of the eastern seaboard from Labrador to Alabama. Aboriginal bowl quarries captured the curiosity of researchers during the latter half of the nineteenth century and there was a flurry of research articles describing quarries in various states. None of these, however, were in the Savannah River valley. Significant studies on soapstone bowls were produced by William Henry Holmes (1897), David Bushnell (1939), and others (Dickens and Carnes 1974; Elliott 1981, 1986; Ferguson 1976). Delineating the age range of the soapstone bowl industry has proven more elusive. Only one radiocarbon date even remotely associated with soapstone bowls has been obtained from the Savannah River valley (Anderson and Joseph 1988:181), and Elliott and Sassaman have observed that most of the excavated Late Archaic sites, such as Stallings Island, Lake Springs, and others, either did not yield soapstone bowls or yielded them in extremely low frequency and in poor context.

Perforated soapstone slabs were recognized as a distinctive artifact type in the Savannah River valley early on. C. C. Jones illustrates examples that he collected from Late Archaic sites in his 1873 monograph. Long considered to be fishing net weights, or netsinkers, repeated finding of this tool type in cooking features during the past two decades led to a general consensus that these items functioned as cooking stones. Regardless of function, this tool type appears to be a sensitive Late Archaic marker and recent studies by Elliott and Sassaman have recognized the importance of this artifact type in Late Archaic research (Elliott and Doyon 1981; Elliott et al. 1993, 1994; Sassaman 1993).

Late Archaic soapstone quarry sites have been identified in Columbia, Elbert, and Wilkes counties, Georgia and Oconee County, South Carolina (James Bates, personal communication 1993; Elliott 1984; Elliott and Doyon 1981; Wauchope 1966; Wood et al. 1986). The quarry sites are found in both riverine and interriverine settings, but no detailed descriptions are available for any of these sites. A pilot study employing neutron activation analysis was conducted by Southeastern Wildlife Services, Inc. using materials collected from soapstone quarries in Elbert and Columbia counties, Georgia and soapstone artifacts from Sara's Ridge, Paris Island, and the Lover's Lane site in Augusta. Subsequent research also has identified soapstone quarries in Banks County, Georgia and Oconee County, South Carolina (Jerry Lilly, personal communication 1993).

Other significant research by Sassaman and other members of the Savannah River Archaeological Research Program has been conducted at the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site including excavations at the Pen Point, Lewis-East, and Tinker Creek sites. The results of this work was summarized recently (Brooks and Sassaman 1990; Hanson 1982; Sassaman et al. 1990).

Interest in the Stallings Island shell midden sites has continued through this period, as vandals and developers work to blot out the last vestiges of this cultural manifestation. Excavations were conducted at Mims Point, a Middle and Late Archaic site in Edgefield County, South Carolina.
by Elliott (1984b) and followed by Sassaman (1993b). Lisa O'Steen's zooarchaeological analysis of the Mims Point faunal assemblage, followed by Weinand's analysis of faunal material from Crusoe and DePratter's excavations at Stallings Island provide the first hard data on Late Archaic faunal use from the region (Weinand 1992). Sassaman also directed salvage excavations at Midden Point, a heavily looted Late Archaic site in Burke County, Georgia, and work has continued on this site under the direction of Steve Hale and Georgia Southern University (Hale 1993; Sassaman 1991b).

Numerous studies were done on the Brier Creek drainage in Georgia, the site of the earlier ill-fated Theriault excavations. Survey, testing, and data recovery excavations during the mid 1980s by Garrow & Associates, Inc. for the Georgia Power Company were conducted during the mid 1980s at a series of buried sites along Brier Creek (Elliott 1986a; Elliott and O'Steen 1987; Espenshade 1986; Garrow 1984; Wise 1986). Although each excavation area was given a separate site number, the loci were surprisingly consistent in content, feature preservation, stratigraphy, and integrity so as to be considered one continuous site separated only by minor drainages. These sites were important for defining Middle and Late Archaic chert reduction strategies for the Brier Creek region. The stretch of the Brier Creek terrace, near its confluence with the Savannah River, experienced peak use during the Middle and Late Archaic periods, as evidenced by discarded stone debitage. While none of the Georgia Power Company excavations were located directly on chert quarries, there was considerable intermediate stage reduction debris present. Several Middle and Late Archaic radiocarbon dates were obtained from the sites. The sparseness of features, low frequency of diagnostic artifacts, extensively bioturbated character of the loose sand deposits, and stifling sampling restrictions reduced the value of these excavations somewhat, but they constitute significant block excavations in the interior coastal plain of Georgia (Elliott and O'Steen 1987).

