Chapter 4
EVIDENCE FOR NON-HISTORIC CATAWBA SITE USES

The Ayers Town site was occupied numerous times during the 10,000 years preceding the establishment of a Catawba town there in 1781. Likewise, the site was used for agricultural and other purposes after Ayers Town was abandoned. Evidence for these earlier and later cultural activities are represented by two archaeological features and more than 2,100 artifacts recovered during excavation. Numerous additional modern artifacts recovered during metal detecting and plow zone excavations, including wire nails, fencing staples, barbed wire fragments, tractor parts, shotgun shells, and beer cans, were discarded in the field.

The earliest culturally diagnostic artifacts from Ayers Town—two Hardaway-Dalton projectile points—indicate that the site was being visited by hunters and gatherers by the end of the late Paleoindian period, or about 8,500 BC (Ward and Davis 1999:24–25). The presence of other projectile point types, including Kessell Side-Notched, Kirk Corner-Notched, Stanly Stemmed, Morrow Mountain Stemmed, Guilford Lanceolate, Halifax Side-Notched, and Savannah River Stemmed, indicate several additional occupations of the site during the subsequent Archaic period (c. 8,000–1,000 BC). These occupations likely were both temporary and sporadic. Other triangular and small stemmed projectile points, as well as 43 small, heavily eroded, sand-tempered and crushed rock-tempered pottery fragments, suggest the site also was used as a temporary encampment during the Early or Middle Woodland periods (c. 1,000 BC–AD 800). Although one ground-stone celt was recovered, there is no other evidence that the site was occupied during Late Woodland and Mississippian times (i.e., between about AD 800 and 1700).

Archaeological Features

Two small hearths were revealed during mechanical stripping of the site. While no culturally diagnostic artifacts were associated with either feature, it is suspected that they are attributable to one of the Archaic or Woodland occupations. Features 31 and 60 were located near the center of the site, about six meters from one another (Figure 4.1). Both were shallow basins filled with fire-broken rocks and heavily leached fill (see Chapter 5 and Appendix A for more detailed descriptions of these facilities). Such archaeological features have not been observed at other late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century Catawba sites.

Late Paleoindian, Archaic, and Woodland Artifacts

Artifacts attributable to the Late Paleoindian, Archaic, and Woodland occupations at Ayers Town include chipped-stone projectile points, bifaces, bifacial knives, scrapers, a perforator, worked flakes, chipped-stone production debris (i.e., cores and unmodified flakes), a celt, hammerstones, a nutting stone, a grinding stone, and both soapstone and ceramic vessel fragments. These artifacts were recovered during metal detecting, from disturbed plowed soil in

Figure 4.1. Feature 60, a probable Archaic or Woodland hearth.

hand-excavated units, while mechanically stripping the site, and from the fill of historic Catawba pit features. Their presence in these latter contexts is not surprising, given that they are fairly ubiquitous across the site and could easily be incorporated into the fill dirt.

Chipped-Stone Projectile Points

Ninety projectile points and point fragments were recovered from Ayers Town. They can be attributed to the Late Paleoindian (n=2), Early Archaic (n=14), Middle Archaic (n=23), and Late Archaic (n=7) periods. Thirteen other unclassified small stemmed and small lanceolate projectile points likely are associated with the Late Archaic or Early Woodland periods. All are thought to have served primarily as sharp, durable tips for atlatl darts. These artifacts mostly were recovered from disturbed plow zone deposits; the remainder came from pit feature fill where they are interpreted as incidental inclusions. Projectile points are described by type below and summarized in Table 4.1. Examples of each type found at Ayers Town are illustrated in Figure 4.2.

Hardaway-Dalton. Two heavily weathered projectile points, identified as probable Hardaway-Daltons or Hardaway-Dalton-like, were recovered from plowed soil within Squares 860R170 and 868R166. One was made of rhyolite, while the other appears to be made of an unidentified meta-sedimentary rock. Joffre Coe (1964:64) described the *Hardaway-Dalton* projectile point type as having a "broad, thin blade with deeply concave bases and shallow side-notches. Bases and sidenotches were ground and edges were frequently serrated." Both specimens generally conform to this description. The Hardaway-Dalton type is associated with

Table 4.1. Projectile Points Recovered at Ayers Town.

