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EXCAVATIONS AT FOUR FALL LINE SITES
THE SOUTHEASTERN COLUMBIA BELTWAY PROJECT

SITES 38LX5, 38LX64, 38LX82, AND 38LX106
EXCAVATION REPORT

PREPARED FOR

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HIGHWAYS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
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MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

During July and August of 1978, archeologists from Commonwealth Associates Inc. conducted excavations at four sites (38LX5, 38LX64, 38LX82, and 38LX106) in the route of the proposed Southeastern Columbia Beltway. The fieldwork and subsequent report preparation were conducted under the terms of a contract with the South Carolina Department of Highways and Public Transportation. Fieldwork operations extended over 150 person-days, during July and August, with analysis and report preparation occupying another 225 days between September 1978 and August 1979.

Field procedures consisted of mapping and controlled surface collection over each site, followed by the excavation of dispersed test pits and block units. Project research was directed toward cultural historical and cultural ecological questions, particularly the delimitation of component specific artifact associations and site-use patterns. Field data collection was directed toward the collection of information useful to the examination of these topics, with an emphasis on the collection of samples of value for specialized analyses focusing on aboriginal subsistence and chronology (ethnobotanical and radiocarbon studies). The analysis consisted of a descriptive and interpretive summary of the four assemblages, including all materials recovered during previous investigations at each site.

Site 38LX5, which occurs in the upland/sandhills area, was the westernmost site examined. A total of 52 controlled surface collection units, 43 one by two meter test pits, five small block units, and two stratigraphic cuts were opened there. The site is extensive, covering approximately 100 x 200 meters in area, with several light concentrations noted in the scatter. Middle Archaic, Late Archaic, Woodland, and Mississippian components were recognized, which were found to be overlapping low density scatters. Limited stratification was noted, with later Archaic and Woodland components generally confined to the plowzone. Identifiable subplowzone features, defined on the basis of faint charcoal staining or clusters of rocks or artifacts, were largely of Middle Archaic through Early Woodland in age. Nine features were recognized, four of probable Woodland age, one from the Middle Archaic, and the remainder of undetermined period. Two of the five features identified to a specific period were clusters of artifacts. Extensive flotation of fill in and around all of the features produced small amounts of charcoal that proved valuable in radiocarbon and ethnobotanical analyses.

The excavation assemblage from 38LX5 consisted primarily of bifaces, flake cutting tools, small pieces of

debitage, ferruginous sandstone, and fire cracked rock, with some pottery in the later periods. Short-term use of the site during most periods is indicated, possibly in hunting and/or butchering activity. Somewhat more extended use of the site area during the Woodland is suggested by the moderate amount of pottery present, but no evidence for long-term occupation, such as structures, was found.

At 38LX106, the second upland site examined, the controlled surface collection entailed piece-plotting all visible artifacts (N=5). Four one by two meter test pits were then opened in the area of apparent scatter, which was about ten meters in diameter. No aboriginal features were detected, and the site assemblage was characterized by a number of small flakes and two probable Late Archaic biface fragments. The low artifact density and predominantly later-stage reduction debris present suggests short-term use, possibly related to hunting activity. The 38LX5 and 38LX106 assemblages are generally similar, with 38LX5 perhaps reflecting numerous small behavioral episodes like that noted at 38LX106. The denser concentration of debris noted at 38LX5 may be related to the site's location, on a low knoll overlooking a small tributary. Site 38LX106, in contrast, is on a hill slope just above the western margin of the river floodplain, with no nearby drainages.

The third site examined, 38LX82, was located near the edge of a small marshy area in the floodplain of the Congaree River. The site is about 20 meters in diameter and some 250 meters from a swampy tributary of Congaree Creek. At 38LX82, a total of 10 one by two meter test units were systematically dispersed over the scatter, with a controlled surface collection about each unit. The site assemblage was found to occur entirely in the plowzone; a 30 meter backhoe trench placed through the center of the scatter failed to delimit deeply buried artifacts or subplowzone features. The artifact assemblage included two probable Late Archaic bifaces,debitage, a few retouched flake tools, and several large cobble mauls or nutting stones. The presence of large cobble tools and a somewhat more diversified flake tool and debitage assemblage than at 38LX5 or 38LX106 suggests more general or extended site use than noted in the uplands. Plant processing may have occurred at 38LX82, a function suggested by the site cobble tools, which were larger and more common than those recovered from the upland areas.

