



1980

## 7-An Archaeological Survey of the Thornapple River Basin, Barry County Michigan: Phase One Completion Report

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DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY  
WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT NO. 7  
1980

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE THORNAPPLE RIVER BASIN,  
BARRY COUNTY, MICHIGAN: PHASE ONE COMPLETION REPORT

WILLIAM M. CREMIN  
PAUL W. MCALLISTER

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project has been funded through a grant from the United States Department of Interior, National Park Service, under the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, through the Michigan History Division, Michigan Department of State.

We wish to express our appreciation to those persons who served on the survey team and the residents of Barry County who so willingly assisted us in the collection of information regarding the archaeological resources of the area.

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## 1. Archaeological Research in the Thornapple Drainage of Barry County

When the Thornapple Basin Survey commenced in Spring 1979, the State site files at the University of Michigan (Great Lakes Laboratory) indicated the presence of 65 sites (of which 64 had been assigned site numbers) in Barry County. However, from the data available in the site files and information provided by the Michigan History Division it was quite apparent to us that no meaningful archaeological research had even been undertaken in the county. And, clearly, this was a situation which the MHD desired to have remedied.

Aside from the interest expressed by the State Archaeologist, Dr. John Halsey, and his staff in having a survey program initiated in the Thornapple River Basin, the senior author, Dr. William M. Cremin, was also anxious to expand his survey activities beyond the nearby Kalamazoo River Valley. After 4 years of systematic survey in portions of the latter drainage system, Cremin realized that many questions which had been instrumental in the establishment of the Kalamazoo Basin Survey remained unanswered; perhaps in part as a result of too much emphasis having been placed on confining the survey program to a single drainage system. For example, although KBS has resulted in the recovery of data from more than 280 new archaeological sites, occurring in almost 100 km<sup>2</sup> of the basin surveyed to date, none of these sites or, for that matter, the remaining 500+ sites which comprise of list of archaeological sites now known to occur in the lower and middle portions of the Kalamazoo Valley in Allegan and Kalamazoo counties, appeared to represent an especially good candidate for a late prehistoric village site! Yet, Dr. Elizabeth Garland's work at the Allegan Dam and Nordof sites in the late 1960's and more recent research by Garland at the Hacklander and Elam sites and Cremin at Allegan Dam and the Schwerdt site clearly established the presence of Upper Mississippian peoples in the Lower Kalamazoo Valley between ca. A.D. 1200-1500.

Following the first season of excavation at the 15th century Schwerdt site, Cremin (1977) proposed that the Kalamazoo River Valley may not provide all the data necessary for modeling the Upper Mississippian adaptive strategy. Rather, he contended that a pan-regional model, one embracing the Kalamazoo Valley together with areas lying within the drainages of other major streams in southwestern Michigan, might more accurately reflect the operation of the Upper Mississippian subsistence-settlement system. Not only would such a model be compatible with the historic utilization of the Kalamazoo Basin by the Potawatomi, who maintained semipermanent agricultural villages on the adjacent St. Joseph River and traveled to the Kalamazoo in spring to harvest the sturgeon and again in winter to hunt deer (Johnson 1880), but it would also correlate quite nicely with the environmental opportunities afforded by the Lower Kalamazoo Valley. Given the nature of the valley, particularly in Allegan County, a subsistence strategy oriented toward the seasonal procurement of concentrated aquatic and riparian resources of the valley floor, together with winter exploitation of white-tailed deer in the adjacent upland areas, would provide excellent dietary supplementation in an economic strategy which emphasized maize agriculture. And all the data currently available for the late prehistoric period in southwestern Michigan indicate that aboriginal subsistence was derived from a mixed agriculture-hunting-gathering strategy-- an adaptation very well suited to the Carolinian Biotic Province.

With these thoughts in mind, and responding to the State Archaeologist's request that WMU consider submitting a proposal for initiating survey work in the Thornapple River Valley, the senior author and his associates commenced a document and site file search, evaluated the available data, and established a series of research objectives which would be used to guide Phase One activities in Barry County.

## 2. The Project Area

Barry County is situated immediately east of Allegan County and north of Kalamazoo County. It encompasses an area of 571 mi<sup>2</sup>, or 1479 km<sup>2</sup>. The western and southern portions of the county lie in the Kalamazoo drainage system, and the remaining portion, aggregating 983.5 km<sup>2</sup> (66.5%), is drained by the Thornapple River and its tributaries. The Thornapple, in turn, is the major tributary of the Grand River, which empties into Lake Michigan at Grand Haven, about 43 km north of the mouth of the Kalamazoo River near Saugatuck, Michigan.

This area is heavily dissected throughout, reflecting the presence of the Valpariso Moraine which enters the county from the southwest and expands to dominate the central portion before exiting near the northwest corner of the county. The SW-NE trending belts of morainal terrain thin along the western edge and also in the south central portion of the county where outwash plains and glacial channel deposits prevail. These areas which are dotted with lakes drain southward toward the Kalamazoo River. The Thornapple River, which enters the county on the east near the community of Nashville and exits north of Middleville in northeastern Barry County, occupies ancient lake beds and glacial spillways, as do those smaller streams which are tributary to the Thornapple. This drainage system effectively "breaks the back" of the morainal topography which dominates the county's landscape. In the eastern portion of the county the Thornapple Valley is flanked by extensive areas of till plain deposits. These are especially prevalent north of the valley in Woodland and Carlton townships and to the south of the river in Maple Grove and Hastings townships.

Floristically, at the time of Euro-American settlement, the county was dominated by 2 major plant associations—Oak and Oak-Hickory Forest in the West and Beech-Maple Forest in the East. The distribution of native plant communities corresponds quite closely to the occurrences of moraines, ancient sandy lake beds



## MAP 1



and glacial channels and spillways in the case of the former, and till plains which support the beech-maple association. In marked contrast to Allegan County, this area is not noted for extensive swamp associations flanking the major stream courses. And in comparison to Kalamazoo County, native prairie vegetation is almost nonexistent. Furthermore, white pine, which was observed in scattered stands throughout Allegan County and in the northwestern corner of Kalamazoo County at the time of settlement, has not been noted in Barry County prior to the recent establishment of pine plantations (Brewer 1979).

Perhaps, in the final analysis, the most important consideration with respect to the potential for archaeological research in Barry County is the fact that only about 15% of this area is developed in ways which effectively prohibit site location survey, and that water covers a mere 3% of the remaining land surface. The remainder is either in forest (26%) or is being used for agricultural purposes (56%). The specific target for evaluation in this project, the antecedents of which are to be found in the research design used by the Kalamazoo Basin Survey, is the acreage currently in cultivation and, additionally, those tracts which now lie fallow but might in the near future be put into production. These are the optimal areas for systematic site location survey employing principally the methods of the walk-over survey or surface reconnaissance.

### 3. Previous Archaeological Research in Barry County

No meaningful archaeological research has been undertaken in the Thornapple River drainage or, for that matter, in Barry County. A thorough examination of the state site files at the University of Michigan (Great Lakes Laboratory) revealed a total of 64 sites recorded for the county. Of this number, 26 sites were located on the basis of brief descriptions found in old documents and histories, 19 were listed in Hinsdale's Atlas, 17 were provided by avocational archaeologists, collectors and individuals affiliated with the Charlton Park Museum, Grand Valley State Colleges and the University of Michigan, and 2 were derived from unknown sources.