Goodyear and his colleagues conducted a survey of chert quarries in the Brier Creek region and in neighboring parts of South Carolina's interior coastal plain (Goodyear et al. 1984). Their work, as well as earlier work by Goad, was critical in identifying the lithic source areas that were extremely important during the Archaic period, but both studies are merely reconnaissance level studies (Goad 1979).

A number of graduate studies were generated during this period that attempted to make sense of the large amounts of data created by CRM studies. John White's M.A. thesis examined Late Archaic settlement in South Carolina (1982). Dennis Blanton's (1983) and Kenneth Sassaman's (1983) theses dealt with Middle and Late Archaic settlement in South Carolina (Blanton 1983; Sassaman 1983). Michael Alterman's dissertation attempted to define the Late Archaic on the upper Savannah River, and he argued against the use of certain projectile point typologies based on his examination of selected projectile point assemblages (1987). Stephen Savage's (1989) thesis dealt with Late Archaic landscapes, although well founded criticism of inadequacies of his study can be found in a review by Rafferty (Anderson 1989; Rafferty 1992). Savage's study is a good example of the misapplication of GIS technology to archaeological data. Sassaman's recently published dissertation research examines the evolution of early cooking technologies using data from the Savannah River valley and the Georgia and South Carolina coast (1993a).

Other studies worthy of mention include projects on the shore of Clark Hill Lake (Cridlebaugh 1983; Gresham 1985, 1986; Wood and Smith 1988); Jerald Ledbetter's work in the Augusta area (Ledbetter 1988; Ledbetter and Doyon 1980); and testing on the Sumter National Forest (Elliott


Within the past five years there have been major leaps forward in Archaic period research for the region. The Rae's Creek site, a stratified site, located at the confluence of Rae's Creek and the Savannah River in Richmond County, was briefly mentioned by Wilfred Neill (1966), and data recovery was conducted there as reported by Ray Crook (1990). Crook's excavations provided the first solid radiocarbon date for the Morrow Mountain point in the Savannah River valley.

The Mill Branch site, located near the headwaters of Brier Creek in Warren County, Georgia, was a shallow upland site with features and included a well-preserved Late Archaic semi-subterranean pit house filled with refuse (Ledbetter 1991). Ledbetter's work at Mill Branch opened our eyes to the reality of Late Archaic architecture and forced a re-examination of previously excavated data. The artifacts from his excavations revealed many aspects of life in the valley circa 3,900 B.P., and were later used to help define the Mill Branch phase of the Late Archaic (Elliott et al. 1994).

The most recent major addition to the Archaic data base of the region is the Bobby Jones Expressway project, particularly the Lovers Lane and Phinizy Swamp sites (Elliott et al. 1994). Lovers Lane yielded hundreds of Late Archaic features, several house plans, and a wealth of Late Archaic material culture from a 700 year span. Phinizy Swamp contained a stratified Archaic deposit with significant remains from the Middle Archaic and Middle to Late Archaic transition.

