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# 66-An Archaeological Survey of the Manistee 25 Pipeline for the Michigan Consolidated Gas Company, Manistee County, Michigan

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William M. Cremin

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE MANISTEE 25 PIPELINE FOR THE  
MICHIGAN CONSOLIDATED GAS COMPANY, MANISTEE COUNTY, MICHIGAN

1984

REPORT OF INVESTIGATIONS NO. 66

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY  
WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Prepared for:

Michigan Consolidated Gas Company  
P.O. Box 33051  
Detroit, Michigan 48232

through

Gove Associates, Inc.  
1601 Portage  
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49001

## INTRODUCTION:

At the request of Mr. Karl Freed, Vice President-Director of Planning, Gove Associates, Inc., Kalamazoo, Michigan, and in response to a Request For Proposal (RFP) from Michigan Consolidated Gas Company, Detroit, Michigan, the Principal Investigator, Dr. William M. Cremin, submitted a proposal and budget for a Phase I archaeological site location survey of the Manistee 25 Pipeline corridor in Manistee County, Michigan. There follows a report of fieldwork undertaken on 15 Dec 84, together with appropriate background information and recommendations based upon the field research.

## PROJECT PERSONNEL:

Principal Investigator - William M. Cremin, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Anthropology, Western Michigan University  
Field Assistant - David De Fant, M.A. Candidate in the Department of Anthropology, WMU

## DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT AREA:

The research area of this study consists of a narrow corridor 75 ft (23 m) wide and one mile (1.6 km) long, commencing just S of the center of Section 23 at the Michigan Consolidated Sour Gas Plant on Fisk Road and running for approximately 300 m to the S; 800 m E to the line between Sections 23 and 24; 400 m S to the corner of Sections 23, 24, 25, and 26; and then 200 m SE to the wellhead on a bluff top overlooking the Manistee River floodplain

in the extreme NW corner of Section 25, Manistee Township,

T22N R16W, Manistee County, Michigan (Map 1).

The corridor passes through an area of moderately rolling morainal topography, varying in elevation from 225 m ASL near the plant to 195 m ASL on the bluff overlooking the Manistee River. Here, contours are most pronounced; the bluff drops away steeply to the floodplain some 20 m below.

Rising in Otsego County, the Manistee flows in a west-

southwesterly direction through Kalkaska, Missaukee, and Wexford counties before entering Manistee County in Marilla Township.

From here it flows south through Marilla and then west across

Dickson, Brown, and Manistee townships before emptying into Lake

Manistee at its north end. Its course brings the river to within

less than a kilometer of the wellhead site as it proceeds in a

southwesterly direction across Section 25 (Map 1). The location

of the Manistee 25 Pipeline terminus on a broad, flat-topped

bluff in close proximity to the river and its 3.2 km wide flood-

plain, strongly suggested to this research team that an archaeo-

logical site(s) might well be found during this pipeline corridor

survey.