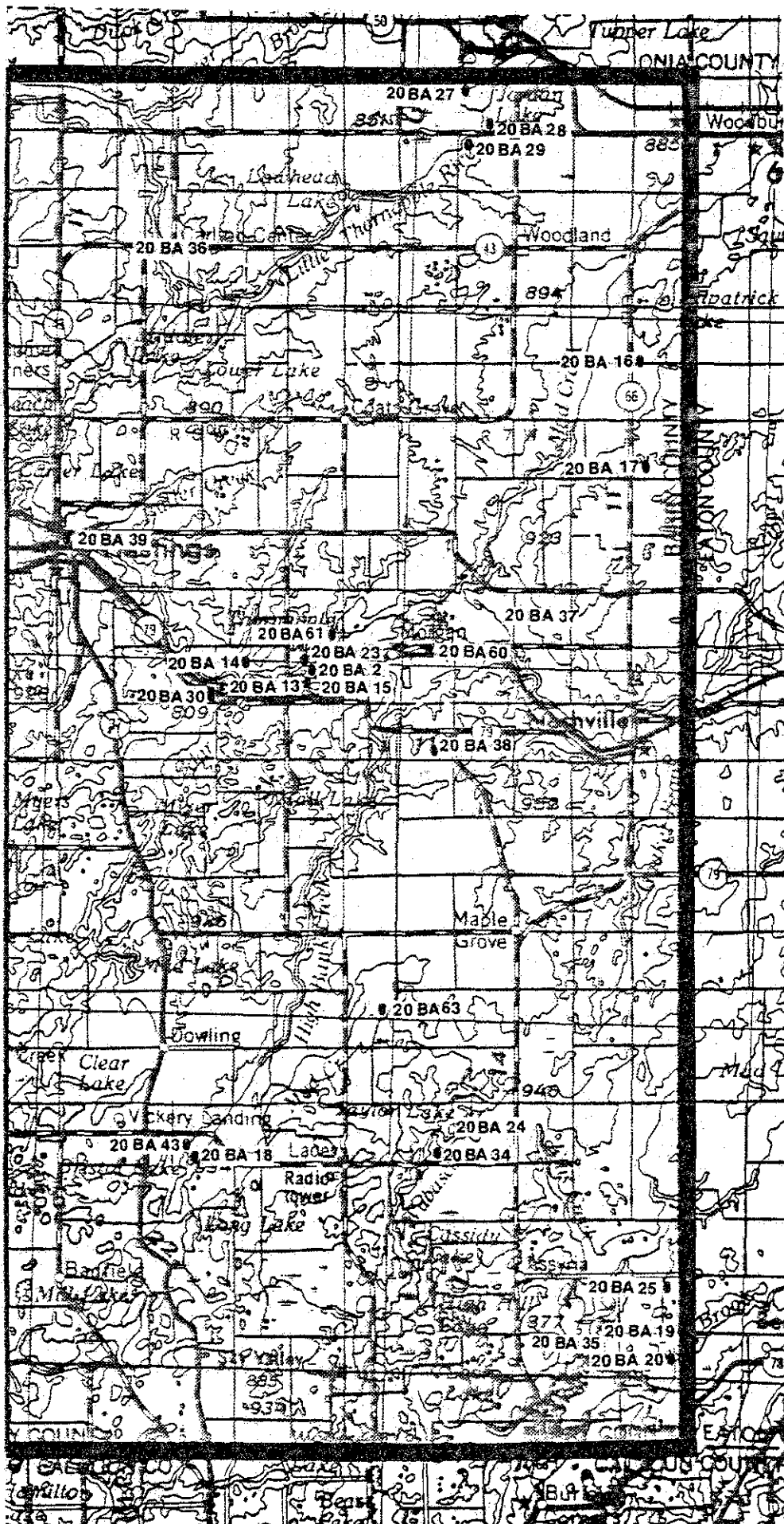
A concerted effort was made by the survey team to relocate every site recorded for those portions of the county which we intended to evaluate during the project. The brief descriptions which follow summarize data in the state site files and also provide information regarding our attempts to relocate them and assess their current cultural status. Problems encountered during this phase of the project are also discussed.

- 20 BA 1      A canoe fragment found near the west end of Baker Lake in Section 17, Yankee Springs Township, T3N R10W, and reported by Greenman (catalog no. 39826, UMMA). Since the find had previously been confirmed during an on-site visit by Greenman, our survey team did not attempt to relocate the site.
- 20 BA 2      A Hinsdale site located near Thornapple Lake in the SW 1/4 of Section 25, Hastings Township, T3N R8W. According to the site files it represents a village site which produced a dugout canoe (UMMA catalog no. 22203). No attempt to confirm this site was made during the current project.
- 20 BA 3      A village site along a creek and S of Freeport in the SW corner of Section 1, Irving Township, T4N R9W. The site yielded projectile points and chippage (UMMA catalog nos. 1156 and 1178). Our surveyors were unable to gain access to the property and confirmation of the site was therefore impossible.
- 20 BA 4      A village located SW of Middleville and on a trail in Section 33, Thornapple Township, T4N R10W. The chipped stone material from this site is at the University of Michigan (UMMA catalog nos. 1135, 1292 and 1308). Given the poor provenience in the site files, it was not unanticipated that our surveyors would be unable to relocate this site.

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# MAP 2

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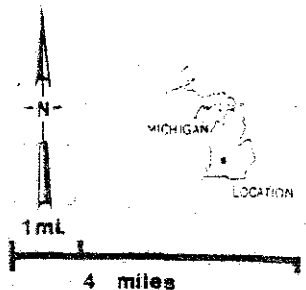


# Thornapple Basin Survey

BARRY  
COUNTY  
eastern half

1979 Phase One

## Previously Recorded Archaeological Sites



- 20 BA 5 A cemetery listed in the Hinsdale Atlas and supposedly located along the railroad tracks SE of the Thornapple River in the SW 1/4 of Section 31, Irving Township, T4N R9W. The provenience given in the files contradicts that listed in the Atlas. The survey team attempted extensive coverage in the suspected area, but was unable to confirm this site's existence.
- 20 BA 6 A village site located E of Gun Lake in the center of Section 32, Yankee Springs Township, T3N R10W. This Hinsdale site location is now developed or in woodlot. Surveyors were not able to confirm this site.
- 20 BA 7 A cemetery located in the NW 1/4 of Section 1, Yankee Springs Township, T3N R10W. This Hinsdale listing could not be confirmed as surveyors were denied access to the land.
- 20 BA 8 A cemetery located N of Pine Lake and on the township line in Section 5, Prairieville Township, T1N R10W. Surveyors were able to locate a small Euro-American family plot in the general vicinity, but given the poor provenience for this Hinsdale site we are not sure that this cemetery is the one recorded in the site files. No Native American cemetery was observed in the area investigated.
- 20 BA 9 A cemetery located along a trail S of the railroad and the Thornapple River in Section 5, Rutland Township, T3N R9W. This Hinsdale site could not be relocated due to poor provenience and our inability to gain access to the land in question.
- 20 BA 10 A mound on the same trail S of the railroad and the Thornapple River in Section 5, Rutland Township, T3N R9W. The same problems as noted above prevented our relocating this feature.
- 20 BA 11 A village site located SW of the Thornapple River in the NW 1/4 of Section 4, Rutland Township, T3N R9W. The Hinsdale Atlas shows this site as being NE of the river. It may be the same site as recorded by the survey team and designated TBS-79-25 (20 BA 89). Once again, the matter of provenience in the state files may be questioned.
- 20 BA 12 A cemetery located SW of Podunk Lake in the NW 1/4 of Section 34, Rutland Township, T3N R9W. Hinsdale's Atlas shows this site NE of the lake in the middle of the W 1/2 of Section 26. Provenience should be rechecked. We were unable to confirm this site in the field.
- 20 BA 13 A village site located NW of Quimby and between the railroad and the Thornapple River in Section 26, Hastings Township, T3N R8W. Insufficient provenience and current land use precluded our confirming this site.

