

Update on the Georgia Paleoindian Survey

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Since 1986 the authors have been conducting a Paleoindian artifact survey in Georgia, a state where no formal recording had occurred previously (Anderson et al. 1986, 1987). Initially directed to fluted points, the survey expanded almost immediately to encompass Paleoindian points of all types, including complete, broken, and reworked points. As of January 1990 data on 216 Paleoindian projectile points have been recorded, including 73 Clovis, 13 possible Clovis, 14 Clovis variants, 1 fluted lanceolate (a preform of indeterminate type), 14 Simpsons, 10 Suwannees, 1 Cumberland, 12 unfluted lanceolates of indeterminate type, 1 Llano-like form, 1 Beaver Lake, 2 Quads, 49 'fluted' Daltons, and 25 unfluted Daltons. A monograph with descriptive information about these artifacts, and summarizing Paleoindian research in Georgia has recently been published (Anderson et al. 1990).

Paleoindian components in Georgia have been provisionally grouped into three temporal categories, corresponding to early, middle, and late Paleoindian subperiods. The early Paleoindian is thought to date from ca. 11,500–11,000 yr B.P. and is characterized by Clovis, possible Clovis, and Clovis variant forms. Possible Clovis points resemble the classic Clovis type, but minor typological uncertainty existed, as many were broken specimens. Smaller fluted forms, most of which appear to be extensively resharpened Clovis points, have been noted in the Georgia and South Carolina Piedmont, and have been provisionally called Clovis variants (Michie 1977). The middle Paleoindian is thought to date from ca. 11,000–10,500 yr B.P. and is characterized by the Cumberland, Suwannee, and Simpson types. Continuation of these forms after 10,500 yr B.P. is possible. The late Paleoindian is thought to date from ca. 10,500 to 9,900 yr B.P., and is characterized by Dalton and related types, including Quad and Beaver Lake. A number of Woodland forms exhibiting basal thinning scars are present in the state, including the Greenville, Yadkin, and Tallahassee types. These are identifiable as later artifacts from their triangular morphology, crude flaking pattern, and absence of basal or lateral grinding.

Paleoindian artifacts have been recorded from 40 counties, mostly from the north-central Piedmont and the southwestern Coastal Plain. Few points are reported from the southeastern Coastal Plain along the lower reaches of the

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Ogeechee, Ocmulgee, and Altamaha rivers. This low incidence may reflect avoidance of these areas due to an absence of high quality lithic raw material. A second distributional void characterizes the northern, mountainous region of the state.

The concentration of Paleoindian artifacts in southwest Georgia may be linked to the high quality chert sources that outcrop in this area. Concentrations of Paleoindian artifacts occur just to the south in Florida along the Aucilla, Wacissa, and Suwannee rivers (Dunbar et al. 1988); southwest Georgia may well have been traversed by these peoples. The restriction of Suwannee and Simpson points, which are extremely common in Florida, largely to areas south of the Fall Line, supports such an inference. Ten of the 14 Simpson points and all 10 of the Suwannee points documented during the survey came from the counties below the Fall Line.

The large numbers of Paleoindian artifacts found in the central Piedmont suggests Paleoindian use of this region was fairly appreciable. Survey data indicates that terrain along both major and minor drainages was visited, as well as in the uplands, with some evidence for increasing use of the uplands over time (O'Steen et al. 1986). A range of site types have been documented including short-term camps, residential camps, and quarry areas. River overlooks near shoals appear to have been favored. One possible aggregation locus, where large numbers of people may have regularly convened, appears to have been present in the Barnett Shoals area along the upper Oconee River.

A decline in the use of Coastal Plain chert, a high quality raw material, and a general increase in the use of lower quality materials such as quartz, metavolcanics, and orthoquartzites is evident over the course of the Paleoindian era. Use of extralocal material was most pronounced during the early and middle Paleoindian periods north of the Fall Line. South of the Fall Line Coastal Plain chert was common during every period; its ready availability in outcrops may have obviated the need to extralocal materials. Raw material source analyses indicate local groups carried or exchanged points 150 or more km from quarry areas.

Clovis points, although exhibiting a wide range, tend to be fairly small, averaging just over 60 mm in length. Clovis points of Coastal Plain chert were longer, on the average, than Clovis points made on other materials. Possible Clovis and Clovis variants were even smaller still, averaging under 40 mm in length. An appreciable majority of these point forms were found north of the Fall Line, and most are locally available materials. Their small size may be due, in part to manufacturing constraints of the raw materials they are made from, which include quartz and low quality Piedmont chert. Middle Paleoindian Simpson and Suwannee points were appreciably larger, averaging ca. 70 and 80 mm in length, respectively. This may be due to the occurrence of these types of primarily from south of the Fall Line, in close proximity to high quality chert sources in southern and central Georgia. Late Paleoindian Dalton points were fairly small, with bifaces exhibiting pronounced 'fluting' or more properly basal thinning typically larger than points without this thinning.

To test whether artifact reduction or exhaustion occurred as distance from raw material source increased, the size of Coastal Plain chert Clovis points found north and south of the Fall Line was examined. Clovis points from north of the Fall Line averaged ca 5 mm smaller in overall length than those to the south. Clovis points found north of the Fall Line were also slightly thicker, on the average, suggesting some concern about loss due to breakage, assuming, as is plausible, that thinner points were known to break more readily than thicker points. Likewise, chert Clovis points from north of the Fall Line had smaller basal concavities, again suggesting (if not a stylistic difference) concern for durability, assuming that points with a solid base were sturdier in the haft, or less likely to break, than those with a concave base. Finally, flute length was greater on the north Georgia specimens, indicating greater care in manufacture. All of these attributes might be expected on points that were to be carried and used at an appreciable distance from a raw material source, since they would probably improve point durability and efficiency.

Examining the incidence of Paleoindian and early Archaic projectile points at a number of locations in Georgia, major increases in the numbers of observed diagnostics were evident between the early and late Paleoindian subperiods, and again from the late Paleoindian to the early Archaic. If these data reflect regional population levels they suggest that major population growth was occurring, and that the considerable filling of the landscape had occurred by the start of the early Archaic.

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