

THE ARCHEOLOGY OF EASTERN GEORGIA AND SOUTH CAROLINA. *By Joseph R. Caldwell**

UNTIL quite recently little has been known of the archeology of eastern Georgia and South Carolina. This chapter will present briefly the prehistory of these regions, so far as it is now understood, by describing the successive archeological manifestations in the order of their appearance on the prehistoric scene, beginning with the oldest. The geographical area under consideration is an arbitrary one and more detailed surveys will need to be made before prehistoric cultural boundaries can be determined.

"EASTERN FOLSOM"

The distinctive flint and chert projectile points shown in Figure 167 may be the most ancient evidence of human activity in this region. Somewhat similar stone points have been found in New Mexico and Colorado associated with extinct fauna geologically datable to the close of the last glacial age.¹ The artifacts from Georgia and South Carolina have been random surface occurrences, without Pleistocene associations, and their relation, if any, to the western types is not clear.²

All the points shown in Figure 167 are in the United States National Museum. *A*, *B*, and *C* are from Kiokee Creek, Columbia County, Georgia; *D* is from Milledgeville, Baldwin County; *E* is from Forsythe County; and *F*, *G*, and *H* are from Buckhead Creek, Burke County.

THE SAVANNAH RIVER FOCUS

Aside from the Folsom-like points, concerning which little can yet be said, the earliest archeological remains in this area have been found in certain shell heaps on the Savannah River and adjacent portions of the Georgia and South Carolina coasts. The ma-

terials occurring at these sites are indicative of a simple hunting and gathering economy and the artifacts are sufficiently similar from one site to another to suggest their having been left by a single people or by a group of peoples of closely related culture. The two major shell heaps which have been excavated, Stalling's Island and Bilbo, were occupied more than once and in both cases the materials characteristic of the Savannah River Focus were stratigraphically below, and hence antedated, the other remains.

Stalling's Island on the Savannah River eight miles above Augusta is largely covered by an imposing heap of freshwater mussel and other shells. C. C. Jones described the pile in 1873 as roughly three hundred by one hundred twenty feet in extent and fifteen feet high. He trenched the shell heap, finding human burials, fragments of pottery, and implements and ornaments of animal bone, stone, and shell.³

In 1931 Claflin, working for Peabody Museum, made extensive excavations at Stalling's Island.⁴ It soon became apparent that the materials he was finding were unusual and unlike the specimens of pottery and other artifacts which had hitherto been considered characteristic of the region. He named this archeological assemblage the "Stalling's Island Culture." Claflin also noted later refuse, storage, and burial pits cutting into the shell heap from higher levels. The pits contained fragments of most of the more common varieties of aboriginal pottery in the district, indicating that the distinctive Stalling's Island pottery and other material must have been older. A survey of the surrounding country showed the presence of several other Stalling's Island Culture sites.

Additional work at Stalling's Island was conducted by Fairbanks in 1940, and the Stallings Island Culture is now recognized as a component of the Savannah River Focus.⁵ Fairbanks' excavations resulted from his interest in Claflin's statement that pottery was absent from the lower levels of the shell heap. Excavating three stratigraphic blocks, Fairbanks found that potsherds occurred mainly in the uppermost twelve inches of the heap and did not appear deeper than two feet. Other artifacts of stone and

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1. Bryan and Ray, 1940, pp. 69-72.

2. Kelly, 1938, pp. 2-8, Fig. 5, and Wauchope, 1939, pp. 344-346, Fig. 30.

3. Jones, C. C., 1873, p. 197.

5. Fairbanks, 1942.

4. Claflin, 1931.

been subject to the Hitchiti (lower Creeks) which later became important in the Creek Confederacy, if indeed they not already were. The major seat of the Yamassee was probably on the Altamaha,⁸⁶ and the Hitchiti themselves were at the headwaters of that stream. In 1733, at a conference between the Indians and the Georgia Colony, the Confederacy assumed the right to dispose of the lands.⁸⁷

The historic site of Fort King George at the mouth of the Altamaha River was occupied by the Yamassee Huspaw in 1715 who were said to have formerly lived there.⁸⁸ The Indian village area contained numerous sherds of Spanish wheel-turned pottery (Fig. 176, *I*) in direct association with late types of aboriginal pottery. The latter have a number of general similarities with coastal Irene pottery, which itself has been found with Spanish sherds at other sites, but more specific resemblances of the Fort King George

pottery are with the historic Hitchiti pottery of the interior.⁸⁹

The historic situation is far more complex than we have made it appear and was especially so on the lower Savannah River where numerous alien groups were settling in late times. These included such diverse peoples as Yuchi, Shawnee, Creeks, and even a few Natchez. At Parachukla, Hampton District, South Carolina, Marmaduke H. Floyd found burials with abundant historic glass beads washing out of the river bank (Fig. 176, *G*). Fragments of European clay pipes (*H*, lower right), a bullet (*H*, lower left), iron nails (*A*), china (*C*), and crockery were mingled with Indian shell beads (*G*, upper) and pottery.⁹⁰ The aboriginal pottery (*B*, *D*, *E*, *F*) was again similar to the historic Hitchiti complex of central Georgia. The Parachuckla Site had been occupied by the Appalachicola, a Hitchiti group, and their town was abandoned during the Yamassee War of 1715.

86. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

87. *Ibid.*

88. Lewis, B., 1939.

89. Caldwell, n.d.

90. Materials presented to the United States National Museum.

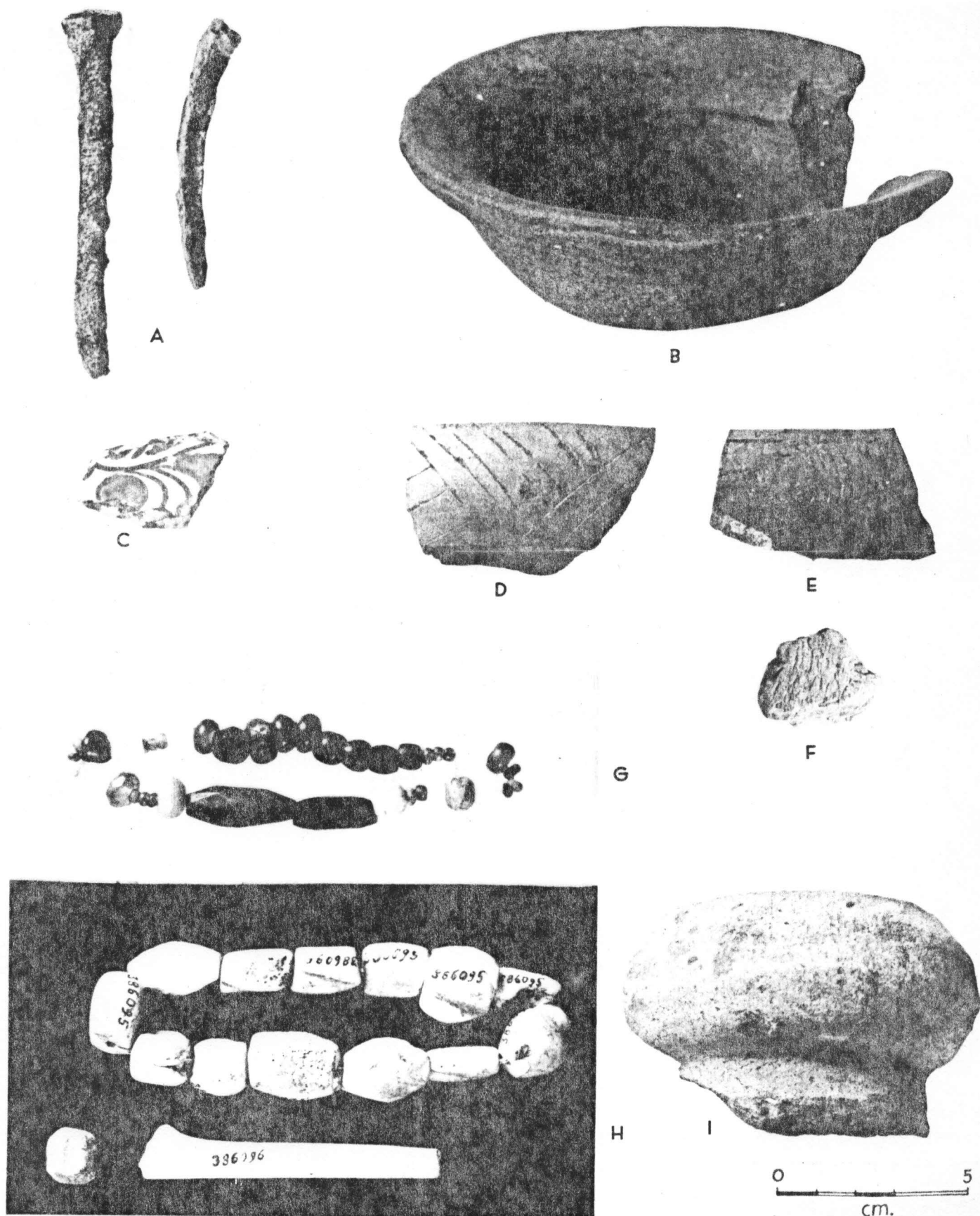


FIG. 176.—Materials from the historic sites of Parachuckla and Fort King George

A. Iron nails
 B. Flaring-rim bowl of native ware
 C. Imported china

D-E. Rim sherds similar to Ocmulgee
 Fields Incised
 F. Body sherd similar to Walnut
 Roughened of Macon area

G. European glass beads
 H. Native shell beads, a fragment of a
 European clay pipe, and a bullet
 I. Spanish wheel-turned pottery