- 20 BA 14 A cemetery located along a creek in the NW 1/4 of Section 26, Hastings Township, T3N R8W. Local landowners reported that they had never found anything here, and our evaluation of the parcel did not result in our locating this site. We would suggest that the site may occur in the NE 1/4 of Section 27.
- 20 BA 15 A mound located on a trail SW of Thornapple Lake in Section 25, Hastings Township, T3N R8W. The location may more properly be W of the lake in Charlton Park. We were not able to confirm this site due to vegetative cover and present land use.
- 20 BA 16 A mound near a creek in the SW corner of Section 25, Woodland Township, T4N R7W. Again, the provenience appears questionable. It is possible that this feature, if it stood here, has since fallen victim to land development. The surveyors could not confirm this site as access to the area about this location was denied them.
- 20 BA 17 A mound located S of the creek in the southern portion of Section 1, Castleton Township, T3N R7W. Provenience precluded relocation of this feature.
- 20 BA 18 A village site N of Bristol Lake in Section 3, Johnstown Township, T1N R8W. As this site is located outside of the project area, no effort was made to confirm its existence.
- 20 BA 19 A village located in the southern portion of Section 24 (on the line between Sections 24 and 25), Assyria Township, T1N R7W. Due to insufficient provenience and present land use, surveyors were unable to confirm this site.
- 20 BA 20 A cemetery on a creek in the center of the E portion of Section 25, Assyria Township, T1N R7W. This Hinsdale listing could not be relocated due to insufficient provenience and very heavy vegetative cover throughout the suspected site area.
- 20 BA 21 A village site located between Pine and Shelp Lakes in the NE corner of Section 5, Prairieville Township, T1N R10W. This area is today in pasture. Partial survey of the area did not reveal any indication of its presence.
- 20 BA 22 A cemetery located W of Long Lake in the middle of Section 35, Prairieville Township, T1N R10W. This Hinsdale site has recently been confirmed by the Bernard Historical Society. The survey team did not visit the location.
- 20 BA 23 A site located in present-day Charlton Park. No information available other than the site was an historic mission-trading post.



- 20 BA 24 A village or camp located in Section 4, Assyria Township, T1N R7W. This site is reported in Johnson's (1880) History of Allegan and Barry Counties. The survey team was unable to relocate it.
- 20 BA 25 A site which Johnson (1880) indicates is located in the W 1/2, NE 1/4 of Section 24, Assyria Township, T1N R7W. This location was examined by surveyors, but the site was not confirmed.
- 20 BA 26 A burial found in Section 22, Thornapple Township, T4N R10W, about 60 yds. W of Highway 37. Provenience was insufficient for surveyors to relocate this site. The skeletal remains are at the University of Michigan (UMMA catalog no. 77290).
- 20 BA 27 An isolated find in the NW 1/4 of Section 4, Woodland Township, T4N R7W. Inasmuch as this site was reported by a reliable informant, Doug Schmuck, no attempt was made to confirm it.
- 20 BA 28 A village site of early Late Woodland affiliation in the SE 1/4 of Section 4, Woodland Township, T4N R7W. The site was recorded by Schmuck, and the survey team did not attempt to relocate it.
- 20 BA 29 An isolated find in the NW 1/4 of Section 9, Woodland Township, T4N R7W. This site, also recorded by Schmuck, was not confirmed by surveyors.
- 20 BA 30 An historic village site, the Upper Thornapple Indian Settlement, located in the SE 1/4 of Section 27, Hastings Township, T3N R8W. Originally reported in Weissert (1932), our survey team was unable to confirm this site due to dense vegetative cover and insufficient provenience.
- 20 BA 31 A mission and settlement site, presumably associated with cemeteries, located in Section 35, Prairieville Township, T1N R10W. The historic Slater Mission has been confirmed by Bernard (1967), but the precise provenience is still lacking. Surveyors did not visit the suspected location.
- 20 BA 32 A ceremonial area, the Middleville Council Grounds, located in the SE 1/4, SE 1/4 of Section 22 and NE 1/4, NE 1/4 of Section 27, Thornapple Township, T4N R10W. This historic site is listed in Weissert (1932). The area has since been obliterated by the expansion of the community of Middleville. Surveyors were unable to confirm its existence.
- 20 BA 33 The Charboneau-Moreau Trading Post is recorded in the files as having been located in the W 1/2, NW 1/4 of Section 33, Thornapple Township, T4N R10W. The site was relocated and a surface collection made by the survey team. Surveyors note, however, that the provenience should be corrected to indicate that the site is located in the NW 1/4, NW 1/4, NE 1/4 of Section 33.

- 20 BA 34 An Historic Period winter camp, the Wabascon Creek Campsite, is located in the SE 1/4 of Section 5, Assyria Township, T1N R7W. Due to extremely dense vegetative cover, the survey team was not able to confirm this Johnson (1880) site.
- 20 BA 35 Hunting ground and kill sites located in Section 26, Assyria Township, T1N R7W. The reference for this site is found in Johnson's (1880) history. Inadequate provenience hindered our efforts to delineate specific site loci in this section.
- 20 BA 36 An historic campsite listed in Johnson (1880) and supposedly located somewhere in Carlton Township, T4N R8W. Without provenience, any attempt to relocate this site would be impossible.
- 20 BA 37 Another Johnson (1880) site, this time located in Section 22, Castleton Township, T3N R7W. Without better provenience, it is doubtful that this site will ever be confirmed.
- 20 BA 38 A maple sugaring camp of the Historic Period located in the SE 1/4 of Section 32, Castleton Township, T3N R7W. This Johnson (1880) listing, called the Mudge Farm Sugar Camp, is supposedly located in an existing sugar maple grove. The location was carefully surveyed, but no artifactual evidence was found. Surveyors noted that the provenience should be given as the SW 1/4, SE 1/4 of Section 32.
- 20 BA 39 The Hastings Campsite, an Historic Period site, is listed in Potter (1912). Its location is given as N 1/2, NW 1/4 of Section 17, Hastings Township, T3N R8W. The city of Hastings is now located on the site; hence, surveyors were unable to confirm it.
- 20 BA 40 An Historic Period winter camp listed in Johnson (1880). The site file provenience is SW 1/4, SW 1/4 of Section 1 and SE 1/4, SE 1/4 of Section 2, Hope Township, T2N R9W. Careful evaluation of this location by the survey team failed to disclose any evidence for the presence of this campsite.
- 20 BA 41 The Cedar Creek Campsite is also listed in Johnson (1880). This historic site is located in the NE 1/4 of Section 36, Hope Township, T2N R9W. The site area was found to be overgrown, and partial survey of this location failed to produce confirmatory evidence of any sort.
- 20 BA 42 The "Middle Village" is recorded in virtually all documents relating to the history of Barry County. It is located in Section 33, Thornapple Township, T4N R10W. Provenience made it impossible for surveyors to confirm this site. However, it is entirely possible that this site is the same as 20 BA 4.