During the course of our survey, we noted that the deep

sandy soils encountered along the proposed route of the pipeline,

as a result of cutting and fire, supported principally Jack pine

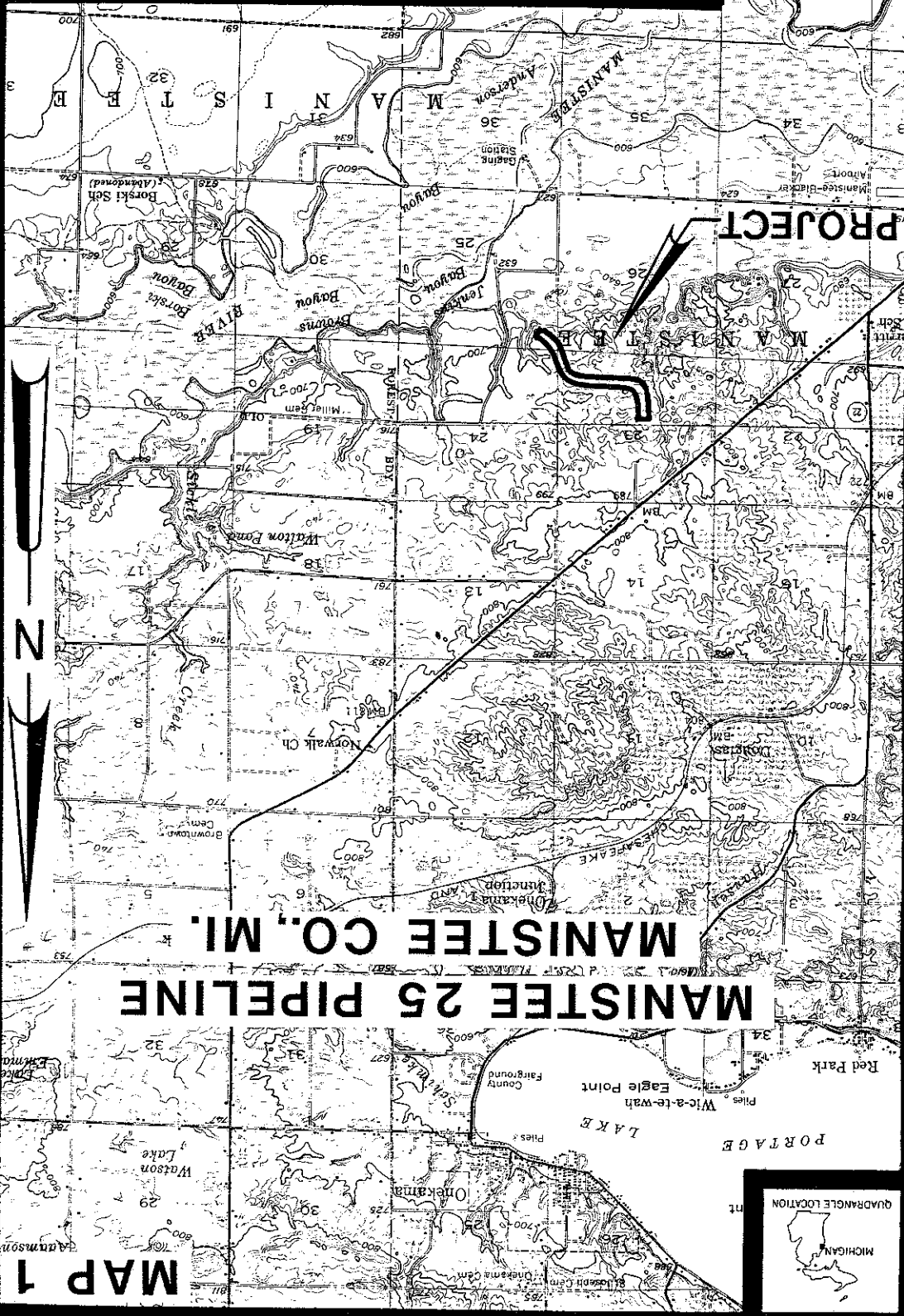
plains and open aspen woods. The frequency with which these

species, interspersed with scrubby oaks (including white, black,

scarlet, jack, and northern red stems) and red maples taking the

form of clumps of sprouts, occur can be explained by reference to

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 5 KILOMETERS



**MANISTEE 25 PIPELINE**  
**MANISTEE CO., MI.**



the distinct and superficial humus layer (a mor humus zone)

prevalent throughout the survey corridor. Only in a few cases

did we note humus to be well incorporated into the soil and

the vegetation to hint at development beyond the pine stage.

Formerly, however, the uplands flanking the Manistee were

noted for vast and dense stands of pine forest and associations

in which deciduous species were mixed with hemlock and the white

pine. Sandy outwash plains throughout this drainage supported

pine communities in which the dominants were the jack pine, red

pine, and white pine. Where morainal ridges and swells featured

soils that were fine-grained and loamy, deciduous forests in

which sugar maple and beech dominated, often with hemlock as a

codominant and an abundance of hophornbeam among the smaller

trees, were common. Alternatively, a mixture of deciduous trees

with hemlock and white pine (the Hemlock-White Pine-Northern

Hardwoods climax of Braun 1950) could be found throughout the

region. These dense forests, together with the elevation of

the land and its surface topography above the Manistee River,

so useful for establishing log slides, contributed greatly to

the settlement of this area after 1840 (Harnstein 1962; Page 1882).

#### PREVIOUS RESEARCH IN THE PROJECT AREA:

An examination of the historical and archaeological documents

and literature, relevant maps, and the state site files revealed

that no archaeological sites had ever been reported either within

the limits of or in close proximity to the Manistee 25 Pipeline

project. Be that as it may, a brief summary of previous archaeo-

logical findings in the Lower Manistee River Valley is in order.

