

THE MISSOURI TOWNSHIP PROJECT: A CULTURAL  
RESOURCES SURVEY AND INVENTORY OF  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SITES, TOWNSHIP  
27 NORTH, RANGE 22 WEST, CHRISTIAN  
COUNTY, MISSOURI: 1979

PHASE I

VOLUME II: Survey Results

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The information presented herein is restricted to use of federal, state,  
and local officials, planners, engineers, and professional archaeologists.  
This information should not be given to unauthorized individuals due to  
the danger of site vandalism, looting, and destruction.

1. Site No. 23CN116, Nelson Ford Site.
2. Location: NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 5, T27N, R22W, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , and N $\frac{1}{2}$ , SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , of Section 6, T27N, R22W.
3. Setting and Description:

The Nelson Ford site covers the entire alluvial terrace on the north bank of the James River at a contour elevation of 1080 to 1100 feet in Sections 5 and 6. It may extend out of the township along the river to the northeast. The same terrain occurs on both sides of the modern road which bisects the site and crosses the James River at the Nelson Ford low water bridge. A former owner/tenant of this land said that lithic debris can be found all along the terrace. At the time of the survey, the area was in pasture and dense vegetation, and had not been plowed for 20 years. Cultural material was found in exposed areas, at the high water line along the river edge, on cattle trails, and around cattle feeders. One informant said he had found many of the types (heavy choppers) which were found in the survey.

Another local collector had many artifacts found on this site. His collection came from 2 areas, one along the high water line in Section 5 east of the road, and the other about a hundred yards from the river bank on the 1090-foot contour line. The first area contained Woodland projectile points, the second some other artifact fragments.

This terrace was also the site of the historic community of Griffin (c. 1840-1912) which developed around the Griffin Mill (23CN114). The first post office and polling place in the township were located in a store operated by Jim Young in Griffin. The post office was discontinued in 1905.

This early community extended up the ridges to the north, outside the study area. Some of the children from Griffin attended the Lone Pine school (Section 8) on the other side of the James River. The Delaware Church was associated historically with Griffin (Section 7). Family names associated with this community are, among others: Griffin, Shelton, Young, Willoughby, Curbow, Sanders, Kimmons, Howard, Scruggs, Forbis, Manley, Maples, Stewart, Nelson, Hawkins, and Bledsoe. Most of them except the Griffins, were southerners from Tennessee; many of them were slave owners and Confederate sympathizers during the Civil War. Most have living descendants on the same land their ancestors homesteaded. They are buried in the Delaware, Manley, and Griffin cemeteries reported elsewhere.

The Nelson Ford mill was built in 1839, and the pre-Civil War community is described in a family history as follows:

There were several homes and stores built after the mill was constructed. Most of the homes and stores were located north of the mill. There was a grocery store, livery barn and blacksmith shop, a drug store that sold corn liquor, and a dry goods store . . . There were four homes or cabins and a large barn and cabin farther north of the stores. One cabin and barn located further north is now the Calhoun place. Corn liquor was distilled locally for the drug store. On election days men came to Griffin to vote. The settlement was the scene of drunkenness and fights on election days. In those days one could always depend on a good fight developing between some of the voters.

A horse-drawn mail hack delivered mail and newspapers to the Griffin, Missouri post office twice a week from Springfield. On mail delivery days people of the community would gather at the settlement to do their trading. Farmers would bring produce with them to sell or trade for needed staples or goods from the stores. The women would swap community gossip and gather at one of the homes to prepare a meal during the all-day affair. There was some fur trading in those days. The James River was abundant with dens of mink and muskrat and most of the farmers near James River did some trapping (Rhodes 1970:25).

Historic photographs c. 1890 show several houses, the livestock yards and sheds, blacksmith shop, and other buildings. The blacksmith shop should be

located in the NE $\frac{1}{4}$  SE $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 6 under a big walnut tree along the road. The road at that time ran about 20 feet west of the present road, down to the ford. Tradition says that in the early days of the Civil War, Federal troops killed several Confederate soldiers at the blacksmith shop while they were having their horses shod. This area was also the location of the skirmish that took place during F. Sigel's retreat from Wilson's Creek in August 1861, in which a number of Union soldiers were killed either in the road and/or hiding under the mill. The incident is described by Vaughn (1876). His father was a captain in the company of local men from Porter Township who took part in the battle, so he may have been an eyewitness. One informant said that he had found uniform buttons on the blacksmith shop site, and a cannon is supposed to be sunk in the James "below the riffle." Nothing remains now to mark the location, and no historic debris could be found.

