

## **CHAPTER 3. PREHISTORIC & HISTORIC BACKGROUND**

### **Paleoindian Period**

The earliest prehistoric occupation of North Carolina dates to the Paleoindian period, which is thought to have begun about 12,000 B.C. Evidence of occupation during this period is generally sparse. The temporal marker for this period is the fluted projectile point, usually recovered as surface finds. During his survey of classic fluted projectile points from North Carolina, Perkinson (1971) reported two specimens from Stokes County. Both were located in the vicinity of Walnut Cove. The reported projectile points from this survey were generally from private collections and primarily serve to demonstrate distribution.

The most important excavated North Carolina site yielding Paleoindian components is the Hardaway site (31ST4), located on the west bank of the Yadkin River in Stanly County. This site is unusual in that it contains stratified deposits including Paleoindian materials. Investigations at the Hardaway site form the basis of the Paleoindian and Early Archaic sequences defined by Coe (1964) for the Piedmont. Later investigations at the Haw River sites in Chatham County reconfirm the cultural-temporal framework (Claggett and Cable 1982).

The classic fluted Clovis projectile point was not recovered from the Hardaway site. However, it is thought to be contemporary with the Hardaway phase, which represents the earliest occupation at the site and dates to at least 8000 B.C. (Ward 1983). The Hardaway and Hardaway-Dalton projectile point types are broad, thin blades with concave bases. The Hardaway-Dalton type has a deeply concave base and shallow side-notches (Coe 1964).

The subsistence pattern during this time is assumed to have been a hunting and gathering lifestyle. Recent work at the Hardaway site has focused on attempts to retrieve subsistence data to obtain a more complete view of Paleoindian lifeways (Ward 1983). Investigations at other Paleoindian sites in the Southeast have demonstrated a uniformity of tool types for the period. Work at the Adams site, a single-component Paleoindian site in western Kentucky, has compiled a complete sequence of Clovis point manufacture. Tools for bone and wood working as well as those for scraping, cutting, chopping, shredding, and planing were present (Sanders 1988).

### **Archaic Period**

The Archaic period (8000-1000 B.C.) was apparently a time of climatic change. A shift from boreal forests to northern hardwoods occurred around the time of the Early Archaic period (8000-5000 B.C.). In the early Holocene, a cool, moist climate prompted the expansion of species-rich Mixed Hardwood Forest in the Eastern United States. During this Hypsithermal, the Oak-Chestnut Forest became dominant in the central and southern Appalachians, oak and hickory were replaced by southern pine on the Coastal Plain, and the Oak-Hickory-Southern Pine Forest covered the Piedmont (Delcourt and Delcourt 1981, 1985). These changes were probably accompanied by an increase in population, as suggested by the greater number of sites with Archaic components (Cable 1980).

The tool kits from the Late Paleoindian tradition to the ensuing Early Archaic are similar, and site data indicate that there was no clear division between the periods (Claggett and Cable 1982). It is generally thought that in the Archaic period there was a continuation of the hunting

and gathering lifestyle, with a possible seasonal round of movement between base camps and hunting camps.

The Early Archaic includes the Palmer and Kirk complexes (Coe 1964). The Early Archaic Palmer phase (ca. 8000-7000 B.C.) is typified by a small corner-notched blade with a straight, ground base and pronounced serrations. The Palmer complex is indicative of possible affiliations with cultures to the north, extending into New England (Coe 1964).

During the Kirk phase (ca. 7000-6000 B.C.), the points increased in size and basal grinding declined. A broad-stemmed, deeply serrated point gradually replaced the earlier corner-notched style. The decrease in basal grinding characteristic of later Kirk projectile points is indicative of cultural affiliations to the west (Coe 1964). The use of hafted end scrapers also increased during this period (Coe 1964; Davis and Daniel 1990). The depth of the Kirk midden at the Hardaway site indicates a long-term occupation (Coe 1964).

During excavations at Icehouse Bottom in Tennessee (Chapman 1977) a bifurcate projectile point tradition was stratigraphically isolated between the Early Archaic Kirk and the Middle Archaic Stanly traditions. No major shift in the artifact assemblage was observed except for the bifurcate point, and the shift was viewed as a modification in the hafting element. The bifurcate tradition was not identified at the Hardaway site, although more recent investigations along the Haw River in Chatham County have confirmed its stratigraphic placement in North Carolina (Claggett and Cable 1982).