Type	Context	Material	L	W	TH	Comment
Hardaway-Dalton	Sq. 860R170	Meta-Sedimentary	39	28	7	basally thinned, ears missing
Hardaway-Dalton	Sq. 868R166	Metavolcanic?	37	25	6	heavily weathered
Kessell Side-Notched	Sq. 864R167	Metavolcanic	79	32	7	concave base, bevelled resharpening
Kirk Corner-Notched	Backdirt	Quartz	29	16	7	basally ground, ear missing
Kirk Corner-Notched	Stripping	Quartz	34	22	8	serrated
Kirk Corner-Notched	Stripping	Quartz	26	20	7	
Kirk Corner-Notched	Feature 124	Metavolcanic	-	23	8	basally ground, tip missing
Kirk Corner-Notched	Feature 140	Quartz	28	23	8	basally ground
Kirk Corner-Notched	Feature 185	Metavolcanic	40	26	7	basally ground, beveled resharpening
Kirk Corner-Notched	Sq. 860R200	Quartz	-	17	8	basally ground, serrated, beveled resharpening, tip missing
Kirk Corner-Notched	Sq. 863R166	Quartz	30	18	7	basally ground, beveled resharpening, basal impact scar
Kirk Corner-Notched	Sq. 869R169	Metavolcanic	49	25	8	drill
Kirk Corner-Notched	Sq. 870R170	Metavolcanic	29	24	6	basally ground, beveled resharpening, basal impact scar
Kirk Corner-Notched	Sq. 873R157	Quartz	26	21	7	basally ground, serrated
Kirk Corner-Notched	Sq. 876R193	Metavolcanic	27	20	5	basally ground, basal impact scar
Kirk Corner-Notched	Sq. 876R193	Metavolcanic	-	24	6	beveled resharpening, tip & ears missing
Stanly Stemmed	Stripping	Quartz	-	35	13	tip & tip of base missing
Stanly Stemmed	Sq. 890R170	Metavolcanic	44	31	8	
Morrow Mtn. Stemmed	Stripping	Quartz	-	26	13	crudely made, tip missing
Morrow Mtn. Stemmed	Stripping	Metavolcanic	-	22	10	tip of base missing
Morrow Mtn. Stemmed	Stripping	Quartz	-	18	9	tip missing
Morrow Mtn. Stemmed	Feature 5	Metavolcanic	-	23	8	tip missing
Morrow Mtn. Stemmed	Feature 61	Quartz	-	23	11	tip missing
Morrow Mtn. Stemmed	Metal Detecting	Metavolcanic	38	27	9	
Morrow Mtn. Stemmed	Sq. 875R195	Quartz	41	20	11	
Morrow Mtn. Stemmed	Sq. 875R195	Metavolcanic	-	23	9	tip of base missing
Morrow Mtn. Stemmed	Sq. 883R191	Quartz	-	24	10	tip missing
Morrow Mtn. Stemmed	Sq. 883R193	Quartz	-	20	7	tip missing
Morrow Mtn. Stemmed	Sq. 883R193	Quartz	-	-	10	tip, lateral edge & tip of base missing
Guilford Lanceolate	Feature 107	Metavolcanic	-	20	11	tip missing
Guilford Lanceolate	Sq. 875R192	Metavolcanic	-	21	10	tip missing
Guilford Lanceolate	Sq. 876R191	Metavolcanic	-	22	10	tip missing
Guilford Lanceolate	Sq. 876R194	Metavolcanic	50	21	9	
Guilford Lanceolate	Sq. 877R195	Metavolcanic	-	21	9	base missing
Guilford Lanceolate	Sq. 878R191	Metavolcanic	-	22	10	tip missing
Guilford Lanceolate	Sq. 878R194	Metavolcanic	-	22	9	tip missing
Guilford Lanceolate	Sq. 885R189	Metavolcanic	-	21	9	tip missing
Halifax Side-Notched	Feature 155	Quartz	-	22	9	tip missing
Halifax Side-Notched	Sq. 875R193	Quartz	-	24	11	tip missing
Savannah River	Feature 4	Quartz	54	32	12	heavily resharpened
Savannah River	Feature 60	Quartz	65	29	14	heavily resharpened
Savannah River	Feature 89	Quartz	-	43	20	distal half missing
Savannah River	Sq. 860R210	Quartz	-	28	13	tip missing
Savannah River	Sq. 876R193	Quartz	-	27	12	tip missing
Savannah River	Sq. 878R192	Quartz	-	47	16	tip missing

Table 4.1 Continued.