The fourth site examined, 38LX64, was also in the floodplain. This site was similar to 38LX82, although much greater in extent. Artifacts were found over an area roughly 100 by 50 meters immediately along a tributary of Congaree Creek. Fifteen one by two meter test pits, 3 meters of backhoe trenches, and 11 controlled surface collection units were

placed over the scatter. The results of an extensive controlled surface collection that had been conducted in 1975 was also incorporated into the analysis. Preceramic, Early, Middle, and Late Archaic components were found at 38LX64, and were identified by the presence of Palmer, Kirk, Morrow Mountain, and Savannah River Stemmed bifaces. A minor Late Archaic or Early Woodland ceramic period site use was suggested by a few sherds of plain and simple stamped sand tempered pottery. Seven features were recognized, at 38LX64 although only one, a possible Middle Archaic hearth, could be clearly identified to specific period. Extensive flotation yielded only minor amounts of charcoal from most features, suggesting poorer preservation than noted on the upland sites, 38LX5 and 38LX106.

The artifact assemblage at 38LX64 was almost entirely contained within a 20cm depth interval, with only minimal evidence for stratification. Both Early and Late Archaic tools were found at the same depth in adjoining units; only a minority of the forms occurred in clear logical superposition. An examination of the 1978 material, coupled with the 1975 controlled surface collection, indicated that the richest portion of the scatter was located to the west, out of the right-of-way. The site assemblage included a range of bifaces, retouched flake tool forms, and debitage, indicating that all stages of reduction and manufacture were occurring on the site. Cobble tools and a grinding basin were present, including mauls and nutting stones. Flake tools had steeper edge angles, on the average, than those noted from the upland sites, and cobble tools were significantly larger and more numerous. Extended use of the 38LX64 site area, possibly even habitation, is indicated, with plant processing possibly an important activity.

The excavations document the major patterns of prehistoric use at each site, and a comparison of the four assemblages reveals differences in the aboriginal use of the floodplain as opposed to the upland areas. In general, the upland sites appear to be short-term special purpose stations focusing on hunting activity, with possibly some extended use during the Woodland. Floodplain sites, in contrast, exhibit a diverse assemblage, suggesting more extended use, with a greater number of activities occurring.

The four sites were characterized by limited stratification and features, in spite of extensive efforts to delimit information of this kind. Sites 38LX106 and 38LX82 were small and the latter appears to be entirely in the plowzone, from which a thorough collection was obtained. Site 38LX106 appears to be limited in size and content, with few associated artifacts or features. Additional fieldwork at these two sites, it is argued, would be unlikely to yield further information beyond that already collected.

Sites 38LX5 and 38LX64 are much more complex, although again it is probable that representative information has been recovered about the prehistoric artifact and feature assemblages present in each area. At 38LX64, additionally, charcoal preservation in features was generally poor, and the thin artifact layer--20cm--made it difficult to accurately delimit associations between specimens. Most of the site, including the areas of highest artifact density, is located outside of the corridor right-of-way.

At 38LX5, the latter Woodland and Mississippian components are almost exclusively restricted to the plowzone, which was extensively sampled by controlled surface collections and test pitting. The subplowzone area, which contained Middle Archaic through Woodland components, yielded nine features, five of which were identifiable to specific period. Five of the site features were characterized by small amounts of preserved charcoal, and radiocarbon dates were obtained from four of them. The information recovered is important, but relatively small in quantity considering the excavations encompassed, almost 300 square meters. Use of heavy equipment in stripping operations would reveal additional features, but the information gained would probably be minor unless a large percent of the site area could be opened and carefully shovel skimmed. Even then, the possibility for significant feature discovery would be only conjectural.

