



1977

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DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

REPORT OF INVESTIGATIONS, NO. 13

1977

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF PROPOSED SEWER LINE RIGHTS-OF-
WAY AND TREATMENT FACILITIES IN COLON, MICHIGAN.

ROBERT G. KINGSLEY

Archaeological Survey of Proposed Sewer Line Rights-of-way and Treatment Facilities in Colon, Michigan

Project Personnel:

Principal Investigator: Robert G. Kingsley, M.A., Research Associate
Field Assistants: Jerrel Sorensen (graduate student), Kevin Kincare
(undergraduate student)

Introduction:

On May 24 an archaeological survey was performed at the request of Mr. James T. Nordlund of Richardson, Nordlund and Dunlap, Inc. of Ludington, Michigan. The survey involved inspection of proposed sewer line rights-of-way and treatment facilities in the area of Colon, Michigan, to determine if extant cultural resources existed in these areas.

Previous Research:

There has been very little archaeological research in St. Joseph County. The archaeological site files at the Department of Anthropology, Western Michigan University, were examined prior to fieldwork; no known archaeological or historical sites were noted within several miles of the survey area.

Procedures:

Fieldwork procedures consisted of surface reconnaissance of the areas where construction will take place. Most of the area examined was under cultivation; in areas not under cultivation, subsurface test probes were dug at 25 yd intervals and at smaller intervals where deemed necessary.

Description of Survey Area:

The treatment plant site area occupies almost the entire center of Sec. 3, Colon Twp., St. Joseph County, Michigan. Part of this area contains existing irrigation fields and holding ponds. These areas and the areas inspected by the survey crew appear on the sketch map in Fig. 1. All of the areas inspected were plowed fields. Six subsurface test probes were placed at arbitrary intervals in these areas and revealed a rather uniform soil profile of 12 to 18 in of plowzone and topsoil covering glacial sand. Glacial till was present in the topsoil layer; the plowzone never extended into glacial sand.

A 4500 ft length of line right-of-way was inspected that occupies the boundaries between Secs. 15 and 14, and 10 and 11, Colon Twp. About 1/2 of this line was under cultivation. The rest of the line crossed an area where topsoil stripping had taken place, a woodlot, and 2 landfill areas. Eighteen test probes were placed in non-cultivated areas and soil profiles varied from highly disturbed to that resembling the treatment plant area. Mixed glacial till was present everywhere.

The final 1700 line feet surveyed occupies the S.W. 1/4, N.E. 1/4, Sec. 27, Colon Twp. This line lies between cultivated fields and woodlot; 35 test probes were placed in the wooded areas revealing a soil profile similar to the other areas surveyed, i.e. 12 to 18 in of topsoil over glacial sand. The soil in this area seemed to have a higher clay content, though no clay layer or lenses were noted. Again, glacial till was always encountered.

Sites Recorded:

One definite and one probable prehistoric archaeological site were discovered in the course of this project. The existence of the definite site, recorded as site S.J.1, was reported to us by Mr. John Nystrom and Mr. Leonard Pamp, both Village of Colon employees. This site lies on the easternmost tip of the sewage treatment plant site, center, N.E. 1/4, Sec. 3, Colon Twp. (see Fig. 1). Several chert flakes, a large quantity of fire-cracked rock, and a possible ground stone fragment were found in this area. Mr. Pamp indicated to us that he collects this area often; he has a "cigar box full" of projectile points, most of which, he stated, are notched. Pottery was not recovered by the survey crew nor by Mr. Pamp.

It would appear, based on the above evidence, that this site was occupied during the Archaic period. Mr. Pamp's collection was not observable at this time, but the presence of notched points and, more importantly, an absence of pottery would suggest an Archaic site. It is important that, while this site lies on the treatment site property, it does not lie in areas of proposed development.

The probable site mentioned above was pointed out to us by Mr. Pamp. This site, recorded as site S.J.2, lies well outside the project area in the S.W. 1/4, N.E. 1/4, Sec. 10, Colon Twp. Mr. Pamp stated that he has found pottery at this location, indicating a Woodland temporal placement. This site is listed here as probable because time did not permit the survey crew to inspect it.

Other prehistoric cultural material was discovered during this project that probably does not represent actual sites. Six possible chert chips or fragments were discovered at various points along the 4500 ft line; one of these chips came from the topsoil stripping area. No other cultural material was found in spite of intensive probing and reconnaissance. As stated, it is felt that this material does not represent a site(s).

A small fragment of Kaolin pipestem and several pieces of glass were found in the treatment site area (see Fig. 1). In the same area was found recent material, e.g. flower pot sherds, concrete. Again, it is felt that this material does not represent an historic site. Indeed, it is possible that this material was brought in with fill dirt during the construction of the holding ponds.

Recommendations:

The areas of this project surveyed, as indicated to me by Mr. James T. Nordlund of Richardson, Nordlund and Dunlap, do not contain extant cultural resources of such significance to warrant delaying this project. Thus, I can recommend that this project proceed as planned. In the case of the easternmost point of the treatment plant site area that contains an archaeological site, however, I must recommend that construction in this area be avoided; construction is not planned for this area at present, and should not in the future. This would include disturbance of this site as a result of the present project as well.

Prepared and submitted by:

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June 1, 1977

Appendix:

Catalogue of recovered cultural material, Village of Colon sewage treatment facilities and lines survey.

SITE ST 1

| | | |
|------------|----------------------------|----------|
| Artifacts: | Ground stone fragment | 1 |
| | Bifacially retouched flake | 1 |
| Debitage: | Bifacial thinning | 4 |
| | Decortication | 2 |
| | Trimming | 1 |
| | Argillite core | 1 |
| | Chert core | 1 |
| | Quartzite flake | <u>1</u> |
| | | 12 |

4500 FT LINE

| | | |
|-----------|--------------------------|----------|
| Debitage: | Bifacial thinning | 1 |
| | Decortication | 2 |
| | Nondescript or "shatter" | <u>3</u> |
| | | 6 |

TREATMENT PLANT SITE

| | |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Kaolin pipe stem | 1 |
| Bottle necks | 2 |
| Bottle neck fragments | 2 |
| Glass stem fragments | 1 |
| Clear glass | 3 |
| Brown glass | 1 |
| Blue glass | 1 |
| Opaque glass | 3 |
| Flower pot rim | 1 |
| Mussel shell fragments | 3 |
| Cinder | 1 |
| White ceramic fragments | <u>6</u> |
| | 25 |

St. Joseph R.

Figure 1

Map of Colon Sewage Treatment Plant Site

(from Map provided by Richardson, Nordlund, and Dunlap, Inc.)