Chapman's work in Tennessee also provided direct evidence of the production and use of textiles in the Early Archaic period. The evidence was recovered as impressions of basketry and woven fiber bags from a prepared clay hearth. The context in which they were found can be firmly dated to the Early Archaic (Chapman 1977).

The Middle Archaic Stanly phase appears to have developed out of the preceding phases and is the earliest clearly documented occupation of the stratified Doerschuk site (31MG22), located in Montgomery County (Coe 1964; Phelps 1983). The major difference in the artifact assemblage seems to be the appearance of polished stone atlatl weights.

The Morrow Mountain and Guilford phases appear during the Middle Archaic period (5000-3000 B.C.). These phases have been referred to by Coe (1964) as the western intrusive horizons. The Morrow Mountain projectile point type is a relatively small point with a short, tapering stem. The analysis of material from the Haw River sites suggests that the Morrow Mountain I and II type points may represent the continuation of the stemmed point tradition (Claggett and Cable 1982). There appears to be a trend toward contracting stems beginning with the Stanly tradition and "culminating with the extreme stem contraction which characterizes the Morrow Mountain cluster" (Claggett and Cable 1982:485).

The Guilford phase, with no apparent cultural antecedents in the region, is characterized by long, lanceolate points and chipped stone axes. The artifacts are very widespread throughout the Piedmont of North Carolina (Coe 1964).

The Halifax phase was identified from the Gaston site (31HX7) on the Roanoke River but did not appear at either the Hardaway or Doerschuk sites (Coe 1964). The Halifax point type, usually made of vein quartz, is a slender blade with shallow side-notches. The base and side-notches were usually ground. One projectile point with Halifax characteristics was recovered from a stratigraphic context at a site on the Haw River. This point was recovered from Lamella 5, the Middle/Late Archaic zone (Claggett and Cable 1982). At the Gaston site, the Halifax zone overlay the Guilford material. Coe (1964) has proposed a northern origin for the Halifax phase.

The terminal Archaic is the Savannah River phase (3000-1000 B.C.). During this period there is evidence of larger sites containing steatite bowls, human burials, and prepared hearths, which suggests a more settled lifestyle (Ward 1983). The Savannah River projectile point is a large, heavy, triangular blade with a broad stem (Coe 1964).

In the Southeast, the Savannah River phase is generally considered to have been organized around a riverine, shellfish-oriented adaptation. The full complement of Savannah River projectile points, steatite bowls and netsinkers, engraved bone pins, grooved axes, and atlatl weights are usually recovered from riparian sites. Most surveys in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain interriverine zones also produce evidence of Late Archaic utilization (Claggett and Cable 1982).

The earliest ceramics are noted during the terminal Archaic period and are dated around 2500-2000 B.C. (Phelps 1983). They are fiber-tempered wares and are reported from at least 38 sites in the southern Coastal Plain, generally below the Neuse River drainage. The reported specimens are all Stallings Plain and do not include the decorated types.

Oliver (1985) has identified a transition between the preceramic Archaic tradition and the Woodland period. A reanalysis of materials from the Doerschuk and Warren Wilson sites suggests that the Piedmont tradition of stemmed point types was continued into the early ceramic period. The Gypsy Stemmed projectile point is placed within the early ceramic zone and is associated with large triangular points and cord- and fabric-marked ceramics.

## **Woodland Period**

During the Woodland period (1000 B.C.-A.D. 1450), the beginnings of regional differences are noted. The introduction of the bow and arrow and ceramic manufacture define the beginning of the Early Woodland (1000-300 B.C.). Other Woodland traits common to eastern North America, such as cultivation of plants and construction of mounds, appear later in Piedmont North Carolina. Cultivation of maize probably dates to around A.D. 1000, but the burial mound complex was essentially absent from the northern Piedmont (Hargrove et al. 1986).

The earliest expression of the Woodland tradition in the Piedmont is the Badin culture, more common in the southern Piedmont. It is characterized by a hard, sandy ceramic ware and large, crude triangular projectile points. The differences between the southern and northern Piedmont traditions became more pronounced through time, and there is increasing diversity in the ceramic materials by the Late Woodland (Ward 1983).

In the northern Piedmont, the earliest ceramics were recovered from the Gaston site in Halifax County and belong to the Vincent series (Coe 1964). Vincent ceramics are very fine sand-tempered wares with cord- or fabric-marked surface finishes. The Vincent occupation began around A.D. 500.