Data on several Middle and Late Archaic point types resulted from the Bobby Jones project. The MALA point, a slightly corner notched, stemmed point was first recognized in stratigraphic sequence as a transitional Middle to Late Archaic point type by Sassaman in his excavations at the Pen Point site (1985). He noted the similarity of this type to late Middle Archaic points forms in Tennessee (e.g., White Springs, Sykes, Benton), which has also been identified in similar temporal context at the Phinizy Swamp site (Elliott et al. 1994). The Brier Creek Lanceolate point was found in Transitional Middle to Late Archaic context at the Phinizy Swamp site (Cambron and Hulse 1964; Elliott et al. 1994; Michie 1968). The Savannah River Stemmed point, a much maligned point type, was found in abundance at Lovers Lane, but only in a pre-3,750 B.P. context. The subsequent Kiokee Creek Stemmed point type was originally defined by Richard Smith, but the name was not adopted by other researchers, due in large part to the obscurity of Smith's research. It was resurrected as a useful type in excavations at the Lover's Lane site (Elliott et al. 1994; Smith 1974). Elliott and his colleagues presented a revised chronology for the Middle and Late Archaic periods of the central Savannah River region.
The differences in the way archaeological research on the Mid-Holocene developed in the Savannah River valley compared with other regions of the eastern U.S. can be traced to two primary factors, site quality and personalities of the archaeologists working the region. A third less significant factor affecting the evolutionary track of Savannah River valley Mid-Holocene research is differences in the material culture. There is considerable homogeneity in Middle and Late Archaic culture throughout the eastern Woodlands, and sites in the Savannah River valley are not extremely different from other Eastern Archaic sites. The Savannah River valley lies in the heart of the perforated soapstone slab area, and the developmental sequence of pottery is well represented (Sassaman 1993a). The soapstone bowl industry, which spans the eastern seaboard from Labrador to Alabama, is well represented in the Savannah River valley (Bushnell 1939; Wood et al. 1986). Use of copper is unknown in the Savannah River valley during the Archaic period, although use of red and yellow ochre is documented (Quimby 1960; Elliott and Doyon 1981). Cemeteries, such as those associated with the Moorehead complex in Maine, have not been identified in the Savannah River valley, although cremation burials recently have been documented (Moorehead 1922; Elliott et al. 1994).

The quality of sites in the Savannah River valley is paled by comparison to the deeply stratified alluvial sites of the Tennessee, Ohio, and Mississippi River valleys. The intensity of shell midden accumulation also was less on the Savannah River. Fewer and shallower shell middens translates to less stratigraphic separation, less recovery of burial populations, less subsistence data, and a more limited view of the material culture. Caves and rockshelters, another source of important stratigraphic deposits that have been used to define cultural sequences elsewhere in the Eastern U.S., are virtually unknown in the Savannah River valley, because of the geological conditions. These sites also have been important because they often contain organic material that is well suited to radiometric dating.

Personalities also enter into the equation of why Mid-Holocene research in the Savannah River valley was stunted during the early mid twentieth century. Researchers, such as Ripley Bullen, Joffre Coe, Madeline Kneberg Lewis, Thomas Lewis, William Ritchie, and William Webb had a keen interest in the Archaic period, and consequently, they developed the knowledge of the period more fully in the regions where they conducted research (Bullen 1961; Coe 1964; Lewis and Lewis 1961; Ritchie 1932; Webb 1974). The Savannah River valley was peripheral to their primary study areas.

There were no professional archaeologists permanently stationed in South Carolina during the period, and those employed in Georgia focused on the Woodland and Mississippian periods. While researchers in Georgia frequently encountered Archaic components in their excavations, they were considered secondary and given very little lip service in the site reports compared with finds from later periods. Even after publication of Coe's research on the Carolina cultural sequence, Archaic research in the Savannah River continued to be retarded (Coe 1964). Had professional archaeologists been more dilligent in reporting on Archaic excavations in the valley, for example, Caldwell's excavations at Lake Springs, Fairbank's excavations at Stallings Island, and Haag's excavations at Bilbo mound, this might have generated additional research interest (Caldwell 1951, 1954; Fairbanks 1942; Dye 1976). When one considers that the Savannah River
valley may contain traces of the origins of pottery technology in North American, it is quite surprising that more interest in this research was not generated at an early date. Only now is the significance of the region and its research potential being realized.

THE POSTMODERN WORLD OF SAVANNAH RIVER ARCHAIC RESEARCH

As the year A.D. 1993 draws to a close and in an atmosphere tempered by concerns for political correctness among archaeologists, gender sensitivity, burial repatriation, public archaeology, and assaults on the future of quantitative research by post-processual types, the future of Archaic research in the Savannah River valley is uncertain. The blunders, dead ends, lapses, and advances made in Archaic period research over the past 150 years reviewed in this study will, hopefully, allow archaeologists to chart a course into the next millennium. It is clear from my review, however, that there are many stories left untold about excavations dating to the Archaic period in the Savannah River valley. Perhaps by the end of the decade we can cleanse our collective closets of unpublished Archaic site reports and greet the year 2000 with a clean slate.
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