- 20 BA 43 The Bristol Lake Village, another Historic Period site, is located in the SW 1/4 of Section 3, Johnstown Township, T1N R8W. Since this Johnson (1880) site occurs outside the project area, no attempt was made to confirm it.
- 20 BA 44 The Joseph Coffin Trading Post is listed in Johnson (1880) as being located in the N 1/2, NE 1/4 of Section 3, Orangeville Township, T2N R10W. The survey team visited this location, but their efforts to confirm the site were hampered by dense vegetation.
- 20 BA 45 McKnight's Trading Post is also first mentioned in Johnson (1880). It is said to have been located in Section 9, Orangeville Township, T2N R10W. Poor provenience, together with dense vegetation and a modern housing development, made confirmation of this site impossible.
- 20 BA 46 The habitation site and fields referred to as Sagamaw's Village are mentioned many times in the Barry County documents. The location is given as the N 1/2, NW 1/4 of Section 4, Orangeville Township, T2N R10W and the S 1/2, SW 1/4 of Section 33, Yankee Springs Township, T3N R10W. Surveyors found this area to be either developed or in woodlot, and they were unable to confirm this Historic Period Indian village.
- 20 BA 47 A campsite dating to the mid 1800's and listed in Weissert (1932). The site is located in Section 36, Prairieville Township, T1N R10W. Again, inadequate provenience hampered our efforts to relocate the site. Moreover, the area is today one of tract homes and woodlots, making it highly improbable that this site will ever be confirmed.
- 20 BA 48 Chippewa's Village is described in the documents as a Native American community of log cabins dating to the mid 19th century. The site is located in Section 1, Thornapple Township, T4N R10W. Inadequate provenience made confirmation unlikely, so no attempt to survey the whole section was made. Surveyors note that this site may be the same as TBS-79-3 (20 BA 67).
- 20 BA 49 A camp mentioned in Weissert (1932) is located in Section 5, Prairieville Township, T1N R10W. Again, insufficient provenience made confirmation impossible.
- 20 BA 50 The Eli Waite Garden Beds are listed in Johnson (1880). This site is located in the NW 1/4 of Section 5 and the NE 1/4 of Section 6, Prairieville Township, T1N R10W. Continuous plowing of this tract of land has thoroughly obliterated this feature and the survey team was not able to confirm the existence of the garden beds.

- 20 BA 51 A cemetery is discussed in Weissert (1932). Dating to the Historic Period, this site is located in the S 1/2, SE 1/4 of Section 36, Thornapple Township, T4N R10W. The parcel identified in the documents was thoroughly evaluated, but surveyors could not relocate this burial ground.
- 20 BA 52 Campau's Thornapple Township Trading Post is mentioned in Johnson (1880) and was located in the SE corner of Thornapple Township, T4N R10W. This Historic Period site was not visited by the survey team and its precise location remains unknown.
- 20 BA 53 A village site given in Johnson (1880) and located in the SE 1/4 of Section 35, Thornapple Township, T4N R10W. This historic site could not be confirmed due to the landowner's refusal to grant access to the parcel in question.
- 20 BA 54 A surface find in Section 6, Hope Township, T2N R9W. Assigned to the Archaic Period by the recorder, our efforts to relocate this site were hampered by poor provenience. We suggest that GVSC archaeological files be consulted for more precise locational data.
- 20 BA 55 This surface find, located in the SE 1/4, SW 1/4 of Section 7, Rutland Township, T3N R9W, is also assigned to the Archaic Period by the GVSC surveyor who recorded the site. Our survey team was able to confirm this site, and the surface collection recovered is in the Department of Anthropology, W.M.U.
- 20 BA 56 Another surface find recorded by GVSC, but this time dating to the Paleo-Indian Period. This site is located in Sections 19 and 30, Rutland Township, T3N R9W. The entire area is now overgrown with dense vegetation. Without more precise provenience, it is doubtful whether this site can ever be confirmed.
- 20 BA 57 An Archaic site in the NE 1/4, NE 1/4 of Section 32, Rutland Township, T3N R9W. This site is described as a surface find in the site files, without any reference to the sorts of material which were recovered. Formerly the area was under cultivation. Today it is dense second growth. Surveyors were unable to relocate the site.
- 20 BA 58 An Archaic surface find in the SW 1/4, Section 11, Yankee Springs Township, T3N R10W. Surveyors could not relocate this site. They feel that the probable location is an old cornfield in the SE 1/4, SW 1/4 of Section 11.

- 20 BA 59 A projectile point of probable Early Woodland affiliation found near the base of a sand dune overlooking a small marsh and pond in the SE 1/4, SE 1/4 of Section 20, Orangeville Township, T2N R10W. Surveyors found the area to be overgrown on the occasion of their visit and were unable to confirm this site.
- 20 BA 60 A possible village site in the NW 1/4 of Section 29, Castleton Township, T3N R7W. The survey team examined the collection from this site in the Charlton Park Museum and also visited the property in question. This site is regarded as being confirmed.
- 20 BA 61 A site in the SE 1/4 of Section 24, Hastings Township, T3N R7W. The surveyors studied the collection from this site now in the Charlton Park Museum and also spoke with the collector/landowner regarding it. Although more precise provenience is still needed, we regard this site as being confirmed.
- 20 BA 62 A village site located over a rather large area including portions of the S 1/2, NE 1/4 of Section 11, N 1/2, SW 1/4 of Section 11, and S 1/2, NW 1/4 of Section 11, Irving Township, T4N R9W. The cultural material now at the Charlton Park Museum appears to date from Paleo-Indian through Historic periods. Based on follow-up conversations with the collector/landowner, the survey team is inclined to view this situation as perhaps representing as many as 3 discrete sites. However, surveyors were unable to confirm this site(s) in the field.
- 20 BA 63 A chipping station located in the center of Section 30, Maple Grove Township, T2N R7W. Based on material collected from this site, the recorder from the Charlton Park Museum has assigned it to the Paleo-Indian through Middle Woodland periods. The survey team examined the collection, but were not able to field confirm this site's location.
- 20 BA 64 A site supposedly located in the SW 1/4 of Section 30, Rutland Township, T3N R9W. Due to poor provenience, the WMU survey team was unable to locate the property on which the site is reported to occur. In fact, surveyors could not even find the farm owned by the Osborn(e) family in this part of the township.

In addition to the aforementioned sites which had been assigned state numbers prior to the initiation of our project, the site files at the University of Michigan also referenced the following cemetery:

The Johnson Indian Burial site, located in the SE 1/4, NW 1/4 of Section 4, Rutland Township, T3N R9W. This site, recorded by Kim Dammers of the Charlton Park Museum, is situated on a bend in the Thornapple River just downstream from the Johnson

farm. Due to the presence of trade items in the collection, it in all probability dates to the Early Historic Period. The site was excavated under less than ideal conditions, and we are uncertain as to the present location of the 11-12 skeletons which were recovered. Dammers is preparing a report on information he has gathered regarding this site. The survey team did not attempt to confirm the location in the field inasmuch as the site had been destroyed.