Type	Context	Material	L	W	TH	Comment
Savannah River	Sq. 878R194	Metavolcanic	-	36	10	tip missing
Savannah River	Sq. 885R192	Metavolcanic	-	29	10	tip missing
Small Stemmed	Stripping	Quartz	-	21	9	tip missing
Small Stemmed	Stripping	Quartz	47	25	11	
Small Stemmed	Feature 162	Metavolcanic	-	-	-	squared stem
Small Stemmed	Sq. 875R193	Quartz	-	-	-	squared stem fragment
Small Stemmed	Sq. 877R192	Quartz	-	-	-	squared stem fragment
Small Stemmed	Sq. 880R190	Quartz	-	-	-	squared stem fragment
Small Stemmed	Sq. 884R190	Metavolcanic	-	22	8	tip missing
Small Stemmed	Sq. 884R191	Quartz Crystal	31	23	7	
Small Stemmed	Sq. 912R170	Metavolcanic	-	19	6	tip & tip of base missing
Small Lanceolate	Stripping	Quartz	33	21	8	slight shoulders
Small Lanceolate	Feature 69	Metavolcanic	48	25	7	slight shoulders
Small Lanceolate	Sq. 876R195	Metavolcanic	32	20	6	small, ovoid point
Small Lanceolate	Sq. 878R161	Quartz	-	22	7	tip missing
Fragment	Stripping	Metavolcanic	-	-	-	mid-section
Fragment	Stripping	Metavolcanic	-	-	-	tip
Fragment	Feature 122	Quartz	-	-	-	tip
Fragment	Feature 163	Metavolcanic	-	-	-	tip
Fragment	Feature 69	Metavolcanic	-	-	-	mid-section
Fragment	Feature 89	Metavolcanic	-	-	-	mid-section (Guilford?)
Fragment	Feature 92	Metavolcanic	-	-	-	tip
Fragment	Sq. 860R171	Metavolcanic	-	-	-	mid-section
Fragment	Sq. 868R209	Quartz	-	-	-	tip
Fragment	Sq. 870R166	Quartz	-	-	-	tip
Fragment	Sq. 870R190	Metavolcanic	-	-	-	tip
Fragment	Sq. 870R190	Metavolcanic	-	-	-	mid-section
Fragment	Sq. 870R209	Quartz	-	-	-	mid-section
Fragment	Sq. 870R209	Metavolcanic?	-	-	-	tip
Fragment	Sq. 870R209	Quartz	-	-	-	tip
Fragment	Sq. 870R209	Quartz	-	-	-	tip
Fragment	Sq. 871R155	Quartz	-	-	-	tip, large (Savannah River?)
Fragment	Sq. 872R155	Quartz	-	-	-	mid-section, serrated edges (Kirk?)
Fragment	Sq. 875R191	Quartz	-	-	-	tip
Fragment	Sq. 876R192	Quartz	-	-	-	distal half (Savannah River?)
Fragment	Sq. 876R194	Quartz	-	-	-	mid-section, large & crude (Savannah River?)
Fragment	Sq. 877R161	Metavolcanic	-	-	-	mid-section (Guilford?)
Fragment	Sq. 877R191	Metavolcanic	-	-	-	tip
Fragment	Sq. 877R195	Metavolcanic	-	-	-	tip, large (Savannah River?)
Fragment	Sq. 878R193	Quartz	-	-	-	tip
Fragment	Sq. 878R195	Quartz	-	-	-	tip, large (Savannah River?)
Fragment	Sq. 879R193	Quartz	-	-	-	tip
Fragment	Sq. 880R210	Metavolcanic	-	-	-	small stem
Fragment	Sq. 881R179	Metavolcanic	-	-	-	tip
Fragment	Sq. 884R190	Metavolcanic	-	-	-	tip (Guilford?)
Fragment	Sq. 890R181	Metavolcanic	-	-	-	tip
Fragment	Sq. 890R190	Quartz	-	-	-	tip

L – length; W – width; TH – thickness. All measurements are in millimeters.