In conclusion, it is apparent that representative information about the nature and content of the surviving archeological record has been recovered from the four sites examined in the Beltway corridor. Future work on these sites would be likely to produce redundant information, and would serve only to augment, rather than markedly alter, the results of the current analysis. During construction, however, care should be taken to avoid damage to the portions of 38LX64 that are adjacent to, but not within the corridor. All other archeological sites identified in the project area, and not specifically examined here, should be avoided during construction.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND TO THE INVESTIGATIONS

Archeologists from Commonwealth Associates Inc. conducted data recovery operations at four prehistoric sites near Columbia, South Carolina. From July 7 to August 21, 1978, the sites (38LX5, 38LX64, 38LX82, and 38LX106) were in the right-of-way of the proposed Southeastern Columbia Beltway, a major traffic artery around the southern and eastern portions of the city. The fieldwork and subsequent analysis and report preparation were conducted under the terms of a contract between Commonwealth and the South Carolina Department of Highways and Public Transportation. The effort was conducted to recover a sample of the cultural resources on each of the four sites. This report, and a separate data appendix volume, summarize and document the results of the archeological mitigation program.

The project area lies just below the Fall line in the extreme upper reaches of the Atlantic Coastal Plain, along Congaree Creek, a tributary of the Congaree River (Figure 1). The sites themselves are located in eastern Lexington County, near the town of Cayce, approximately four miles to the southwest of Columbia and on the opposite side of the river. Until quite recently the area was sparsely populated farmland, although residential and industrial development is rapidly progressing.

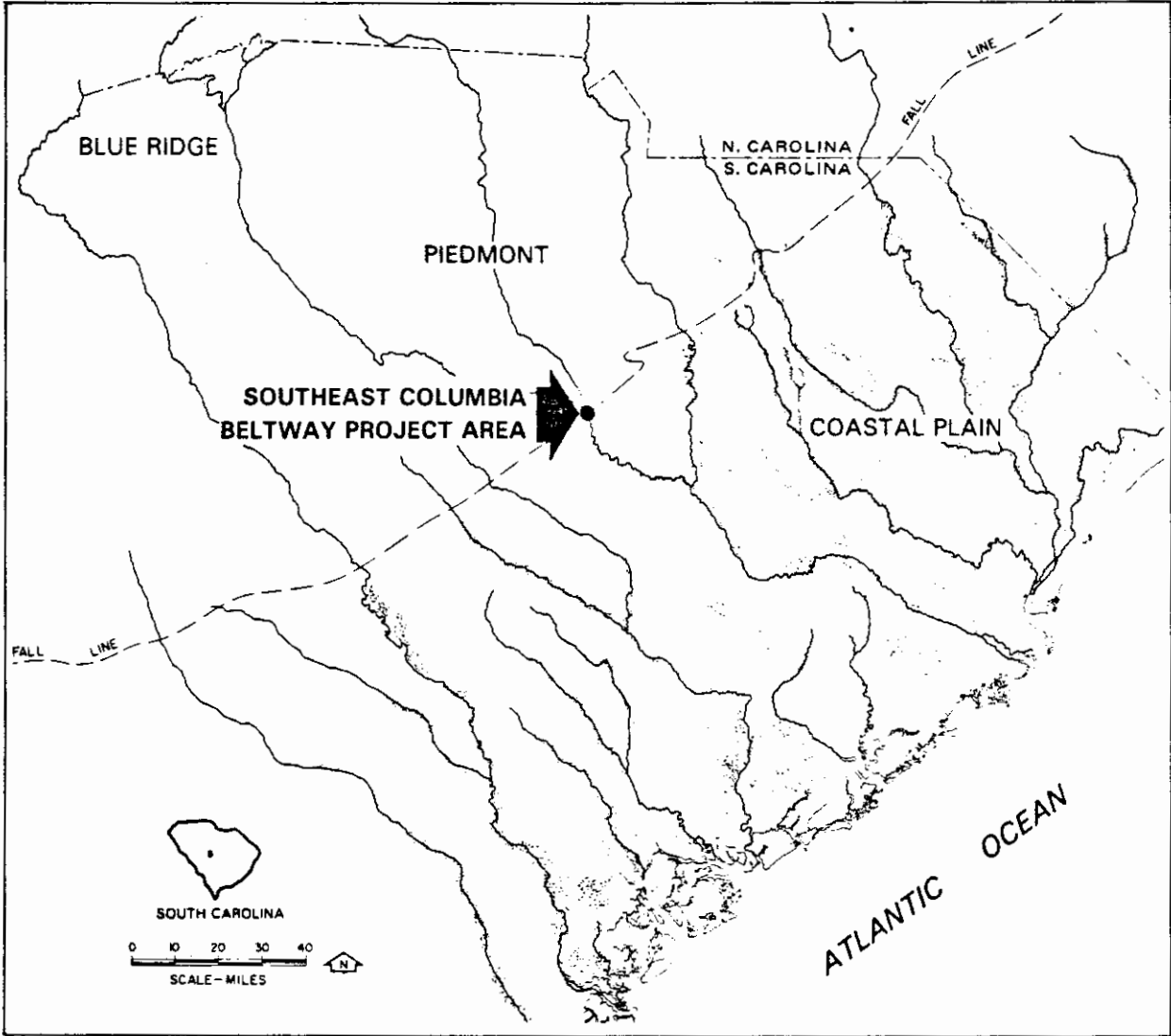
The right-of-way for the proposed Southeastern Columbia Beltway corridor begins just south of the U.S. Highway 321 exit on Interstate 26, where a series of connector interchanges are planned. From I-26 at the west, the corridor proceeds east and southeast for a distance of some four miles, until it crosses the Congaree River. From here, the right-of-way passes into Richland County, some 800 feet south of the Columbia Sewage Treatment Plant. The route then proceeds for approximately two miles to the northeast, where it intersects Bluff Road (S.C. 48), where an interchange is planned. Three separate cultural resources surveys were conducted for the Beltway, sponsored by the South Carolina Department of Highways and Public Transportation. A number of archeological sites were found during these surveys, and the corridor chosen represents a least-effects compromise that avoids most of the known cultural resources. The four sites reported here comprise the only known cultural resources in the corridor right-of-way in either Lexington or Richland Counties.