#### 4. Research Objectives for Phase One

To initiate meaningful archaeological research in the Thornapple River Basin of Barry County has necessitated that we first evaluate the region in terms of its potential for intensive, systematic site location survey. The Phase One objectives of the project are as follows:

##### A. Assessment of Current Land Use Patterns

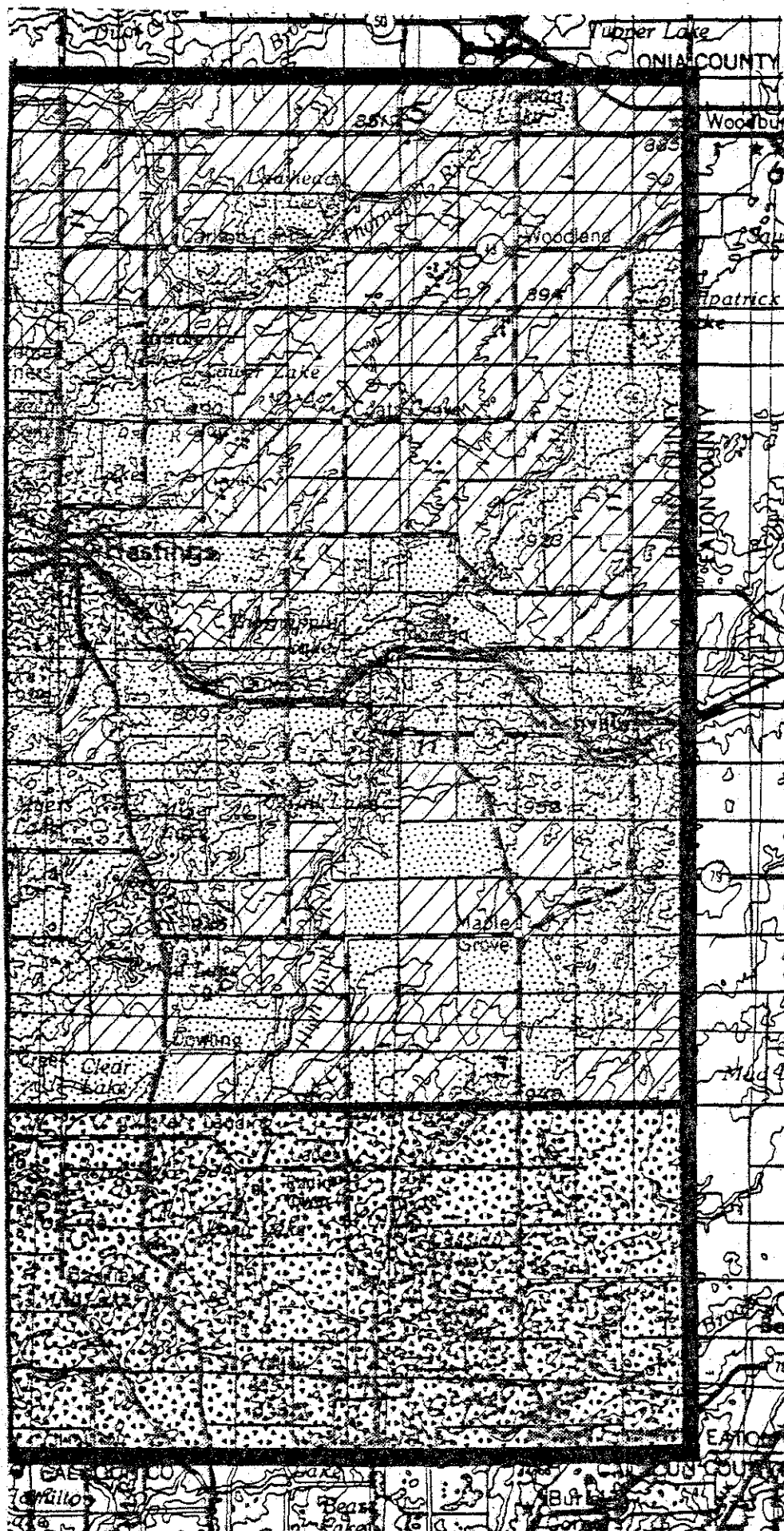
Based upon our prior experience in the Kalamazoo River Basin, we realized that it would be most helpful if we could collect information on current land use practices before establishment of the survey research design and, specifically, the selection of the methods by which the area could be most efficiently sampled. Without some prior knowledge of the ways in which the landscape of the project area had been modified in recent years, it would be difficult at best to decide whether transect or point procedures would be most beneficial and productive with respect to gaining a representative sample of the probable prehistoric site population for use in the creation of a predictive model of aboriginal settlement in the basin.

Our work in the basin initially entailed overviewing the area by car for the purpose of mapping those tracts of land which were: (1) actively being farmed or influenced by erosional processes so as to provide reasonably good ground visibility for a survey team employing walk-over survey procedures; (2) presently in pasture or lying fallow, but might be anticipated to be put into production in the near future; and (3) under water, in woodlot or developed in ways which would preclude evaluation by surface reconnaissance.

Map 3 illustrates the manner in which data collected from 10 townships in the county have been utilized to provide a basic "tool" for assessing the potential of areas within the drainage system for systematic site survey. The map clearly indicates that significant portions of many townships are now

## MAP 3







# Thornapple Basin Survey


**BARRY  
COUNTY**  
eastern half


1979 Phase One

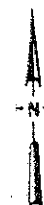
Land Use Survey

 < 50%  
surveyable

 < 50%  
potentially  
surveyable

 > 50%  
surveyable

 outside  
survey  
universe



1 mi.

4 miles

MICHIGAN

LOCATION

available for evaluation, especially in the NE 1/4 of the county. Furthermore, it is anticipated by the surveyors that sizeable tracts along virtually the entire length of the Thornapple River will have some potential for survey, if not at the present time, most assuredly in the near future. Although the survey team was not able to extend this land use survey to every portion of the Thornapple drainage in the time allotted, specifically in Hope and Johnstown townships, the data gathered clearly have great value in terms of planning subsequent phases of the long-term project envisioned by WMU archaeologists.

B. Evaluation of Data in the State Site Files and Information Provided by Landowners/Collectors and Local Institutions

The second aspect of this year's project involved our attempts to relocate previously recorded sites and to evaluate information in the hands of local residents and institutions which had not as yet been reported to the State. Our activities with respect to relocating/confirming sites now bearing state site numbers are summarized in Section 3 of this report.

Generally, this aspect of our work was seriously hampered for a variety of reasons. First, inadequate or incomplete provenience was a major problem with respect to our efforts to relocate "known" sites. Even in those instances when our efforts to find a particular location were successful, we were more often than not unable to find the slightest indication of the former presence of a site. In those instances when our efforts were supported by reasonably good provenience information, we often could not relocate a site due to the area's now being developed or in dense vegetative cover which prohibited proper assessment of the ground surface.

Fortunately, local informants were often willing to help us. The knowledge they possessed with respect to the precise location of sites made it possible for the survey team to pinpoint the target area and efficiently probe beneath the surface for confirmatory evidence. More often than not, however, even sub-surface testing failed to reveal evidence of the site which we were seeking to

confirm.

In the course of interviewing more than 30 Barry County residents having knowledge of area prehistory and the whereabouts of archaeological sites, the survey team gathered information regarding 25 collector sites in both the Thornapple and Kalamazoo drainages. Every lead we received was followed up by a visit to the locality in question (often in the company of the informant) for the purpose of confirming the site's existence. We were ultimately able to confirm only 6 of the informant sites, and these are discussed in Section 5 of the report together with the 22 sites discovered by the survey team. Of the 6 informant sites to which we have assigned state site numbers, 5 occur in the Thornapple River Basin and the 6th is situated near the southern boundary of the county overlooking Gull Lake, which is in the Kalamazoo River Basin.

