

NORTH CAROLINA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER

Intensive Survey of the Shelly Point Site (31CR53) Carteret County, North Carolina



Trench 4 profile showing midden layer, Shelly Point Site (31CR53), Carteret County, NC

The Cultural Resource Group of Louis Berger & Associates, Inc. (LBA), recently conducted an intensive archaeological survey of the Shelly Point Site (31CR53), located on the Marine Corps Auxiliary Landing Field, Bogue (MCALF Bogue), Carteret County, North Carolina. Project objectives were to establish site boundaries, identify cultural affiliation, document the integrity of archaeological deposits, and assess site potential with respect to National Register of Historic Places eligibility. The work was conducted at the request of the Wilmington District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with funds administered by the Mobile District.

The Shelly Point Site is located on the southeast-facing shoreline of Bogue Sound, within the reservation of MCALF Bogue, a facility administered by the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station, Cherry Point, North Carolina. Artifacts previously recovered from

the site, which was originally recorded by Littleton and Mattson in 1969, suggested the presence of Early, Middle, and Late Woodland as well as eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and twentieth-century historic occupations. Concern about the continuing impact of military activities and shoreline erosion on these cultural deposits prompted the survey. I served as the principal investigator while Mark Whitby performed crew chief duties. Kay Simpson was the LBA project manager and Richard Kimmel was the Wilmington District representative. Fieldwork was conducted from October 4 through 15, 1993.

The survey strategy included mechanical excavation of a series of 30 trenches, 1.7 meters in width by 5 meters in length, to a depth which exposed the surface of culturally sterile subsoil. Trenches were placed in the vicinity of the shoreline, near the tip of

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the peninsula, as well as away from the apparent shell midden. This approach, based on Mark Mathis' findings at the Broad Reach Site, was intended to identify habitation areas believed to be located beyond the midden area. Mr. Mathis also visited the site during the fieldwork and provided helpful insights on matters relating to artifact types, site patterning, and formation processes. Additionally, shovel tests were excavated in those areas where dense growth restricted machine operation. A pedestrian examination of the shoreline was also conducted.

As a result of these activities, 40 features were identified. Lithic and ceramic diagnostic materials recovered indicate the presence of Early, Middle, and Late Woodland components at Shelly Point, although artifact density suggests that the most intensive occupation occurred during the Late Woodland period. A Middle Archaic Morrow Mountain projectile point was also located, which suggests the possibility of the presence of a pre-Woodland component at the site. The paucity of artifacts predating the Woodland period occupation, however, argues against the presence of such a component. One sherd of 19th century historic ceramics was also recovered from the shoreline.

An examination of the distribution of ceramics recovered from the site indicates that greater than 60 percent of the small number of Early and Middle Woodland sherds were recovered from the shoreline while only 25 percent of the Late Woodland materials were so located. Although inconclusive, this occurrence suggests that the earlier occupations at the site may have been centered near the tip of the peninsula, and been most effected by erosion and sea level rise. No discernable concentrations of artifacts were noted relative to features, inferred structures, or postmolds.

Three features were excavated to confirm their cultural origin. The features were basin-shaped pits which contained large amounts of oyster and clam shell and faunal material associated with duck, deer, frog, box turtle, rat, possible dog, unidentified fish, unidentified bird, and unidentified small and medium mammals. Radiocarbon dates of 910 +/- 60 AD

(Beta-69589), 1120 +/- 60 AD (Beta-69588), and 1250 +/- 60 AD (Beta-69590) were derived from shell samples taken from the three features. Additionally, several large sherds of shell-tempered, plain surface, Late Woodland White Oak ware were recovered from two of the features.



Pit Feature (Feature 25) at Shelly Point Site (31CR53), Carteret County, NC

Trench excavation found evidence of intact midden deposits in several areas of the site. Also uncovered as a result of opening the trenches were 274 postmolds, many aligned in linear and rectangular patterns. Several were excavated to confirm their cultural origin. Close examination of the postmold patterns confirmed the presence of at least three prehistoric structures.

Based on the data gathered during this investigation, the Shelly Point Site (31CR53) appears to occupy the entire peninsula and, although areas of disturbance were noted, substantial portions of undisturbed midden as well as intact cultural features remain. The site is considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

William H. Reid
Louis Berger & Associates, Inc.

1994 NC State Fair

October 14 - 23

The State Fair is upon us again and, as we have in the past years, NCAS will sponsor an exhibit booth in the Kerr Scott Building. We will only have two cases this year due to the decrease in size. One case will be on the United Carolina Bank Site in New Bern (31CV183, Craven County), and the other case will be

on projectile points and other tools from various sites around North Carolina.

If you are interested in signing up to work the booth, please contact Dee Nelms @ 919-733-7342. We need your support.

Thank you.

Life In Stone

*I walked across the furrowed field, and stood where others had trod-
some mere twelve years ago, upon this very sod.*

*The ground where I was standing, cried out from another day-
when ancient man had made a life of hunting along this way.*

*I bowed my head in reverence, to those hunters and their kin-
who stood where I was standing, all wrapped in fur and skin.*

*With head bowed low, my eyes did glow, as I peered upon the ground-
for there beside me in the soil, laid a spearpoint- but not a sound.*

*Was I the first to hold in hand this treasure from the past,
who fashioned by some artison- stories it held fast?*

*Oh, by the stream, many years ago, lived a hearty kind of soul-
though none was there to pen these things, still his LIFE IN STONE is told.*

*You see, each stone he worked by hand, has a living quality-
'to those ancient hunters and their kin- I hold in DIGNITY!*

Gerald L. Johnson, Jr.

NCAS Chapters

All Chapters of the North Carolina Archaeological Society are invited to submit articles for the newsletter on your activities, meetings, etc.

We encourage you to keep the members informed of all your functions.

1994 Annual Spring Meeting

The 1994 Annual Spring Meeting held at the Archives and History building in Raleigh on April 30th was a great success with over 80 people attending.

A special thanks to our speakers Pat Garrow and Randy Daniels, and to Steve Wilhelm for his flintknapping demonstrations during lunch.

NCAS

Newsletter Publication Schedule

All NCAS members are encouraged to submit articles and news items to Dee Nelms, Associate Editor, for inclusion in the *Newsletter*. Please use the following cut-off dates as guides for your submissions:

Spring Issue	March 31
Summer Issue	June 30
Fall Issue	September 30
Winter Issue	December 31

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