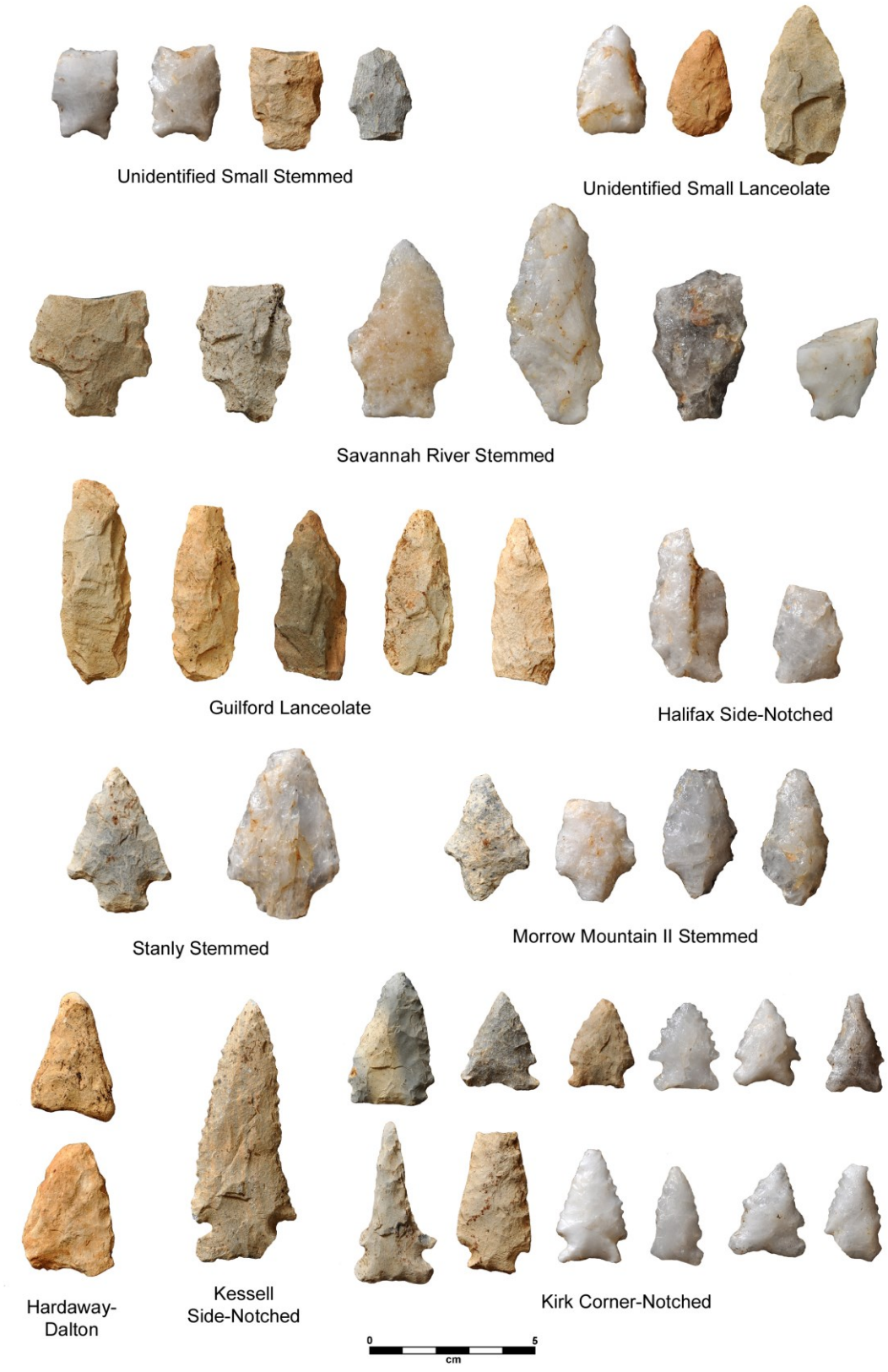

Figure 4.2. Projectile points recovered from Ayers Town.

the late Paleo-Indian period (before 8,000 BC) in the central Carolina Piedmont (Coe 1964; Ward 1983).

Kessell Side-Notched. One projectile point recovered from Square 864R167 was classified as Kessell Side-Notched. This point has distinct side notches, a slightly concave base, and edge serrations. It is made of a heavily patinated, fine-grained rhyolite and likely is associated with the better-represented Early Archaic Kirk component at the site. The Kessell Side-Notched type, first recognized at the St. Albans site in southern West Virginia, was reported by Bettye Broyles as being represented in the lower, Early Archaic strata at that site. The specimen from Ayers Town closely resembles the one illustrated by Broyles from St. Albans (Broyles 1971:Figure 26m).

Kirk Corner-Notched. Thirteen projectile points from Ayers Town were classified as Kirk Corner-Notched, a predominant point type of the Early Archaic period (ca. 8,000–6,000 BC) in the southeastern United States and the best represented point type at the site. Being first recognized at the Hardaway site, located about 95 km northeast of Ayers Town, Coe (1964:69) described the Kirk Corner-Notched projectile point type as having "a large triangular blade with a straight base, corner-notches, and serrated edges." Most of the points from Ayers Town have been heavily resharpened, and are made of vein quartz; the remaining ones are made of rhyolite and are heavily patinated. Seven points were recovered from plowed soil in hand-dug units; the others came from backdirt and backhoe stripping, and from the fill of Features 124, 140, and 185, where they are interpreted as incidental inclusions. The frequent occurrence of worn out and discarded Kirk points, along with the presence of several formal end scrapers, suggest that the site may have served as a base camp during the Early Archaic period.