In summary, this aspect of our Phase One research program has resulted in the confirmation of 21 of 89 sites for which we had received information, either as a result of our examination of the state site files at the University of Michigan or information which we had received from project area residents whom we had interviewed after entering the field. That we were unable to confirm more of the previously recorded and collector sites for which we had gathered information reflects those problems presented earlier; namely, inadequate or incorrect site provenience and current land use practices which all too frequently prohibited thorough evaluation of the suspected site locations.

#### C. Limited Surface Reconnaissance in Selected Portions of the Basin and County

In addition to surveying numerous parcels of land in an attempt to confirm previously recorded sites and follow up on leads provided by local landowners and collectors, the survey team also evaluated more than 4 km<sup>2</sup> of the Barry County landscape. This aspect of our research program not only led to the discovery of 22 new archaeological sites, but also provided surveyors with the opportunity to gain some first-hand impressions of the local topography,

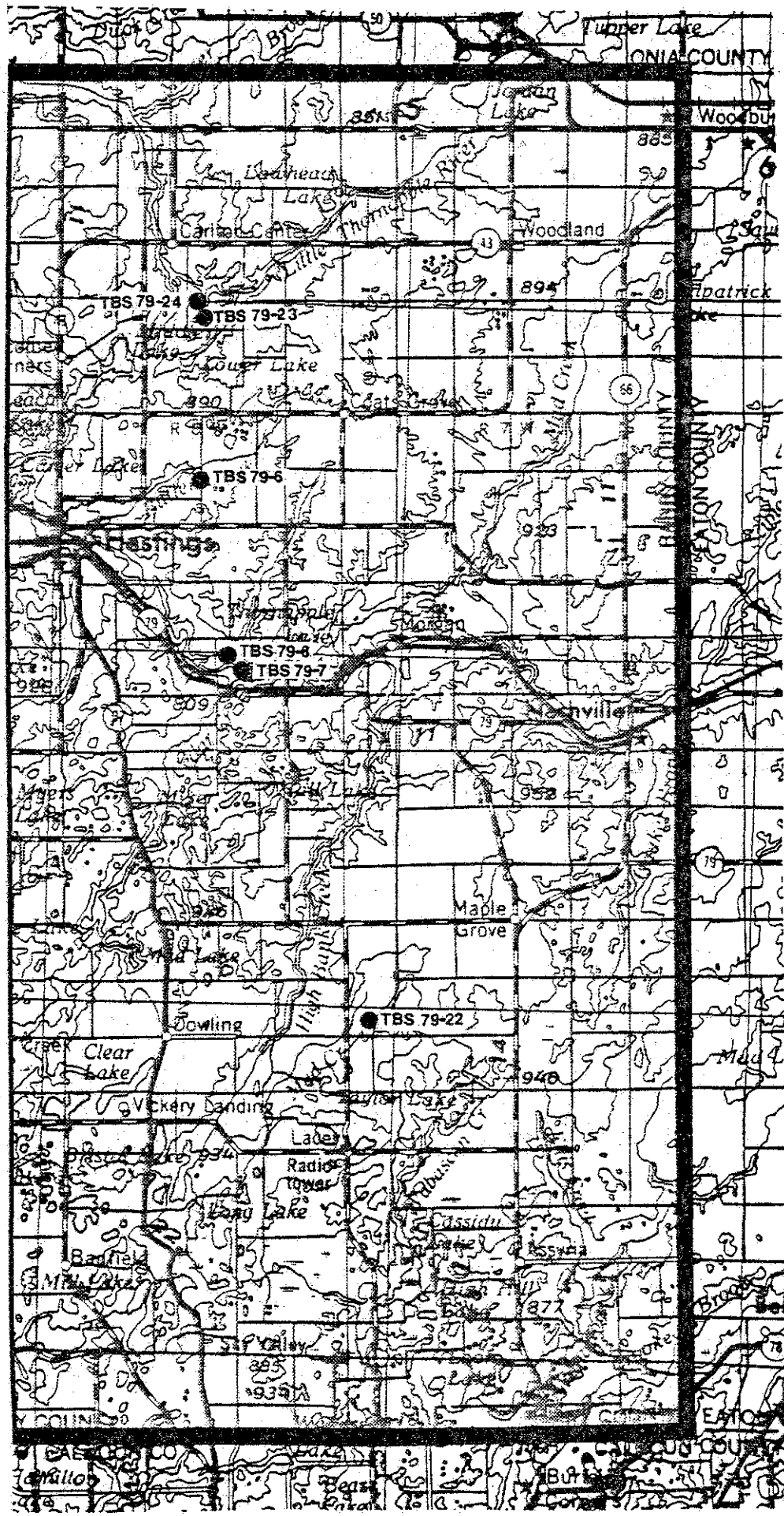
drainage patterns and vegetative cover. The basis for selection of specific parcels for systematic surface reconnaissance was strictly judgemental; that is, we evaluated areas to which we were given access by landowners and which we felt might potentially be characterized by high site density and/or occupational intensity during prehistoric times. For example, based on our examination of the historical documents, the local environmental setting and some valuable information provided by area residents, we were particularly anxious to evaluate accessible tracts of land in close proximity to what had formerly been called Bull's Prairie in the SW 1/4 of Irving Township and Scales Prairie in the SW 1/4 of Thornapple Township. Also, we were much intrigued by reports of numerous sites supposedly located around a body of water called Indian Lake in the southern portion of the county (and in the Kalamazoo drainage system). Given our interest in locating late prehistoric/early historic village sites in the county, these areas required some assessment beyond merely seeking to confirm previously recorded and/or collector sites reported to occur here. As the project moved toward completion in terms of its other aspects, surveyors were able to devote more time and energy to this last objective, collecting some valuable environmental data and recording 22 new sites in the process.

## 5. Description of Sites Recorded and Catalog of Surface Collections

With respect to the prehistoric sites listed below, an assessment is made regarding each site's relative significance. That is, a "low, moderate, or high priority" is assigned to each site reflecting its potential value for reconstructing cultural chronology and elucidating and explaining prehistoric settlement in the Thornapple River Basin of Barry County. As pertains to the historic sites described in this section, the priority assigned reflects the extent to which we feel that archaeological test excavations may provide valuable supplemental information regarding regional history. Our own examination of the documents suggests that there remains much to be learned about early Euro-American contacts with the native inhabitants of this region. And archaeological research can certainly contribute to the solution of those problems which have long interested both historians and ethnographers.