1. The History of Manistee, Mason and Oceana Counties, Michigan (Page 1882) includes references to a historic period. Chippewa Indian village (20MT10) and burying ground (20MT7) and also a campsite and burial ground (20MT9) of probable Woodland affiliation located in the coastal zone along the channel linking Manistee Lake and Lake Michigan. This last site, the Fowler Shell Mounds, was opened by amateurs during the last century and revealed pottery and lithic material in association with human remains. Although the collection from this site is not available for study, the description provided by Page serves to verify the proposed Woodland cultural affiliation.

2. Hinsdale's (1931) Archaeological Atlas of Michigan locates the aforementioned sites and also plots on Map 11 a Woodland burial mound (20MT8) and another habitation site (20MT6) of uncertain cultural affiliation and/or temporal placement. No materials are available for these Hinsdale listings.

3. The Onkama Quadrangle Sheet, 15 Minute Series (USGS 1956) shows an Indian Mound (20MT43) and an Indian village (?) on the north side of the Manistee River in the SE corner of Brown Township about 12 km upstream and east-southeast of the Manistee 25 Pipeline project. The mound occupies a ridge spur overlooking the confluence of Browns Bayou with the Manistee in Section 36, and less than one km NE of this mound and overlooking the same bayou is located the village.

4. Fitting (1968) has published the Bear Creek site (20MT1). Located at the confluence of this creek with the Manistee



River in Section 22 of Brown Township, this Late Woodland seasonal fishing station is but 6.8 km east of the study area.

5. Finally, the state site files maintained by the Bureau of History, Michigan Department of State, contain information acquired during several Cultural Resource Management (CRM) projects conducted in response to planned expansion of the Manistee-Blacker Airport in Sections 33 and 34 of Manistee Township during the late 1970s. Referenced in the files are no fewer than 12 prehistoric sites, most of which occur in the river floodplain about 3.0-3.5 km downstream and to the SW of this project. Included are findspots and lithic debris scatters discovered during on-site evaluation by CRM survey teams, as well as a number of informant sites that have yielded collections pointing to occupation during the Archaic, Middle Woodland, and Late Woodland periods.

While this summary is not intended to be all inclusive, it does serve to illustrate the rich archaeological potential of the Lower Manistee River Valley and in part explain the great anticipation with which we viewed the survey of the pipeline corridor; especially the opportunity that would be afforded us to examine the very pronounced bluff top overlooking the valley where the pipeline and wellhead meet.

#### SURVEY FIELD PROCEDURES:

On the day that fieldwork was conducted, ground surface visibility along the entire length of the pipeline corridor was observed to be absolutely nil. This necessitated that systematic