The Middle Woodland Yadkin phase was defined from the Doerschuk site. The ceramics appear to have evolved from the previous Badin type. The temper changed to a crushed quartz which, in some cases, constituted 30 to 40 percent of the paste. The surface finishes were cord marked or fabric impressed. It was during this phase that influences from the southern coastal region first appeared, with clay temper mixed with the quartz (Coe 1964). The projectile point type was the Yadkin Large Triangular point, which differed from the previous Badin style in that it was better made.

The Late Woodland Uwharrie projectile point type is a small, slender triangle. In the sample of 104 Uwharrie points recovered from the Donnaha site in northern Yadkin County, 98

percent were manufactured of felsite (Woodall 1984). The closest source of felsite to this site is 70 km to the southeast. The Uwharrie ceramic series is marked by abundant fragments of crushed quartz temper. Portions of a Uwharrie vessel, recovered from a feature at the Donnaha site, were found in association with charcoal fragments which provided a <sup>14</sup>C date of A.D. 1480 (Woodall 1984). The majority (more than 85 percent) of Uwharrie pottery from Upper Sauratown had net-impressed exteriors, scraped interiors, and sub-angular quartz temper (Eastman 1996).

In the upper Dan River drainage, the Dan River ceramics apparently developed out of the preceding Uwharrie phase (Coe 1964). Dan River series pottery may contain both crushed quartz and coarse river sand inclusions. At the Donnaha site, the proportion of quartz to sand changed through time. At the lower part of the midden most sherds contained some quartz; however, in the upper part of the midden, most sherds contained only sand inclusions (Woodall 1984).

Late Woodland occupation in the upper Dan drainage is represented by the Dan River phase (A.D. 1000-1450). Davis and Ward (1989) report that Dan River phase sites are both more numerous and larger than contemporary sites in neighboring drainages. Settlements during the early Dan River phase may have been composed of small palisaded villages (Davis and Ward 1989). These larger villages were most often built on wide alluvial terraces along the Dan River and its tributaries. Archaeological research has demonstrated cultural continuity between the late prehistoric Dan River phase and the Sauratown phases of the protohistoric and contact period (Ward and Davis 1993).

Early Dan River ceramics from the Powerplant site (31RK5) contain crushed quartz temper and generally are heavily scraped on the interior. Most have net-impressed exteriors. A Dan River component at site 31SK1a, Upper Sauratown, is also characterized by net-impressed sherds; 86 percent of the sherds and eight large jars were decorated with this surface treatment (Eastman 1996). This site is located across NC 311 to the south of the current project area. Cord-marked, smoothed, cob-impressed, and brushed surfaces were also present. Later Dan River assemblages generally have scraped interiors with net-impressed exteriors, although cord-marked, cob-impressed, or smooth exteriors were also present. Most were tempered with coarse to fine sand. Vessel decoration became more diverse and common in later Dan River ceramics. The Caraway Triangular point dominates the typable lithic assemblage. A wide variety of bone, shell, and clay tools were utilized during this time (Ward and Davis 1993).

### **Protohistoric and Historic Period**

The protohistoric occupation in the upper Dan is represented by the Early Sauratown phase (A.D. 1450-1620). Davis and Ward (1989) indicate that by 1550 settlements were no longer distributed along the Dan River and its major tributaries, but rather were established at the mouths of the tributaries. Early Sauratown phase sites have produced pottery with fine sand temper with vessel forms that were not present during the late prehistoric Dan River phase. The ceramic assemblages contain cazuela bowls with burnished and carved-paddle stamped exteriors, filfot scroll complicated stamping, and notched applique strips. These new ceramic styles may reflect interaction with the chiefdoms of the Catawba, Pee Dee, or Wateree drainages to the south (Eastman 1996). Evidence of Mississippian influence from northeastern Tennessee and southwestern Virginia was visible at Upper Sauratown in the form of incised rattlesnake gorgets found in several of the burials (Eastman 1996).

Wilson (1983) proposed the new ceramic series, Oldtown, for these ceramics in order to distinguish them from the Dan River series. The Oldtown series is diagnostic of the Early, Middle, and Late Sauratown phases and is characterized by a well-kneaded paste that usually has fine to very fine sand temper. Ninety percent of the Upper Sauratown sherds of this type were 4 to 8 m thick (Eastman 1996). Small triangular points are still common, and are usually made from minimally altered flakes (Ward and Davis 1993).

