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Archaeological Survey of Proposed Sewer Line Rights-of-way in the City of Portage, Michigan

Personnel:

Principal Investigator: Robert G. Kingsley, M.A., Research Associate  
Field Assistants: Jerrel H. Sorensen, Paul McAllister (graduate students)

Introduction:

On August 2 - 4, 1977, an archaeological survey was conducted at the request of Mr. Dallas Williams of the City of Portage, Michigan. The survey involved inspection of sewer line rights-of-way in an attempt to locate extant cultural resources in these areas prior to construction. The areas to be surveyed were outlined and identified by Dr. Jeffery Sutherland of Williams and Works, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Previous Research:

Four contract archaeological surveys have been conducted within the City of Portage by Western Michigan University. Two of these projects, conducted by Dr. Irwin Rovner and Mr. Marvin Keller, both formerly of the Department of Anthropology at Western Michigan University, were performed within the confines of the Kalamazoo Municipal Airport. An additional project was conducted in Section 10 near Portage Creek by Marvin Keller. Finally, a survey in Section 10 north of Keller's survey was performed by Robert Kingsley. None of these surveys located either historic or prehistoric cultural resources; the reports on these projects are on file at the Department of Anthropology, Western Michigan University and the Michigan History Division in Lansing.

Two archaeological sites are known to exist within the City of Portage. The first of these, known as 20 KZ 30, lies in the NE  $\frac{1}{4}$ , Sec. 3, Portage Twp., and is of unknown cultural affiliation. The second site is located near the Kalamazoo Municipal Airport. Known as Indian Fields, this site may be more than one site, since separate village and burial areas have been reported in different areas. This site(s) has never been accurately located, and the survey work in and around the airport did not discover it. Indian Fields is reputed to be an Historic Period Pottawatomie village and cemetery. None of the possible locations for this site(s) lie near the present project areas.

## Procedures:

Prior to fieldwork, the archaeological site files at the Department of Anthropology, Western Michigan University, were examined to determine the extent and nature of known cultural resources in the area. These sites have been discussed above. Also, the field notes and historical data compiled by Rovner and Keller were inspected.

An historical document search was conducted at the Waldo Library Michigan Historical Archives at Western Michigan University. This was done to determine if any documented historical sites or places were located within the proposed project areas. A plat map of Kalamazoo County dated 1861 revealed that one of the proposed sewer lines (line 19 on Map 1) would pass through a farmstead and possibly a farmhouse that existed at that time. No other historical sites were noted in the proposed line areas.

Field procedures consisted of surface reconnaissance of the areas to be impacted. In addition, subsurface test probes were placed in areas of poor surface visibility and otherwise where deemed necessary. Many of the proposed line areas were plowed fields and hence offered good to excellent surface visibility; as indicated, other areas (i.e. not plowed) were subjected to probing. Probes were dug to glacial sand or clay.

## Description of Survey Areas:

Nineteen separate proposed sewer lines were surveyed (see Map 1). All lines are located within Portage Twp. A summary and general description of these areas is as follows:

- Line 1: SE  $\frac{1}{4}$ , SW  $\frac{1}{4}$ , Sec. 6; about 1000 ft. This area lies immediately adjacent to the US 131 - Milham Road over-pass. Area heavily impacted from overpass construction.
- Line 2: SW  $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW  $\frac{1}{4}$ , Sec. 8; about 2000 ft. Area is plowed fallow field; good surface visibility; sandy soil.
- Line 3: E  $\frac{1}{2}$ , SE  $\frac{1}{4}$ , Sec. 7; about 200 ft. Area is alfalfa field and cow pasture. Pasture (about  $\frac{1}{2}$  the area) was not walked or probed at the owners request; pasture is inhabited by 2 bulls. Owner said that he has never found cultural material in pasture however.
- Line 4: SE  $\frac{1}{4}$ , SW  $\frac{1}{4}$ , Sec. 9; about 600 ft. Cornfield; excellent visibility; sandy soil.
- Line 5: W  $\frac{1}{2}$ , SW  $\frac{1}{4}$ , Sec. 9; about 500 ft; Wooded parkland, climax deciduous trees, little undergrowth; loamy soil.
- Line 6: SE  $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW  $\frac{1}{4}$ , Sec. 9; about 2000 ft. Cornfield with good visibility; sandy soil; also, local resident said that he had been through the area often and had not found cultural material.
- Line 7: NE  $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW  $\frac{1}{4}$ , Sec. 4 about 500 ft. Line runs along gravel driveway and between two houses. Area heavily impacted from grading, house construction.