Stanly Stemmed. The Stanly Stemmed projectile point type is characterized by a broad, triangular blade and a small, squared stem that often has an indented base (Coe 1964:35). Points of this type date to the early Middle Archaic period (ca. 6,000–5,500 BC) and were found in stratified contexts at the Doerschuk site in piedmont North Carolina (Coe 1964:35) and in southeast Tennessee at the Icehouse Bottom, Howard, and Calloway Island sites (Chapman 1977, 1979). The two specimens from Ayers Town Came were recovered during backhoe stripping of plowed soil and from the plow zone of Square 890R170.

Morrow Mountain II Stemmed. Eleven projectile points were classified as Morrow Mountain II Stemmed, making this the second most frequent type represented at Ayers Town and indicating a significant Middle Archaic component at the site. A majority of these specimens were made of vein quartz. Two came from the fill of Features 5 and 61; the others came from the plow zone. According to Coe (1964:37), this projectile point type is defined by a long, narrow blade and a tapered stem (Coe 1964:37). The Morrow Mountain II type is associated with the Middle Archaic period (ca. 5,500–5,000 BC) and has been recovered in stratified context at the Doerschuk site in piedmont North Carolina (Coe 1964), and at the Icehouse Bottom and Howard sites in southeast Tennessee (Chapman 1977, 1979).

Guilford Lanceolate. The Guilford Lanceolate projectile point type is defined by "a long, slender, but thick blade with straight, rounded, or concave base" (Coe 1964:43). Based upon excavations at the Doerschuk and Gaston sites in piedmont North Carolina, Coe (1964:44, 118) has suggested that this Middle Archaic point type dates between about 5,000 BC and 4,000 BC.

Eight Guilford Lanceolate points were recovered from Ayers Town. Seven came from the plow zone; the remaining specimen came from Feature 107 fill. Unlike most other point types represented at the site, all Guilford points were made of rhyolite and other varieties of metavolcanic stone.

Halifax Side-Notched. Coe (1964:108) describes the Halifax Side-Notched type as having a "slender blade with slightly restricted base. Shallow side-notches. Base and side-notches were usually ground. The material most frequently used was vein quartz." The stratigraphic position of Halifax materials between Guilford and Late Archaic Savannah River strata at the Gaston site indicate a late Middle Archaic temporal association (Coe 1964:118). The two specimens from Ayers Town came from Feature 107 fill and the plow zone. Both are made of vein quartz and conform to the Halifax type description.

Savannah River Stemmed. Though initially described by Claflin (1931) at the Stallings Island site, the stratigraphic position of the Savannah River Stemmed projectile point type was first documented by Coe (1964) at the Doerschuk, Lowder's Ferry, and Gaston sites, where points of this type were found in strata above those containing Middle Archaic Guilford Lanceolate and (at the Gaston site) Halifax Side-Notched points. Coe (1964:44) described this Late Archaic projectile point type as having "a large, heavy, triangular blade with a broad stem." Savannah River Stemmed projectile points have since been radiocarbon dated to 3,000–1,800 BC at the Bacon Bend site in southeast Tennessee (Chapman 1981). The eight Savannah River points from Ayers Town conform to this description, though they are not as large as the rhyolite specimens recovered from Lowder's Ferry and Doerschuk sites, both located near rhyolite quarries within the Uwharrie Mountains. All but two of the Ayers Town points are made of vein quartz; the others are made of rhyolite. These Savannah River Stemmed points, two fragments of carved soapstone bowls, and perhaps some of the unidentified small stemmed points described below document a Late Archaic encampment at the site.

Unidentified Small Stemmed. Nine small stemmed points and fragments of small stemmed points were recovered which do not readily conform to a defined projectile point type. Oliver (1985) has argued that what he terms the Piedmont Tradition of stemmed projectile points, represented by the Late Archaic Savannah River Stemmed type as well as smaller stemmed variants such as Gypsy Stemmed and Swannanoa Stemmed, continued into the Early Woodland period and preceded the adoption of the bow and arrow. This hypothesis is reasonable and would account for the presence in small amounts of Woodland pottery at Ayers Town in the absence of triangular Woodland projectile points.

Unidentified Small Lanceolate. Four small ovoid or lanceolate points were recovered that do not conform to an established projectile point type. They may represent crude or very early triangular points; conversely, some may be heavily resharpened Guilford Lanceolate points. A Middle-Late Archaic or Early Woodland cultural association is assumed.