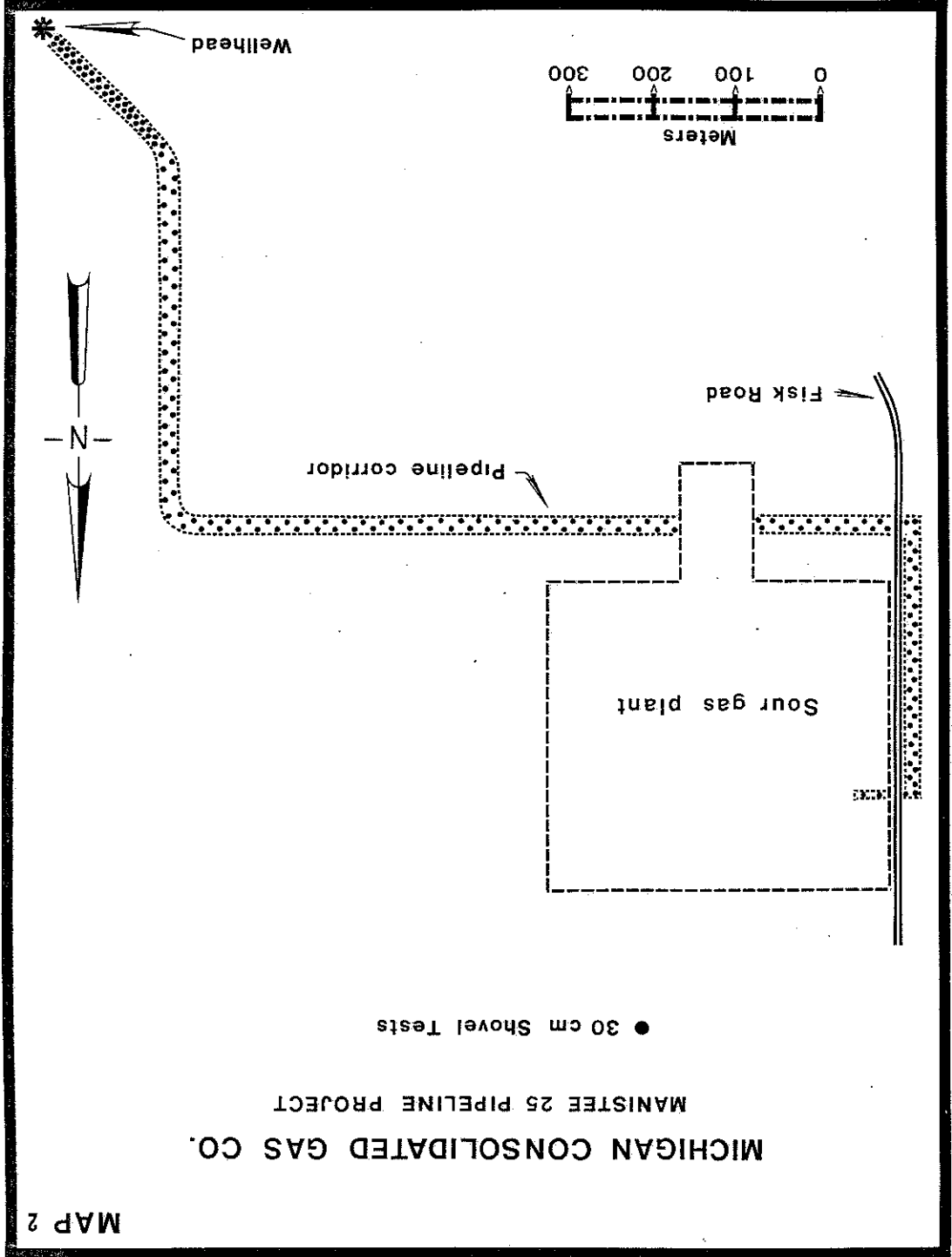
and intensive examination of the project area be accomplished by means of shovel testing procedures. Within the 23 m wide corridor, surveyors walked two transects that were on the average separated from one another by about 10 m. Shovel tests were spaced at intervals of approximately 20 m along each line of survey, and they were deliberately staggered so as to further minimize the distance between tests along the proposed route of the pipeline. Moreover, as surveyors entered Section 25 and approached the wellhead, the distance between shovel tests was reduced to 10 m or even less. In this manner we sought to intensify our examination of the 200 m segment of the corridor crossing the bluff top overlooking the Manistee River Valley to the south--that portion of the pipeline project affording the very best opportunity for discovering archaeological remains.

In aggregate, 180 shovel tests, ranging in depth from about 30-80 cm and in every instance providing unquestionable contact with culturally sterile subsol of Pleistocene origin, were placed along the Manistee 25 Pipeline corridor. The approximate locations of all shovel tests are indicated on Map 2. Systematic and intensive on-site evaluation in the manner described above, in conjunction with a careful review of the literature, documents, and state site files, provides the basis for the comments and recommendations that follow.

#### RESULTS OF THE SURVEY:

Not a single shovel test excavated along the route of this

pipeline revealed the slightest trace of cultural material. Soil profiles were observed to be consistently undisturbed (except



where this pipeline closely paralleled trenches excavated for other pipelines, resulting in some backfill being deposited over portions of the corridor through which the Manistee 25 Pipeline would pass), and the only real departure from a natural profile was observed to be the a mor humus layer so indicative of vegetational disturbances associated with cutting and fire in an area formerly supporting forest cover. The presence of Jack pine plains and open aspen woods over much of the area through which the pipeline corridor passes also attested to such disturbances of the climax plant associations.

Furthermore, in that portion of the project providing the best opportunity for locating a site, the bluff top where the wellhead is situated, we found that an area of approximately 10,000 m<sup>2</sup> around the wellhead had been thoroughly impacted (i.e. bladed and cleared of timber, brush, and 15-20 cm of soil) at the time that the well was drilled to bring the wellhead site into compliance with Department of Natural Resources specifications (Mr. Karl Freed, Gove Associates, and Dr. John Halsey, Bureau of History, personal communications). Had an archaeological site existed here, no evidence for its presence was observed during fieldwork.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based upon a systematic and intensive examination of the Michigan Consolidated Gas Company property in question, which yielded absolutely no information relating to the presence of archaeological remains, it is felt that no impact to cultural resources will occur as a result of proposed excavation of a

pipeline linking the wellhead and the nearby sour gas plant. It is therefore recommended that the Mantstee 25 Pipeline project be permitted to proceed as planned.

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