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REPORT OF INVESTIGATIONS, NO. 12

1977

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF PROPOSED 24TH STREET AND AB AVENUE
PROJECT, RICHLAND TOWNSHIP, KALAMAZOO COUNTY, MICHIGAN.

Robert G. Kingsley

Archaeological Survey of Proposed 24th Street and AB Avenue Project,
Richland Twp., Kalamazoo Co., Michigan

Project Personnel:

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

Field Assistants: Larry M. Wyckoff, M.A.; Susan Grant, B.S.

Introduction

On April 26 and 27, an archaeological survey was undertaken at the request of Mr. Ron Copping of the Kalamazoo County Board of Road Commissioners. The survey involved reconnaissance of the proposed 24th Street and AB Avenue project in Richland Twp. The road commission has planned to widen and pave this gravel road and to construct a new curve at the point where 24th Street and AB Avenue meet; this survey was undertaken to inspect proposed impact areas before construction takes place.

Previous Research

The site files at the Department of Anthropology at Western Michigan University were inspected to determine if historic or prehistoric archaeological sites were known in the immediate area. No sites had been recorded in the project area. The nearest known site lies about 3 mi to the west of the area; this site is reputed to have yielded Paleo-Indian and Late Archaic materials. Three more sites lie about 1 mi south of the former site and are unconfirmed mound and earthwork sites reported by W.B. Hinsdale (1925). None of these sites was visited by the survey crew.

Procedures

As indicated above, the site files at WMU were inspected prior to actual fieldwork to determine the locations of known sites in the area.

Field procedures consisted of surface reconnaissance of the roadsides where impact will take place; an area about 30-40 ft wide was examined on either side of the existing road right-of-way. Most of the land bordering the road is plowed, and in unplowed areas subsurface test probes were utilized at 25 yd intervals. Systematic subsurface probes were not used in the plowed fields, as visibility was excellent in these areas. Fifteen subsurface probes were dug at arbitrary intervals in plowed fields to gain information regarding soil composition and profile.

Description of Survey Area

The roadsides surveyed lie on the boundaries of Sec. 6 and 7 in Richland Twp. and Sec. 1 and 12 in Cooper Twp. In addition, the section of AB Avenue that was surveyed lies in the N 1/2, Sec. 6, in Richland Twp.

Most of the area inspected was plowed fields. The remaining areas were fallow fields, woodlots, and front yards. Soil composition and profile was quite consistent throughout the area and consisted primarily of sandy loam with high clay content; glacial till and gravel was abundant everywhere. Typical profiles revealed 12-16 in of sandy, clayey loam covering glacial sand and till. In some test probes in the southernmost 1/4 mi of the survey area, a discernible clay strata was observed below the loam and above the sand. Plow zones usually did not extend to the glacial subsoil.

Vegetation in the impact areas consisted of climax deciduous trees, mostly maples and oaks. Woodlots contained climax and other vegetation, including sassafras, a few birch, and sumac. Ragweed and other weeds abounded in fallow fields and in the area generally.

Sites Recorded

One chert flake was recovered in the course of the fieldwork. The material appears to be from the Upper Mercer formation in southern Ohio. This flake was found in a plowed field at the junction of the new curve and 24th Street. Absolutely no other cultural material, features, or fire-cracked rock was discovered in this area in spite of intensive surface reconnaissance and subsurface probing; it is felt that this single piece does not represent a prehistoric site.

Recommendations

It is apparent that the area to be impacted by this project, as outlined to me by Mr. Ron Copping of the Kalamazoo County Board of Road Commissioners, does not contain historic or prehistoric cultural resources. It is recommended that this project proceed as planned.

Prepared and submitted by:

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