Unidentified Projectile Point Fragments. Thirty-one fragments of chipped-stone projectile points were recovered which cannot be typologically identified with confidence. Twenty-one are tip fragments, nine are mid-section fragments, and one is a small base fragment. Size, edge configuration, and workmanship characteristics suggest this group may include one Kirk Corner-Notched, three Guilford Lanceolate, and five Savannah River Stemmed specimens.

Other Chipped-Stone Tools

Seventy-two chipped-stone artifacts other than projectile points were recovered. They include bifaces, end scrapers and other scrapers, a perforator, and worked flakes. All of these artifacts are associated with pre-Catawba occupations of the site.

Bifaces. Thirty-three chipped-stone bifaces and fragments of bifacially worked flakes were recovered from plowed soil and feature fill. Most (n=25) of these are made of vein quartz; the remainder are made of rhyolite (now heavily patinated) and other metavolcanic stone. Seven of these appear to represent projectile point performs, including a probable Guilford perform and a probable Savannah River perform. Another quartz specimen appears to be the proximal half of an adz, which likely is associated with the late Paleo-Indian or Early Archaic site occupations. The remaining bifaces and biface fragments represent the early-stage manufacture of projectile points and other bifacial tools.

End Scrapers. End scrapers are unifacial, chipped-stone tools that have a roughly triangular, "teardrop" shape defined by a tapered proximal end and a broad, straight to slightly convex distal end that has been finely and steeply retouched. Specimens sometimes exhibit graver spurs and polish along the distal working edge. Artifacts conforming to these characteristics have been recovered mostly in late Paleo-Indian and Early Archaic contexts in the Southeast (Chapman 1977; Coe 1964; Daniel 1998) and are interpreted as hafted hide scrapers. Fifteen end scrapers were recovered from Ayers Town, where they are attributed to the early occupations represented by Kirk Corner-Notched and Hardaway-Dalton projectile points. Two-thirds are made of vein quartz (the remainder are made of metavolcanic stone), and nine are complete but heavily resharpened and worn out tools that likely were replaced at the site. These nine scrapers are generally consistent in size, ranging from 24–32 mm in length, 24–30 mm in width, and 7–12 mm in thickness. Two unique specimens, both made of vein quartz, include a small "thumbnail" end scraper (21 mm long, 19 mm wide, 9 mm thick) and a much larger end scraper perform (62 mm long, 29 mm wide, 14 mm thick) that was completely shaped but lacked a prepared (i.e., retouched) working edge.

Other Scrapers. Four other unifacially worked flakes were found that can be characterized as scrapers. Three of these are elongate flakes that have been steeply retouched along one edge; the fourth is an oval flake fragment that has a retouched convex edge. The cultural association of these artifacts is unknown.

Perforator. A single specimen was classified as a probable perforator. It appears to be a small lanceolate quartz projectile point that was unifacially retouched at the distal end to produce a narrow, triangular working edge. This edge configuration indicates a probable function related to boring holes in hides or other soft materials.

Worked Flakes. Nineteen chipped-stone flakes were recovered from Ayers Town which exhibit retouch along one or more margins. A majority (n=10) of these are made of metavolcanic stone (mostly rhyolite); the remainder are either vein quartz (n=5), quartz cobble (n=1), or quartz crystal (n=3). Worked flakes are thought to have functioned primarily as *ad hoc* cutting tools.

Chipped-Stone Production Debris

Most chipped-stone artifacts from Ayers Town can be characterized as debris resulting from the production of stone tools. These artifacts were placed into one of two categories—cores and flakes.

Cores. A core is defined as any mass of knappable raw material from which one or more flakes have been detached. As such, cores represent the parent material from which chipped-stone tools were manufactured. Seventeen cores were recovered from excavations at Ayers Town. As with other chipped-stone artifacts, they were scattered among a variety of contexts, including excavated plow zone, feature fill, and surface finds collected during backhoe stripping. The seven specimens from historic Catawba features are regarded as incidental inclusions. All cores are amorphous in form, and all but two are vein quartz. The other two are quartzite stream cobbles from which multiple flakes have been removed. While quartz may have been quarried from veins exposed in the surrounding uplands, the presence of water-worn cortex on a few (<2%) quartz flakes indicates that some of this material was derived from alluvial cobbles in the nearby river or along eroding terrace edges. Conversely, two-thirds of all quartzite flakes exhibited water-worn cortex on the dorsal surface.