EXISTING INFORMATION ON PREHISTORIC RESOURCES IN THE GENERAL PROJECT AREA

From an archeological perspective, the Fall Line in the vicinity of Congaree Creek is unquestionably one of the most intensively studied localities in South Carolina. A number of summaries of previous archeological research in the general project area have appeared in recent years, and complement the present discussion (Goodyear 1976, Wogaman, House, and Goodyear 1976:9-13, Michie 1979:11-17). The record of past investigation provides a basis for reviewing human occupation and use of the project area. The examination of past work additionally provides a perspective from which to evaluate the research design that guided the excavations and analyses reported here.

Terminology used in this report to identify major cultural historical stages follows that proposed by Griffin (1967). These stages, and associated absolute dates, include the Paleo-Indian (c. 20,000 - 10,000 BP), Early Archaic (c. 10,000 - 8000 BP), Middle Archaic (c. 8000 - 4500 BP), Late Archaic (c. 4500 - 3000 BP), Early Woodland (c. 3000 BP - 1500 BP), Later Woodland (c. 1500 - 750 BP), Mississippian (c. 750 - 300 BP), and Historic (c. 300 BP - present). General stage definitions and alternative summaries of local cultural history are also to be found in a number of reports from the area (Goodyear 1975a:5-17, Ackerly 1976:6-14, Wogaman, House, and Goodyear 1976:10-14, Smith 1977:9-11, Michie 1979:11-17).

Prehistoric archeological research in the upper Congaree River valley began with artifact collecting as early as the mid-nineteenth century. The Fall Line near Columbia has been settled continuously for over 200 years, and clearing, farming, and settlement have unquestionably taken their toll on local archeological resources. Interest in Indian remains developed early, with the first documented collecting activity occurring in the 1840s. This early investigation was summarized by the Reverend George Howe (1857), in an article entitled "An Essay on the Antiquities of the Congaree Indians of South Carolina" (reported in Schoolcraft 1851-1857, Volume VI:155-168). Howe provided a lengthy series of descriptions of artifacts uncovered by floods and plowing in the Columbia area, and underlined the state of relic collecting at the time: " I have many hundred arrow and spear heads, and many more are in the possession of others" (Schoolcraft 1851-1857, Volume VI: 159). The locations where Howe made his collections are only generally reported, and in all probability lie outside of the Beltway corridor. Howe's paper is important, however, in that it points to a lengthy and popular tradition of artifact collection in the general area. Existing records document artifact collection from the four excavated Beltway sites only



LOCATION OF THE PROJECT AREA ON THE FALL LINE NEAR COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

SOUTHEAST COLUMBIA BELTWAY PROJECT
SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

FIGURE 1

over the last ten years; Howe's reference indicates that casual surface collection may have occurred on them a hundred or more years previously, at any time after the land was cleared and plowed.

