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REPORT OF INVESTIGATIONS NO. 85
1988

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE AYERS ROAD EXTENSION IN SECTIONS
35-36, SUMMIT TOWNSHIP (T3S R1W), JACKSON COUNTY, MICHIGAN
(ER-88385)

WILLIAM M. CREMIN
A Report of Research in Response to ER-88385 and Prepared for:

Jackson County Road Commission
2400 Elm Road, P.O. Box 1135
Jackson, Michigan 49204

Attention:

Mr. John W. Midgley, P.E.
INTRODUCTION:

Pursuant to receipt of authorization from Mr. Robert M. Zenz, Chairman, Board of County Road Commissioners (contract dated 27 Jul 88), for a Phase I archaeological site location survey of the Ayers Road Extension project in Sections 35-36 of Summit Township, Jackson County, Michigan, archaeologists in the Department of Anthropology, Western Michigan University initiated a site file search and on 4 Aug 88 conducted on-site evaluation of the project area in order to determine whether proposed construction activities would adversely impact potentially significant archaeological resources. There follows a report of our research program, together with the recommendations derived from examination of the Ayers Road Extension project.

PROJECT PERSONNEL:

Principal Investigator - Dr. William M. Cremin, Professor of Anthropology, Western Michigan University

Field Supervisor - Mr. Dale W. Quattrin, M.A., WMU

Field Assistant - Mr. Greg Walz, Graduate Student in Anthropology, WMU

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT AREA:

The research area of this study comprises a strip of land 20 m wide and 1.52 km long, commencing on the east at Ayers Road in the center of the W 1/2, W 1/2 of Section 36 and extending in a westerly direction across the Grand River to Hague Road lying just west of the center of Section 35, Summit Township (T3S R1W), Jackson County, Michigan. It is estimated that the project area
includes slightly more than 3.0 ha requiring evaluation by the survey team (Fig. 1).

Elevation along the project rises from about 285 m ASL near Ayers Road on the east side of the river to approximately 297 m ASL near Hague Road on the west, providing for local relief of some 12 m. At the time of our fieldwork, the strip of land lying between Ayers Road and the Grand River supported uncut hay and pasture grasses. Across the river, wet bottoms supported primarily bulrushes and Indian plaintain. From the edge of the valley for about 300 m, vegetative cover consisted of thick trees and and undergrowth of scrub brush. Thereafter, a mosaic of plowed land flanked by relatively open to closed second growth deciduous woodlands interrupted only by a two track characterized the immediate environs of the proposed ROW.

Importantly, the proposed ROW was well staked at the time of fieldwork, greatly facilitating the survey team's progress along the route.

PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN THE GENERAL AREA:

Our review of the relevant literature produced not a single reference to the presence of known archaeological sites in the general area of the Ayers Road Extension project. And a call to the Bureau of History indicated that the state site files include only two references of interest to us. One site, 20JA28, has been recorded in Sections 2-3 of Liberty Township, some 1.6 km SW of our study area. Moreover, a highway survey recently undertaken in the E 1/2 of Section 36 of Summit Township produced only negative results (Barbara Mead, personal communication). Thus,
Figure 1: Ayers Road Extension Project, Summit Township, Jackson County, Michigan.
our literature review and site file search have resulted in no especially relevant information being noted.

PHASE I SURVEY FIELD PROCEDURES:

The purpose of our Phase I study was to conduct a systematic and intensive survey of the Ayers Road Extension across the Grand River to determine whether the proposed construction of the bridge and roadway would impact on potentially important archaeological sites. To this end, the field team employed shovel testing along transects and visual examination of the two track near the western end of the project to achieve coverage that would result in a conclusive recommendation regarding the presence or absence of archaeological resources in the zone of impact.

Due to the wet conditions in the floodplain flanking the river on the west, surveyors were not able to evaluate this portion of the project area. The remainder of the ROW was examined as follows: the ca. 120 m long strip of land between Ayers Road and the river was examined by means of four transects spaced 3-5 m apart, with shovel tests being located at intervals of 10 m along each line of survey; from the edge of the wetlands on the west side of the river for a distance of about 180 m, similar spacing was maintained; thereafter, a single line of survey on either side of centerline, with shovel tests being placed every 20 m, was established and examined. Finally, much of the western end of the ROW featured a two track affording good surface visibility. Here, surface reconnaissance procedures were employed as an adjunct to our shovel testing program. In aggregate, 137 shovel
tests were excavated during our program of research. The approximate locations are shown in Fig. 2. These were routinely excavated to a depth of 50-60 cm below the surface, with occasional tests being excavated to a depth in excess of a meter below surface for purposes of examining the local soil profile. Nowhere did shovel tests produce cultural items or reveal the presence of subsurface midden deposits.

RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS DERIVED FROM THE PHASE I STUDY:

Based upon a careful on-site examination of the Ayers Road Extension project employing both shovel testing and limited surface reconnaissance procedures, yielding not a single observation suggesting the presence of archaeological resources in the proposed ROW, it is my professional opinion, without reservation, that the proposed project will not have an adverse impact on potentially significant archaeological sites. Therefore, I recommend that construction work be permitted to proceed as planned.
Figure 2: Ayers Road Extension Project fieldwork.

- Wetlands flanking Grand River in project ROW
- Visual inspection of two track
- Location of 30 cm shovel test