

A MID-EIGHTEENTH CENTURY INDIAN VILLAGE ON THE CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER

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In June 1965 the Georgia Kraft Company appropriated money to the Smithsonian Institution for salvage archaeology at their new plant near Cotton, Alabama, a little north of the State of Florida line. Indian sites had previously been discovered at this location by Harold A. Huscher (1959) of the River Basins Survey, Smithsonian Institution. It was anticipated that Huscher would conduct the field activities, but after he went on sick leave Dr. Clifford Evans of the Smithsonian Institution asked me, as a Collaborator of the Smithsonian Institution, if I would take Huscher's place. These matters delayed the start of field work.

Construction in the plant area was far advanced when I first visited the property on September 21, 1965. The plant site, approximately a mile west of the river had been bulldozed level, truck traffic was heavy, and the approach railroad had been laid. A field survey of this and adjacent deforested areas revealed no signs of Indian occupation but it was apparent from maps that three of Huscher's sites would be destroyed by the construction of settling basins.

Figure 1 presents a sketch map of the area. The region between Route 165 and the river was featureless and covered with "dog fennel" which grew in thick sets up to eight feet high. Several small tests were dug which produced an occasional nail, a few sherds, some chips, and, in one instance, a projectile point, 2 sherds and 3 chert flakes in the upper 6 inches. Finally a careful survey was made along the river bank from the northern line of the Georgia Kraft property to the railroad track or end of the access road. Sherds concentrated on what appeared to be a remnant of a natural river terrace a little north northeast of the railroad bridge (Fig. 1, site).

In this location we excavated twenty 10- by 10-foot squares to form three trenches as indicated in Figure 2. The upper 6 inches, containing most specimens, was stripped off first after which excavation continued to a depth of 12 inches. In each trench, one 10-foot square was carried down to the underlying red clay without finding any cultural debris below a depth of 12 inches. The proveniences of aboriginal pottery by types is given in Table 1 by trenches and squares, numbered as in Figure 2. Material from the 6- to 12-inch levels was so scarce that number 21 in Table 1 combines sherds from that level of Squares 11, 12, and 17; number 22 combines from those Squares 13, 14, 15, and 16; and 23 those from Squares 18 and 19.