Flakes. Nineteen hundred and fifteen unmodified chipped-stone flakes were recovered from plow zone excavation (n=1,110), feature fill (n=785), backhoe stripping (n=17), and metal detecting (n=3) at Ayers Town. Almost 95% were made of metavolcanic stone (49.2%) or vein quartz (45.4%); the remainder were made of quartzite (3.0%), quartz crystal (2.1%), and Allendale chert (0.3%). The nearly equal frequency of metavolcanic and vein quartz specimens is consistent with the raw material distribution of projectile points (i.e., an equal number of metavolcanic and vein quartz projectile points were recovered). However, while numerous quartz cores were recovered, no metavolcanic cores were found. This indicates that, whereas vein quartz flakes likely were the products of core reduction and chipped-stone tool production, maintenance, and recycling, metavolcanic flakes almost entirely reflect flintknapping activities associated with tool production and maintenance. This conclusion is supported by the near absence (1.1%) of decortication flakes among the metavolcanic flakes.

Finally, the predominant representation of tool production and maintenance, as opposed to primary core reduction, is also indicated by the size distribution of flakes. About 20% of metavolcanic and vein quartz flakes were less than 1 cm in diameter, and 80% were less than 2 cm in diameter. Only a single metavolcanic flake was larger than 6 cm in diameter. Unfortunately, very little evidence exists for associating debitage with specific Archaic or Woodland occupations indicated by other diagnostic artifact categories. The five Allendale chert flakes, representing the only non-local lithic material within the flake sample, probably are associated with the earliest occupations, when hunter-gatherer band mobility was greatest. With a source area along the lower Savannah River drainage, discarded Allendale chert tools and debitage occur infrequently on archaeological sites in the upper North Carolina–South Carolina Piedmont, but have been reported in Early Archaic contexts as far north as Hardaway, located about 95 km northeast of Ayers Town (Daniel 1998:126–127). Feature 60, the only non-historic feature at Ayers Town that contained artifacts, yielded 14 flakes but no culturally diagnostic artifacts. Ten of the flakes were vein quartz; the remainder were metavolcanic.

Ground-Stone Artifacts

Eleven ground-stone artifacts were recovered which, based on stylistic and morphological characteristics, are thought to be associated with earlier Archaic or Woodland activities at the site. Several of these were recovered from historic Catawba feature fill, suggesting that they may have been collected and used or recycled by Ayers Town residents.

Celt. The distal half of a tapered-poll, ground-stone celt was recovered from the lower fill of Feature 123, a deep storage pit. It is made of diorite and measures 69 mm long (broken), 41 mm in maximum width at the bit, and 29 mm thick. This specimen is similar in size and form to celts reported from: (1) Town Creek and attributed to the South Appalachian Mississippian Pee Dee culture (Coe 1995:215); and (2) the early Late Woodland Holt site in the central North Carolina Piedmont (Ward and Davis 1993:71). Its presence at Ayers Town is unexplained: it may have been discarded at the site by an earlier Late Woodland or Mississippian Indian, or it may have been found elsewhere and brought back to Ayers Town by one of its residents. No other artifacts from Ayers Town have a clear South Appalachian Mississippian or Late Woodland cultural association.

Hammerstones. Six hammerstones were recovered. Three of these are relatively large specimens that can be confidently attributed to earlier Archaic or Woodland activities based on morphological characteristics. They are roughly circular to oblong in shape and range from 75–97 mm in length, 66–74 mm in width, and 37–42 mm in thickness. Made of granite (n=2) or metasandstone (n=1), all have heavily abraded edges and two have shallow-pitted faces, indicating that they also were used as anvils. The metasandstone specimen has one ground face, suggesting that it also functioned as a mano.

The other three specimens are flat, quartzite stream cobbles with abraded margins. While they are interpreted as hammerstones, the abraded edges may be the result of mechanical weathering and not a product of their use as hammers. All three specimens, as well as one of the pitted hammerstones, were found in feature fill; the other two came from the plow zone.

Nutting Stone. A large fragment of a nutting stone was recovered from Feature 155. It is made of coarse-grained soapstone and is 22 cm long, 14 cm wide, and 7 cm thick. This specimen appears to represent about one quarter of the original implement, which would have been about 26 cm in diameter and roughly circular. One surface is deeply concave, indicating that it likely served as a milling stone before being used as a nutting stone by the grinding of multiple cup-shaped depressions into both faces. The presence of several cut marks along one of the broken edges suggests that it may have been recycled further after its use as a nutting stone.

As the name implies, nutting stones are thought to have been used as anvils for processing nuts, and their use has been reported ethnographically (Lee 1979:151, 198–199). This specimen likely represents "site furniture" from an earlier occupation at Ayers Town. Its potential use by Catawba residents at the site is unclear; however, its importance may have been related more to its size than its original function (see below).