In the Middle Sauratown phase (A.D. 1620-1670) the first European trade goods appear in the Dan River drainage. Ceramics are fairly similar to the Early Sauratown phase, but there appears to be less variety in shapes and fewer decorated vessels. Cazuela bowls are rare and check stamping appears for the first time. Flake tools and triangular points are common (Ward and Davis 1993). According to Eastman (1996), more than half of the ceramics from this time period at Upper Sauratown were plain. Recurved rims on jars first appear during this time, while flat- or round-bottom bowls with carinated or incurved rims, small cups, cuspidors, and everted rim jars continue from the Early Sauratown phase. Cuspidors have a wide shoulder, flat base, and everted rim. While net-impressed ceramics continued to be used, the net was finer textured than before (Eastman 1996).

The Late Sauratown phase (A.D. 1670-1710) is marked by the increased influx of both European goods and disease. Oldtown series pottery continued to be produced as were the small, triangular projectile points. Most of the ceramics have smooth or burnished surfaces, with others being net impressed (using very fine net), check stamped, cob impressed, brushed, simple stamped, or complicated stamped (Ward and Davis 1993). At Upper Sauratown, carved-paddle stamping became more common than in the previous phase, as did net impressing (Eastman 1996).

The collections at Upper Sauratown included a large quantity of trade items, which indicated that the site's occupants were heavily involved in the fur trade (Wilson 1983; Eastman 1993).

### **Early European Exploration and Settlement**

European explorations into the northern Piedmont of North Carolina began by the late seventeenth century. The impetus for most of these early travels was to establish the feasibility of trade with the native inhabitants of the region. In 1669, John Lederer, a young German physician, was commissioned by Governor Berkeley to explore the regions to the west of the Virginia colony (Cumming 1958). Lederer's second journey, begun in May 1670, was due west to the mountains, where he parted company with his military escort and turned south and west (Cumming 1958). He described Indian villages on the Dan, Eno, and Haw rivers and visited the Saura Indians, who may have occupied the Yadkin River Valley near the river crossing at the Trading Ford. Wilson (1983) suggests that the Saura village may also have been located in the Dan River drainage. Before returning to Virginia, Lederer traveled south to the Catawba lands (Cumming 1958). The trail he followed was probably the Trading Path, described by William Byrd as "the route the Traders take with their Caravans, when they go traffick with the Catawbas and other Southern Indians" (Rights 1957:102).

In 1673, Abraham Wood of Fort Henry (Petersburg), Virginia, sent two of his agents, James Needham and Gabriel Arthur, to explore the frontier. They followed much the same trail as Lederer had three years before, reaching the Catawba then turning west over the mountains

(Rights 1957). Rights (1957) reports that Needham and Arthur visited the Saura on June 18, 1673.

By 1675, the Saura and other Native American groups in the Piedmont were directly involved in the fur and skin trade out of Virginia. Aboriginal sites from this period in the upper Dan drainage contain large quantities of European trade goods and also many human burials. Smallpox and other Old World pathogens accompanied English traders into the Piedmont and resulted in epidemics that took a heavy toll on the native populations in the area during the last quarter of the seventeenth century (Ward and Davis 1991). By 1710, the Saura had abandoned the Dan River drainage to join the Catawba, leaving the upper Dan River drainage vacant and open for other settlers.

Many of the settlers who moved into the area came down the Great Wagon Road from Virginia and Pennsylvania. Probably an old Native American path, the Wagon Road ran from Philadelphia to the Yadkin Valley for a distance of 432 miles, according to the Jefferson and Fry map of the 1750s (Lester 1984). The first permanent white settlers were Germans who began settling in Stokes County shortly after 1750. Ulster Scots, English, and Irish were present as well. The Town Fork Settlements, a series of connecting farms, were mostly English, with a few Germans and Irish scattered through. One of the settlements, Lash, located near the mouths of Mill and Lick creeks, later became Walnut Cove (Woodard 1981). The people of Town Fork frequently went to the Moravian settlement of Bethabara for protection during the French and Indian War.

### **Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries**

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries brought industry to Stokes County in the form of iron forges. The tobacco industry was so important in Stokes County that by 1841, the county became the second largest tobacco product producer in the state, with 17 family-operated factories. Brick making later became an important industry in the twentieth century (Woodard 1981).

No Civil War battles were fought in Stokes County, although General George H. Stoneman's cavalry raiders in 1865 (Woodard 1981) closed the Moratock furnace in Danbury, which had produced tons of iron for the Confederacy. It was the last operating furnace in the county. Farm size was drastically reduced after the Civil War as well, with large plantation farming coming to an end (Woodard 1981).