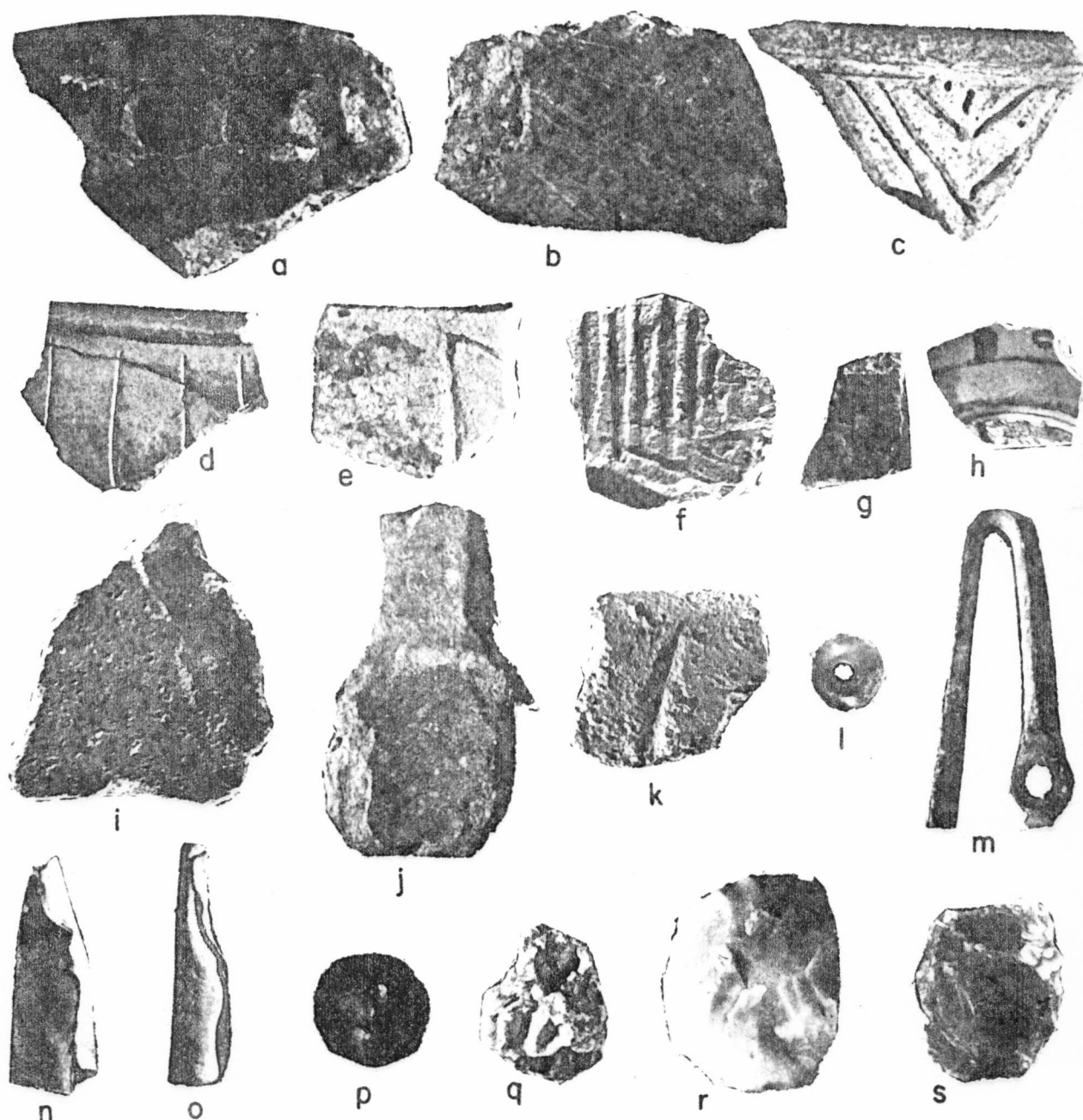


Fig. 7. Specimens of clay, glass, metal, and stone.

a, Type I rim with pinched decoration; b, Chattahoochee Brushed; c, Type II decorated rim; d, Ocmulgee Fields Incised; e, Kashita Red Filmed; f, Type VIII or Jefferson Complicated Stamped; g, Tyle V, black filmed; h, Delftware with cobalt decoration; i, Yorktown glazed earthenware; j, spoon-shaped handle, Type 3 paste; k, fiber-tempered rim sherd; l, glass bead; m, fizzle spring; n-o, brass cones; p, white metal button; q, chewed musket ball; r-s, gun flints.

Kaolin pipes were represented by 108 stem and 77 bowl fragments. Of measurable holes 25 were 4/16, 73 were 5/16, and 15 were 6/16 inch in diameter which by Harrington's graph date in the 1710-50 range, by Binford's formula the date comes to 1743.61 A. D.

Colonial ceramics include 8 examples of Yorktown stoneware (1730-1750), 1 of a ribbed Staffordshire mug, (1710-30), 1 of a Staffordshire red-bodied ware with lead glaze of Astbury or Bell type (1735-55), 1 white salt glaze stoneware (1735-65), 1 English delftware with cobalt decoration, (possibly early 18th century), 3 from small Delftware bowls (Fig. 7, h) with cobalt decoration (1710-40), 2 English white salt glaze (1710-40), 3 Yorktown brown stoneware (1720-1760), 1 English delftware of uncertain date and form, 1 Virginia earthenware similar to Yorktown earthenware, and 1 Yorktown type lead-glazed earthenware (Fig. 7, i).

Decorative items were a silver bangle (Fig. 8, f) and 5 glass beads: 1 clear, flat, 1/4 diameter; 1 white, 5/16 by 1/8 inch, 1 clear, 1/4 high by 6/16 inch diameter (Fig. 7, l), 1 black, 1/2 by 1/8 inch, and 1 red, 5/16 long by 1/4 inch diameter. Also present were 127 fragments of bottle glass, Most were thin and green but 13 were thick and green, and 11 clear and thin.

Animal Remains

Excavated animal bones included 45 bird, 39 deer, 68 large mammal fragments (probably deer), 208 small bone fragments, and 1 fish bone. Twenty-three riverine shell fragments, 1 fossil shark tooth and 2 fossilized pecten shells complete the inventory. It is not clear whether or not the fossilized items were used.

Discussion

The main occupation of the village is estimated to have been between A. D. 1735 and 1750. This is based on three sets of criteria: pipe stem dating, Harrington's graph method, 1710-50 and Binford's formula, 1743.61; colonial ceramics manufactured between 1710 and 1765; and buttons manufactured between 1726 and 1776. Trade musket parts and gun flints are of this general time period but are not as specifically dateable. The aboriginal ceramics--except for the fiber-tempered sherds--are closely similar to types found in Florida at Spanish Mission period settlements known to have been destroyed by Gov. Moore's (of Carolina) raids of 1702 and 1704. These forms continued to be manufactured in Alabama and western Georgia and undoubtedly were still in use in the middle of the 18th century. Huscher, from his survey and interpretation of historical data, considered this area was occupied by a historic Creek town, Sawokli (Huscher 1959:52-3, sites Ru-20, 21). The archaeology is in complete agreement with such a correlation.