In the early days of the mill the public still was run by Woodson Howard, a distiller from North Carolina. Making liquor was one way of storing excess grain received as the miller's toll. The stillhouse was north of the township boundary near Blue Spring. Howard was noted for the quality of his corn whiskey, apple jack and peach brandy. A bushel of corn could be exchanged for a gallon of whiskey. Peach brandy sold for 10¢ a quart, 40¢ a gallon (Howard 1947). Everyone used spirits, including children. Historic ceramic fragments and glass were found at the approximate location of the Griffin house, near which a large modern house and outbuildings have been built. These are the only structures on the site of Griffin now, except for the Carr house (23CN124), just north of the township in Section 31, T28N, R22W.

Section 18, T27N, R22W

The topography in Section 18 (Figure 38) ranges from an elevation of 1240 feet in the southwest corner to 1070 feet on the river bottom terraces. Steep, heavily wooded slopes drain into the James River. The James River flows diagonally from the northwest to the southeast across the section. There are few permanent water sources besides the river. However, seasonal springs do occur along the bluffs. A large flat alluvial terrace (23CN3) along the river in the northwest corner has been continuously occupied since 1820, first by Pettijohn, then by the Delaware Trading Post and Chief Anderson's Delaware village, and finally by a succession of early settlers. The 1835 survey map shows the Delaware Trail (the Old White River Road) crossing the river at this point through "Porter's Field" (about 80 acres). Highway 14 now approximately follows that route, coming down a hollow on one side, crossing the bottom, then going up a hollow on the other side. The location of the road has been changed several times in an attempt to find a more favorable route. During the latest highway construction (1970s) several sites were reported. Site 23CN70, reported by R. Marshall, is a Woodland site on the east bridge approach, and 23CN86 is on the west bridge approach, outside the study area. The east site could not be confirmed because of dense pasture. A site was found on the west side, but it was assigned a new site number since Marshall's report did not give a clear location of 23CN86.

The Delaware trading post-village site may extend upstream along the lower terrace into Sections 7 and 12 (in T27N, R23W) and downstream into Sections 19 and 20 (T27N, R22W). Included in 23CN3 is the historic Gibson Cemetery, oldest cemetery in the study area. The oldest burial is that of John Donner who died in 1847. A local informant marked the location of Donner's