- Line 8: SW  $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW  $\frac{1}{4}$ , Sec. 4; about 300 ft. Line located in low swampy area, across small creek, and between two houses. Heavy impact in lawn areas; swamp is annually flooded.
- Line 9: NW  $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE  $\frac{1}{4}$ , Sec. 3; about 2000 ft. East end of line crosses Portage Creek; rest of line roughly follows old graded road through woods in old outwash/flood plain area. Low areas show indications of annual inundation and retention of ground water. Much grading and ditchdigging throughout area. Soil in area is very black and rich, perhaps indicating old lakebottom environment.
- Line 10: SE  $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW  $\frac{1}{4}$ , Sec. 10; about 500 ft. Low area similar to Line 9; line runs along gravel driveway and two-track road.
- Line 11: E  $\frac{1}{2}$ , SW  $\frac{1}{4}$ , Sec. 10; about 500 ft. Area totally impacted by transmission line construction; low area similar to Lines 9 and 10.
- Line 12: E  $\frac{1}{2}$ , NW  $\frac{1}{4}$ , Sec. 16; about 200 ft. Line runs between yard and vacant lot down to low muck environment; much impact due to drainage ditch construction on south end.
- Line 13: W  $\frac{1}{2}$ , SE  $\frac{1}{4}$ , Sec. 15; about 100 ft. Horse pasture, low muck soil like Lines 9 - 12. Area walked but not probed due to hostile horses.
- Line 14: NW  $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE  $\frac{1}{4}$ , Sec. 23; about 1500 ft. One-half of line runs along small creek/swamp, mucky soil; rest of line crosses sandy, gravelly fallow field.
- Line 15: SE  $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW  $\frac{1}{4}$ , Sec. 26; about 2000 ft. Part of line will run under existing gravel road; rest of line runs through small recreational park on Austin Lake; grassland area with sandy, gravelly, thin topsoil.
- Line 16: Center, NW  $\frac{1}{4}$ , Sec. 27; about 700 ft. Line runs through artificial ridge forming border of drainage ditch; ridge and ditch occupy swampland area, apparently always inundated.
- Line 17: SE  $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW  $\frac{1}{4}$ , Sec. 32; about 500 ft. Line occupies driveway and yard area, sloping to low field area; very sandy soil.
- Line 18: SE  $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE  $\frac{1}{4}$ , Sec. 32; about 300 ft. Grassy field and yard areas; sandy soils.
- Line 19: SW  $\frac{1}{4}$ , NE  $\frac{1}{4}$ , Sec. 34; about 2000 ft. All but south end of line occupy fallow field with very sandy, gravelly soil - in many places topsoil was absent. South end slopes to low area with deciduous tree growth. This area was reputed to be the site of a c.a. 1861 farmstead (see below).

#### Sites Recorded:

The Michigan Historical Archives indicated that one J. Cleland owned and apparently farmed the land in and around the southern end of Line 19 during the year 1861. In this area the survey crew found old, dilapidating structures; present were a barn, corn crib, and chicken coop(?). However, it was noted that these buildings were constructed from modern milled lumber, round wire nails, and cinder blocks, and the barn stood on a poured concrete foundation. It is apparent that these structures are of relatively modern origin and were not constructed c.a. 1861. Also, the local landowner was

interviewed. She stated that she had lived on this location since 1947 and has never found historic artifacts or evidence of any kind of old structure, in spite of the fact that her family had farmed this area. She had never heard of a family or person named Cleland and did not know of any historical significance her property might possess. Finally, if the 1861 plat map can be trusted as accurate, then the old farmhouse would lie directly beneath the present modern house, and has thus been destroyed.

Near the western end of Line 9, in a plowed field about 150 ft south of the actual sewer line, the survey crew found a single projectile point. The point is corner notched,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in long and  $15/16$  in wide. It is manufactured out of Ohio Upper Mercer chert and is well made. No other artifacts, debitage, fire-cracked rock, or features were found in this area in spite of intensive surface reconnaissance and subsurface probing. Soil in this area is black, lowland muck soil that changes to gravel as the land slopes upward to the west. Since no other cultural material was found here, it must be concluded that this point is a chance surface find, and does not represent a prehistoric site.