Grinding Stone. One possible grinding stone fragment, made of granite, was recovered from the same feature context (Feature 155, North 1/2, Zone 3) as the nutting stone just described. It

is similar in size, measuring 18 cm long, 13.5 cm wide, and 6.5 cm thick. While not heavily used, one surface is slightly concave, suggesting that it once functioned as a grinding surface.

Soapstone Potsherds. Two fragments of carved soapstone pots were recovered from plow zone excavations. They range from 14–41 mm in diameter and 10–14 mm in thickness. Soapstone vessels in the Carolina Piedmont are associated with the Late Archaic period (Coe 1964), and at Ayers Town they likely are associated with the occupation that produced the Savannah River Stemmed projectile points.

Woodland Potsherds

Forty-three of the 17,177 potsherds recovered from Ayers Town are attributed to an earlier Woodland period site occupation. These sherds are distinguished from the rest of the pottery sample by temper, texture, color, surface treatment, and overall condition. Whereas most of the pottery from Ayers Town and the contemporary site of Old Town, attributable to late eighteenth-century Catawba potters, contains no visible temper and has a generally smooth texture, these sherds have a rough or gritty texture and are tempered with coarse sand (n=23), medium-sized crushed quartz (n=15), a mixture of fine crushed quartz and crushed feldspar (n=3), or coarse sand with sparse, medium-sized crushed quartz inclusions (n=2). While the Catawba-made pottery from Ayers Town and Old Town varies greatly in color, ranging from very pale brown (10YR 8/4) to reddish yellow (7.5YR 6/6) to black 10YR 2/1), the sherds attributed to the Woodland period represent a consistent, narrow spectrum of colors ranging from dark brown (7.5YR 4/4) to dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/4). These differences likely are related both to patterns of clay procurement and methods of firing. Because of the generally small size and eroded condition of the Woodland sherds, probable surface treatment could be identified on only three specimens. Two appear to be cordmarked, while the third exhibits faint warp and weft impressions associated with fine fabric marking. Most pottery vessels made in the central Carolina Piedmont during the Early Woodland and Middle Woodland periods were conoidal cooking or storage jars, hand-built by coiling and stamped with a cord-wrapped paddle or with a simple twined fabric (Blanton et al. 1986; Coe 1964; Ward and Davis 1999). The two rim sherds in the sample represent vessels with rounded lips and straight rims, and one has oblique notches or ticks along the outside rim edge, a decorative attribute not seen on Catawba vessels post-dating 1760.

The 43 Woodland sherds found at Ayers Town likely are associated with at least some of the unidentified small stemmed (n=9) and small lanceolate (n=4) projectile points discussed earlier, and together they document a minor occupation of the site during the Early Woodland or Middle Woodland periods. This occupation likely dates no earlier than about 1,000 BC or later than about AD 800. Ceramic evidence for limited activity during the Early Woodland or Middle Woodland periods also was found during excavations at the nearby Ashe Ferry site (38YK533); however, the primary cultural components at Ashe Ferry are attributable to the Late Woodland Ashe Ferry phase and early Middle Mississippian Early Brown phase, and these are not represented in the artifact sample recovered from Ayers Town.

Modern Artifacts

No evidence was found for a site occupation following the abandonment of Ayers Town; however, later land uses were represented in the archaeological record. The most obvious evidence was the plow-disturbed character of the topsoil, indicating that the site was farmed, and earlier in the twentieth century a barbed-wire fence surrounded the eastern and northern site edges. Numerous fragments and strand segments of this fence were encountered during systematic metal detecting. Metal detection survey also revealed a relatively dense band of litter (e.g., steel and aluminum beer cans, metallic wrapper fragments, etc.) along the tree line flanking the north edge of the existing highway and gas pipeline right-of-ways. These items largely post-date construction of the original SC Highway 5 bridge and were not collected.

Modern items found during metal detection survey or plow zone excavation and not discarded include: two solarized glass fragments, four fragments of barbed-wire fencing, two cast iron stove plate fragments, a mower part, a large iron knob, a fragment of copper wire, two fencing staples, a wire nail, a lock washer, and four coins. The coins all date between 1900 and 1940 and include a 1905 V-type five-cent piece, a 1916 Buffalo-type five-cent piece, a 1917 Mercury-type dime, and a 1935 Lincoln-type small cent. Some other artifacts recovered during metal detecting, particularly those made of iron and classified simply as fragments, sheet fragments, or unidentified objects may post-date the Catawba occupation at Ayers Town; however, these items are typologically indistinct and unidentifiable as to probable function or age.