Historic records, as summarized by Meriwether (1940), Trinkley (1974a), Gay (1974), Anderson (1975a), and Goodyear (1976), are useful to describe the condition of the four sites prior to the beginning of the project. The first significant land clearing began after 1718, when the trading fort along the lower Congaree Creek was established. The four sites may not have been affected by land clearing until sometime in the nineteenth or even possibly the early twentieth century. By the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century, however, three of the four site areas are reported, by local informants, to have been under cultivation. At the time of the 1978 excavations, these three sites (38LX5, 38LX64, and 38LX82) had apparently been continuously cultivated for at least fifty years. The exception, 38LX106, was in a mixed hardwood/pine forest at the time of the 1978 excavations, and appeared, given the immature condition of the trees, to have been logged in the past.

In addition to logging, clearing, and cultivation, much of the lower-lying reaches along Congaree Creek have been artificially drained in recent years. A drainage ditch runs by the western perimeter of one of the project sites, 38LX82, and may have removed some of the archeological deposits. Site water table levels, flooding periodicity and extent, and erosional patterns have all been altered considerably during the historic period, affecting the archeological record on the project sites. Additional documentation of these factors is included in the individual site descriptions.

The earliest well-documented archeological collections from the general project area date to the 1920s and 1930s. Surface finds of fluted points and ceramic artifacts collected from sites in the area were reported in short technical papers by Wauchope (1939) and Griffin (1945). Wauchope's paper described a number of Paleo-Indian fluted points that had been collected from the Columbia area. The exact locations of some of these finds remains uncertain, although several of the points appear to have come from the vicinity of the Taylor site (38LX1), a mile north of the Beltway corridor across Congaree Creek. Griffin's paper described a surface collection of pottery from the Thom's Creek site (38LX2), which is located some three miles south of the project area. The assemblage encompassed most of the wares now known to occur in the area, and the paper serves as a model for the descriptive analysis of local ceramics. The paper provided the first type description of Thom's Creek punctate, a

distinctive Late Archaic ware that has since been reported throughout the South Carolina Coastal Plain (Waddell 1963, Anderson 1975b, Trinkley 1976a).

By the late 1950s, one of the four sites, 38LX5, was known to local collectors and subject to at least occasional visits (James L. Michie: personal communication). By the middle to late 1960s the archeological potential of the Congaree Creek area was becoming known in local collecting circles, with many of the larger sites visited each year. Extensive surface collections accumulated at this time, and some, notably those by Tommy Charles and James L. Michie, then avocational archeologists with the Archeological Society of South Carolina, are today regarded as invaluable research collections.

Systematic, scientific investigation and reporting of archeological remains in the project area was initiated in the late 1960s by James L. Michie, a Columbia area resident. In 1969 Michie conducted excavations at the Thom's Creek site, where 16 five foot squares were opened in six inch levels to a depth of 30 inches (Michie 1969). The excavations yielded Early Archaic through Woodland materials in a logical stratification, demonstrating the applicability of Coe's (1964) Archaic cultural sequence to central South Carolina. A second season of excavation was conducted at the Thom's Creek site in 1970, by a University of South Carolina field school under the direction of Dr. Donald R. Sutherland. These excavations, reported by Michael B. Trinkley (1974b), provided additional documentation of the Archaic and Woodland components on the site.

In 1969 and 1970 Michie (1971:47-48) also conducted excavations at the Taylor site (38LX1), where Early Archaic Palmer and Dalton hearth and tool clusters were found undisturbed below the plowzone. The fieldwork at the Taylor site was briefly reported in the 1971 Southeastern Archaeological Conference Bulletin (Michie 1971:47-48); final analysis and report preparation activity are still in progress. The work at Taylor and at Thom's Creek documented the presence of stratified deposits, and features and working floors, on sites in the upper Congaree River valley, and provided direction to later fieldwork and research in the area.

In August of 1972 archeological survey and testing operations were conducted at the proposed Columbia Zoological Park, located five miles north of the project sites, just across the Fall Line along the Saluda River (Ryan 1972). Four prehistoric sites were discovered, and a small block unit, encompassing 19 square meters, was removed at one of the four, at the Sable site (38RD60). The Sable site is located on a narrow sand/clay ridge or terrace remnant elevated just above the Saluda River back swamp. The block unit produced

Woodland period artifacts and features, including simple stamped, linear check stamped, and fabric impressed pottery in direct association in a feature (Ryan 1972:166). A backhoe was also employed at Sable, documenting the presence of buried Archaic deposits at depths of at least 1.5 meters. Although the work at Sable was only limited in scope, the description of the artifact assemblage is useful for comparison with sites from the project area.