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| TBS-79-1<br>20 BA 65 | Pratt. Possible trading post or early homestead in the SW 1/4, SW 1/4, SW 1/4 of Section 33, Irving Township, T4N R9W, Barry County, Michigan. About 300 m <sup>2</sup> of cultural debris, including 3 possible foundations, on a flat bank overlooking the Thornapple River. Moderate to high priority.<br>1 ax head<br>1 fragment of iron kettle<br>1 large nail or spike<br>12 pieces of mortar<br>1 piece of historic ceramics     |
| TBS-79-2<br>20 BA 66 | Hill Creek. Possible campsite in the NW 1/4, NE 1/4 of Section 11, Yankee Springs Township, T3N R10W, Barry County, Michigan. About 80 m <sup>2</sup> of cultural material on a sandy plateau above a marsh situated in a deciduous forest. Low to moderate priority.<br>1 projectile point<br>1 chert chip   |
| TBS-79-3<br>20 BA 67 | Domers. Possible campsite in the N 1/2, SW 1/4, SE 1/4 of Section 1, Thornapple Township, T3N R10W, Barry County, Michigan. About 400 m <sup>2</sup> of cultural material, including a previous collection with Hi-Lo and Archaic points, found on gently rolling land above a marsh. Moderate priority.<br>17 chert chips<br>1 historic ceramic fragment<br>1 possible chopper<br>1 bone fragment<br>light amount of fire-cracked rock |
| TBS-79-4<br>20 BA 68 | Nagel. Informant site in the NE 1/4, SW 1/4 of Section 31, Irving Township, T4N R9W, Barry County, Michigan. Several "arrowheads" reportedly found by landowner in sandy loam of gently rolling hills. Low to moderate priority.  |

## MAP 4

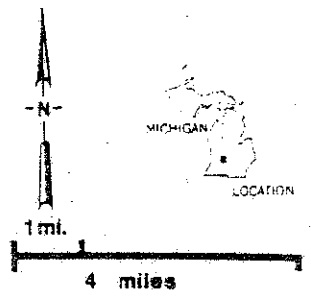


# Thornapple Basin Survey

**BARRY  
COUNTY  
eastern half**

**1979 Phase One**

**Archaeological  
Sites**



- 21
- TBS-79-5  
20 BA 69      Hellinga #1. Informant site in the NW 1/4, SW 1/4, SE 1/4 of Section 28, Thornapple Township, T4N R10W, Barry County, Michigan. An historic (possibly prehistoric) Indian cemetery reportedly located within an area of hardwood forest adjacent to a corn field near Scales Prairie. Moderate priority.
- TBS-79-6  
20 BA 70      Garrison. Early historic log cabin in the NE 1/4, SE 1/4, SW 1/4 of Section 3, Hastings Township, T3N R8W, Barry County, Michigan, on a gently rolling till plain. Low priority.
- TBS-79-7  
20 BA 71      Lenz #1. Possible campsite in the SE 1/4, NW 1/4, SW 1/4 of Section 26, Hastings Township, T3N R8W, Barry County, Michigan. About 40 m<sup>2</sup> of cultural material found on a hill above the Thornapple River. Low to moderate priority.  
        1 biface fragment  
        1 uniface fragment  
        2 chert chips  
        light scatter of fire-cracked rock
- TBS-79-8  
20 BA 72      Lenz #2. Possible campsite in the NW 1/4, NW 1/4, SW 1/4 of Section 26, Hastings Township, T3N R8W, Barry County, Michigan. About 100 m<sup>2</sup> of cultural material found in an area of beech-maple forest occupying a small bluff overlooking the Thornapple River. Low to moderate priority.  
        1 chert chip  
        1 historic gun flint
- TBS-79-9  
20 BA 73      Curtis. Possible campsite in the SW 1/4, SW 1/4, NE 1/4 of Section 1, Barry Township, T1N R9W, Barry County, Michigan. An isolated point lying on the side of a knoll above Fair Lake. Low priority.  
        1 projectile point
- TBS-79-10  
20 BA 74      Dryer. Informant site in the SE 1/4, SE 1/4 of Section 2, Hope Township, T2N R9W, Barry County, Michigan. An historic Indian campsite (which may be referenced in a History of Allegan and Barry Counties and is well documented by a collection in the hands of the landowner) located on rolling terrain above Fall Creek and a small marsh. Low to moderate priority.
- TBS-79-11  
20 BA 75      Leonard. Informant site in the SE 1/4, NW 1/4, NW 1/4 of Section 32, Hope Township, T2N R9W, Barry County, Michigan. Many points and other cultural material recovered from a 400 m<sup>2</sup> area above Wall Lake by the landowner. Low to moderate priority.
- TBS-79-12  
20 BA 76      Adams. Informant site in the NW 1/4, NE 1/4, NW 1/4 of Section 4, Barry Township, T1N R9W, Barry County, Michigan. An isolated point found by the landowner on rolling hills above swamp. Low priority.



- TBS-79-13  
20 BA 77      Impoundment #2. Possible campsite in the SE 1/4, SE 1/4, NW 1/4 of Section 32, Rutland Township, T3N R9W, Barry County, Michigan. About 100 m<sup>2</sup> of material found on an upland plain above marsh. Low priority.  
1 uniface fragment  
2 chert chips  
light scatter of fire-cracked rock
- TBS-79-14  
20 BA 78      Bender #1. Possible campsite in the NE 1/4, NE 1/4, NE 1/4 of Section 33, Thornapple Township, T4N R10W, Barry County, Michigan. About 100 m<sup>2</sup> of cultural material in a plowed field on an upland plain. Low priority.  
6 chert chips
- TBS-79-15  
20 BA 79      Bender #2. A possible campsite in the middle of the S 1/2, NE 1/4 of Section 33, Thornapple Township, T4N R10W, Barry County, Michigan. An isolated biface fragment found in a plowed field above a spring-fed pond, near Scales Prairie. Moderate priority.  
1 biface fragment
- TBS-79-16  
20 BA 80      Klinger. A possible campsite in the middle of the SE 1/4, SW 1/4 of Section 32, Hope Township, T2N R9W, Barry County, Michigan. About 400 m<sup>2</sup> of cultural debris in a plowed field below a knoll and adjacent to a small marsh. Low to moderate priority.  
1 projectile point  
1 chert chip  
medium scatter of fire-cracked rock
- TBS-79-17  
20 BA 81      Simpson. A possible campsite in the NE 1/4, NE 1/4, NW 1/4 of Section 34, Prairieville Township, T1N R10W, Barry County, Michigan. About 400 m<sup>2</sup> of cultural material found on a knoll above Indian Lake. Moderate priority.  
3 chert chips
- TBS-79-18  
20 BA 82      Barber #1. A possible campsite in the SW 1/4, NW 1/4, NE 1/4 of Section 34, Prairieville Township, T1N R10W, Barry County, Michigan. About 400 m<sup>2</sup> of cultural material found on a small knoll overlooking Indian Lake. Moderate to high priority.  
1 biface fragment  
12 chert chips
- TBS-79-19  
20 BA 83      Barber #2. A possible campsite in the NE 1/4, SW 1/4, NE 1/4 of Section 34, Prairieville Township, T1N R10W, Barry County, Michigan. About 25 m<sup>2</sup> of cultural material found on a knoll in a hilly field. Moderate priority.  
3 chert chips