Recommendations:

It is apparent that the 1861 farmstead discussed above has been totally destroyed by modern development and the construction of a sewer line in this area would not further impact it. It does not seem that the single projectile point found during this fieldwork represents a prehistoric site. Since these areas do not possess significant cultural resources and since no other material or features were encountered during this project, I can recommend that this project, as outlined to me by Dr. Jeffery Sutherland of Williams and Works, proceed as planned.

Prepared and Submitted By:

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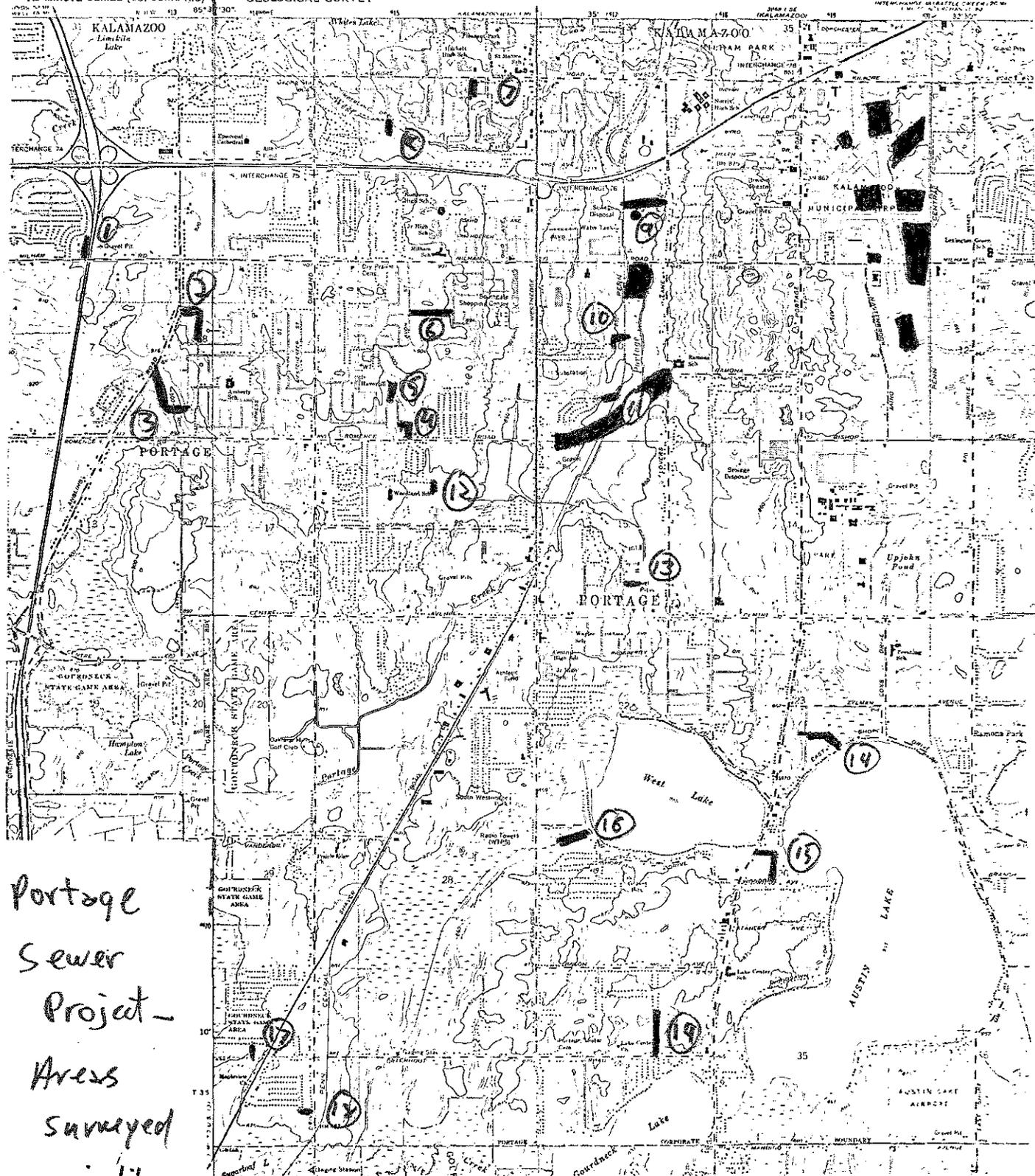
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GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Portage Quad.

STATE OF MICHIGAN



Portage  
Sewer  
Project -  
Areas  
Surveyed

● = projectile  
point

map 1