Intensive archeological fieldwork has been almost continuous along Congaree Creek in recent years, with much of the work prompted by the planned development of the area. In early 1974 members of the Archeological Society of South Carolina began excavations at the Manning site (38LX50), a fifty acre scatter located on an elevated terrace remnant overlooking Congaree Creek, and within view of two of the four sites reported here. The society's excavations at Manning continued, on a seasonal basis, until mid 1979. A large block unit opened in the north-central part of the site, in woods overlooking Congaree Creek, has yielded Early Archaic through Mississippian remains as well as evidence for a mid-eighteenth century homestead (Goodyear, Lee, and Michie 1978).

In addition to the work at Manning by members of the state archeological society, during 1975 and 1976 extensive controlled surface collections and stratigraphic tests were conducted across the site (Wogaman, House, and Goodyear 1976:21-22). A controlled surface collection over the southern half of the site was conducted by Albert C. Goodyear and John House during the summer of 1975. During the winter of 1975/1976 additional surface collection, and a dispersed subsurface testing program was initiated, under the joint direction of John House, William Ayres, and Donald R. Sutherland. The testing and controlled surface collection program was continued in the summer of 1976, by a University of South Carolina field school under the direction of Leland G. Ferguson. A preliminary analysis of the 1975-1976 fieldwork indicated that undisturbed artifact-bearing deposits 30 cm or more in depth occurred over much of the Manning site, with considerable variation in content and density evident (Wogaman, House, and Goodyear 1976:21). Limited testing conducted in 1977 and 1978 at the eastern end of the Manning site provided additional confirmation of the 1975/1976 testing results, namely that preserved archeological deposits were to be found below the plowzone. All fieldwork at 38LX50 ceased in mid 1979, including the archeological society's block excavation. Detailed analysis of the site collections has been initiated, under the overall direction of Dr. Albert C. Goodyear of the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology staff, and the analysis and report preparation is expected to occupy several years time.

Legislatively-mandated survey and testing projects have provided a wealth of information on site distribution and content throughout the immediate project area. Much of this work has been sponsored by the South Carolina Department of Highways and Public Transportation, along the route of the proposed beltway, and planned connectors. All of the survey and testing work related to the highway program was carried out by archeologists from the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology, under the terms of an agreement between that institution and the South Carolina Department of Highways and Public Transportation (Stephenson 1975a:1-2, 1975b). Three separate corridor surveys were conducted in 1974 and 1975, during which 26 prehistoric and historic sites were located, and entered into the state site files (Anderson, Michie, and Trinkley 1974, Anderson 1974, Goodyear 1975a). All but two of the sites were located south of Congaree Creek, in the broad floodplain and at the edge of the adjoining sandhills defining the Congaree River valley. General and/or controlled surface collections were conducted at each of these sites during the beltway surveys. Four of the sites located at this time (38LX5, 38LX64, 38LX82, and 38LX106) comprise the subject of the present investigations. The initial fieldwork conducted at that time at each of these sites is reported in later chapters.

In 1976 additional archeological survey and testing operations were conducted along the route of a planned connector to the beltway, the Twelfth Street Extension (Wogaman, House, and Goodyear 1976). Nineteen additional archeological sites were located and recorded, most on the north side of Congaree Creek, with surface and/or subsurface collections gathered from each site. The report, by Wogaman, House, and Goodyear (1976), summarized much of the survey data collected to that time from the Congaree Creek locality, and provided a detailed discussion of individual site content, significance, and research potential, framed in relation to a series of specific research questions.

At the Godley site (38LX141), intensive subsurface testing excavations incorporating small, dispersed units, were conducted, in 1977 and 1978. The Godley site is a multi-acre scatter located two miles north of the Beltway corridor across Congaree Creek (Perlman et al. nd, Cable and Cantley 1978). This testing also revealed undisturbed subplowzone deposits, and additionally detected two possible house or activity floors. The results of this testing operation are still in preparation.

Additional information in the Congaree Creek locality has been provided by survey and testing operations along a series of proposed powerline corridors running through