- TBS-79-20  
20 BA 84 Barber #3. A possible campsite in the NE 1/4, NW 1/4, NE 1/4 of Section 34, Prairieville Township, T1N R10W, Barry County, Michigan. About 400 m<sup>2</sup> of cultural material on a knoll above Indian Lake. Moderate to high priority.  
2 chert chips
- TBS-79-21  
20 BA 85 Barber #4. A possible campsite in the SW 1/4, SE 1/4, SE 1/4 of Section 27, Prairieville Township, T1N R10W, Barry County, Michigan. About 200 m<sup>2</sup> of cultural material on a series of ridges above spring-fed Indian Lake. Moderate to high priority.  
1 projectile point  
2 chert chips
- TBS-79-22  
20 BA 86 Cheeseman. A possible campsite in the NE 1/4, NW 1/4, SE 1/4 of Section 30, Maple Grove Township, T2N R7W, Barry County, Michigan. An isolated projectile point found in a field on a clayey outwash plain. Low priority.  
1 projectile point
- TBS-79-23  
20 BA 87 Landon #1. A possible campsite found in the SE 1/4, SW 1/4, NE 1/4 of Section 27, Carlton Township, T4N R8W, Barry County, Michigan. An isolated T-shaped drill found in a rolling field on a moraine. Low priority.  
1 T-shaped drill
- TBS-79-24  
20 BA 88 Landon #2. A possible campsite in the NE 1/4, NW 1/4, NE 1/4 of Section 27, Carlton Township, T4N R8W, Barry County, Michigan. About 100 m<sup>2</sup> of cultural debris found on rolling hills of an upland moraine. Low priority.  
3 chert chips
- TBS-79-25  
20 BA 89 Seeber. A possible village in the SE 1/4, NE 1/4, NW 1/4 of Section 4, Rutland Township, T3N R9W, Barry County, Michigan. Site size is unknown. A fire pit with a large number of fire-cracked rocks (270 pieces) was observed on a bluff above the Thornapple River. Moderate to high priority.
- TBS-79-26  
20 BA 90 Hellinga #2. A possible campsite in the SW 1/4, NW 1/4, SE 1/4 of Section 28, Thornapple Township, T4N R10W, Barry County, Michigan. About 9 m<sup>2</sup> of cultural material found on knoll in an otherwise level field. Low to moderate priority.  
3 chert chips
- TBS-79-27  
20 BA 91 Hellinga #3. A possible campsite in the NW 1/4, SW 1/4, SE 1/4 of Section 28, Thornapple Township, T4N R10W, Barry County, Michigan. About 400 m<sup>2</sup> of cultural material found in a plowed field near a grove of trees. Moderate priority.  
19 chert chips  
1 historic glass fragment  
1 projectile point base  
light scatter of fire-cracked rock

TBS-79-28  
20 BA 92

Boudeman. Informant site in the SW 1/4, SW 1/4, SE 1/4 of Section 31, Barry Township, T1N R9W, Barry County, Michigan. A stemmed scraper found in a garden plot on a flat overlooking Gull Lake. Low priority.

## 6. Interpretations and Conclusions

Our initial survey efforts in the Thornapple Basin of Barry County have been very successful with respect to the stated objectives of this Phase One project. Five weeks of fieldwork have provided WMU archaeologists with a firm basis for evaluating the area particularly with respect to the implementation of a long-term research program aimed at generating some meaningful statements about aboriginal occupation of the basin and ultimately creating a predictive model of prehistoric settlement. In terms of our desire to employ intensive, systematic survey procedures to generate a sample of the total population of sites occurring in the basin, we have emphasized that aspect of our project involving an assessment of current land use practices in the county. Based on the results of this study, we are inclined to view a sampling strategy using points or quadrats of equal size (most probably the very useful 1/4 section sampling unit) rather than the transect, as currently employed in the research design of the Kalamazoo Basin Survey, as having the greater potential for deriving good settlement data from a representative sample of the total land area included within the Thornapple drainage. Stratification of the research universe according to aspects of the environment, e.g. soil type, physiographic feature, drainage and vegetative cover, would be desirable in order to insure that the selection of sampling units for study would not be biased in favor of any particular environmental variable(s).

With respect to the data regarding extant sites, both those derived from the state site files and those provided by local informants, it is indeed unfortunate that inadequate or incorrect provenience information was in large part responsible for our being able to confirm only 21 of 89 sites which we had reason to believe existed in the county. Surely some of the remaining sites are legitimate, but information as to their precise locations, negative impacts resulting from recent developments on the landscape and dense vegetation

which often effectively prohibited thorough evaluation of suspected site loci, made relocation by the survey team highly improbable if not impossible. Therefore, even with the 22 new sites discovered by surveyors this past spring, the total number of confirmed sites is much smaller and the data set derived from them less meaningful than we had originally anticipated.

Be that as it may, participants in this research program are "high" on the archaeological potential of Barry County and, especially, the Thornapple River Valley. As noted in Section 4 of this report, numerous tracts of land along the entire length of the river evidence land use which may be regarded as ideal for a systematic survey program employing walk-over procedures. And in the NE 1/4 of the county, land currently in cultivation far exceeds all other categories of land use combined. Given the favorable conditions for our preferred recovery procedures, i.e. systematic surface reconnaissance of parcels selected from a stratified random sample of 1/4 sections comprising the survey universe, the hint of significant archaeological resources contained in the historical documents and derived from some of the extant sites, and the generally cooperative attitude of local residents contacted by the survey team, we would strongly suggest that a long-term research program be initiated in the very near future so that archaeologists might begin to assess the county's archaeological resources and develop a model reflecting prehistoric settlement in the Thornapple River Basin.

## 7. Comments on Management of Cultural Resources and Future Research Needs

Given the fact that the Thornapple Basin Survey-Phase One is a program of surface reconnaissance with only limited subsurface probing for cultural debris lying in the ground, sites recorded by the survey team, without exception, were found either in areas currently under cultivation or in association with erosional features such as slumping riverbanks. Therefore, that portion of the Barry County landscape which was the focus of our attention, together with the observed archaeological contexts, is presently being altered and valuable information is being irretrievably lost.

Although land use practices associated with modern agriculture are not kind to archaeological resources, that fully 56% of the county is currently assigned to this land use category may be regarded as a "plus" for future archaeological research endeavors for which site discovery is an important consideration. The remainder of the county's land surface lies in forest (26%), is developed (15%) or is under water (3%).

That the survey team has been able to confirm only 23% of the previously recorded sites and collector sites for which information was available reflects some site destruction associated with residential and recreational development, the dense vegetative cover now effectively concealing many of the recorded site locations and, more often than not, the poor provenience information given us.

Based on all the information which we were able to collect, we are inclined to doubt that cultural resource management is a critical consideration in the project area. Certainly, it is not as important a factor as is the case with those areas of the Kalamazoo Basin evaluated to date. First, those sites which may now be regarded as confirmed, together with the new sites described herein, are principally lithic scatters of limited extent and isolated or spot finds, with good candidates for components being exceedingly rare. In most cases, we are reasonably confident that our surface observations are a good indication

of a site's probable significance, and that test excavation would in all probability produce little in the way of additional data with the potential for enabling the archaeologist to ascertain either the temporal placement or the nature of the activity which characterized its use. Secondly, if those sites which the surveyors were unable to confirm are legitimate, future archaeological research will have to address them with renewed efforts to establish whether or not they still exist. For the moment, presuming that at least those which have not been destroyed by recent land alteration activities do still exist and are to some degree protected by woodlot and/or pasture, we might reasonably assume that their destruction has been delayed for a time.

Several sites which clearly deserve archaeological attention in the near future include: (1) Pratt (TBS-79-1), a possible 19th century trading post or homestead with what appear to be foundations at least partially in tact; (2) the series of small campsites (TBS-79-17, 18, 19, 20 and 21) clustered about Indian Lake in the extreme southern portion of the county; (3) Seeber (TBS-79-25), on the Thornapple River, with its exposed rock-filled pit perhaps being indicative of a major habitation site; and, especially, (4) the site which we believe to be the Charboneau-Moreau Trading Post (20 BA 33) in SE Thornapple Township. Test excavations at this latter site are clearly in order inasmuch as archaeological research might provide valuable information supplementing the historical literature treating Euro-American-Indian contacts prior to the wholesale removal of the native residents of the area, effectively ending the free-wandering existence of Native American peoples in this portion of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan.

#### 8. Catalog of Artifactual Material from the Survey

A complete listing of all cultural material recovered during the 1979 Thornapple Basin Survey is included together with the brief site descriptions in Section 5 of this report.



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