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Robert G. Kingsley
Western Michigan University

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REPORT OF INVESTIGATIONS No. 30

Archaeological Survey of 39 Acre Parcel in the Fort Custer Military Reservation, Battle Creek, Michigan

Project Personnel:

Principal Investigator: Robert G. Kingsley, M.A.,
Research Associate

Field Assistants: Larry M. Wyckoff, M.A.; Lynn E. Skinner,
B.S.; Deborah K. Rhead (graduate student)

Purpose of Investigations:

This survey was performed at the request of Mr. George Kopacha of the Government Services Administration. The purpose of the project was to identify any cultural resources within the project area that would warrant mitigation. The 39 acres will possibly undergo land exchange in the future. The field inspection of the parcel was done on July 28, 1978.

Description of Project Area:

The 39 acre project area lies in the N 1/2, SE 1/4, NE 1/4, Sec. 31, Bedford Twp., Calhoun County, Michigan.

The area surveyed is an abandoned radar installation at the Fort Custer Military Reservation; the area has thus been heavily impacted. Numerous structures exist in the parcel, including partly dismantled radar towers, electrical facilities, and various other buildings or barracks. All were in a bad state of disrepair; most have been very badly vandalized. One structure had been burned on the inside. In addition to building, several paved roadways exist in the area.

Topography in the parcel is level to slightly rolling; much of the area appears to have been graded prior to construction of roads and buildings. Wild grasses are the vegetation present.

Previous Research:

No systematic archaeological research has been done in the 39 acre project area prior to this survey.

One known archaeological site lies about 1 mi NE of the area. This site, designated C-6, was discovered in 1973 by Western Michigan University field crews. The site possibly dates to the Woodland Period.

A contracted archaeological survey was conducted on June 28, 1978, in the 76 acres adjoining the present parcel on the north. This survey, undertaken by the author, did not locate cultural resources.

Procedures:

Prior to fieldwork, the archaeological site files at the Department of Anthropology, Western Michigan University, were inspected to determine if known archaeological resources existed in the project area or near it.

Field procedures consisted of surface reconnaissance of the area and sub-surface test probing. The 39 acres were walked by the survey crew in a randomized fashion; the highly disturbed nature of the area precluded the necessity for systematic transect procedures. Subsurface test probes were placed at arbitrary points between structures. Areas that appeared to be possibly least disturbed were concentrated on.

Sites Recorded:

Other than the modern structures in the project area, no historic or pre-historic cultural materials or sites were found by the survey crew.

Recommendations:

Since no archaeological sites or materials worth mitigation were discovered in the course of this project, I can recommend that this area, as outlined to me by Mr. George Kopacha of GSA, will not be adversely impacted by land exchange.

Prepared and Submitted by:

Robert G. Kingsley, M.A.
Research Associate; Principal Investigator
Department of Anthropology
Western Michigan University

August 3, 1978