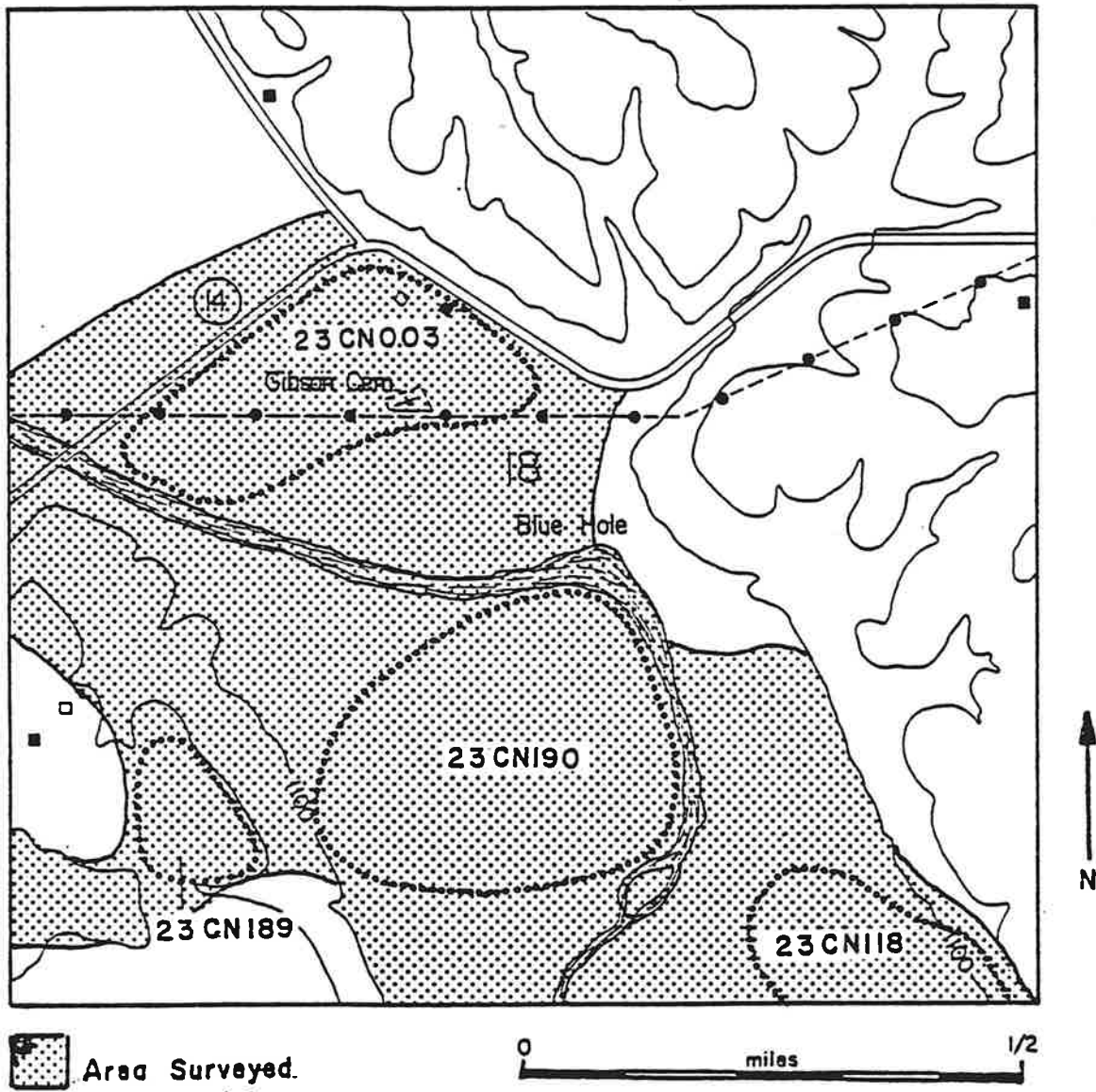


Figure 38. Section 18, T27N, R22W, showing area surveyed and sites.

homestead on the second terrace southwest of the river in the southeast quarter of the section. He indicated that the remains of the log cabin could be seen until fairly recently, and that the site has not been disturbed by construction.

Approximately 60% of the section was physically surveyed. In addition to the above sites, two sites were reported in the southwest corner, one on the 1150-foot terrace on the southwest bank of the James River. The high terrace site (23CN189) is the only place in the township where a tool with a worn gloss (highly polished surface) was found. The patina had been acquired before the tool was broken, and the tool shape suggests that it could have been a Sedalia Digger which Chapman (1975:174) equates with Late Archaic prairie-forest border foraging.

In summary, the survey in this section relocated one multi-component prehistoric-historic site (23CN3), and reported 3 other prehistoric sites, 23CN189, 23CN190, and 23CN155.

1. Site No. 23CN3, Delaware Town Trading Post
2. Location: SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , AND SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , Section 18, T27N, R22W.
3. Setting and Description:

The Delaware Trading site is situated on a terrace at an elevation of 1070 feet, about 5 feet above the floodplain of the James River. A modern farmhouse and outbuildings now occupy the terrace, and most of the area is covered with a dense grass. About 1820, John Pettijohn, Sr. built a cabin near or on this site, which subsequently became the center of the Delaware occupation (1822-1830). By 1824 a considerably large village had been built. The trading post included the blacksmith shop, stables and other log buildings to house the early settlers and their slaves. Chief Anderson's log house as well as the cabins of many Delaware Indians were also located here. There may have also been a Delaware ceremonial log "big house" where rituals were held. When the Delaware left in 1830, Euro-American settlers moved into the vacant cabins while they looked for land. The land was claimed by Major Joseph Weaver for several years, then sold to Porter (or sold the improvements as neither could take up a legal claim), and Porter was on the land when it was surveyed in 1835.

Porter patented this land in December, 1839, and most of it has been held by Porter descendants (Howard and Kerr) ever since. The tract with the actual site is currently owned by the Maples family, although the Kerrs and Howards own large adjacent tracts.

This site may represent a stratified village site, dating perhaps from the Middle Archaic until 1820. Since that time it has been permanently occupied by Euro-American or Indian settlers. According to Tong (personal communication 1978) who first recorded the site, great quantities of broken implements, iron pots, copper kettles, bits of muskets and other



metallic trash were gathered up and dumped when the land was being prepared for agriculture. There are still quantities of broken china, glassware, iron nails, and Euro-American fragments on the site.

The site also has a prehistoric component. Flakes and projectile points have been found by collectors, including Middle to Late Archaic projectile points seen in private collections and collected during the survey. This is the only site surveyed where a metal detector was used; several metal artifacts were recovered.

No prehistoric structures were recognized. Fifteen feet of a stone foundation was found, not part of the current farmstead, but which may belong to an early historic component.

The Gibson Cemetery, the oldest in the study area, is part of the site. Porter and many Howards were buried here until the Delaware cemetery (23CN164) was established. The topographic map shows the cemetery as Gibson, but the area is actually in the Shelton Cemetery, and the 5 Gibson graves are within it in a fenced enclosure. There are 30 to 50 graves in the cemetery threatened by flood water and vandalism. The cemetery is not maintained. Family names represented, on the 17 graves recorded on the Daughters of the American Revolution register, include Donner, Forbis, Ritner, Shelton, Dixon, Smith and Merritt. The oldest known grave is that of John Donner who died in 1847. Other graves may be older. Along one side are a number of early Euro-American "box graves" similar to those found in the Simpson Cemetery in Greene County.

The site was divided into 3 sections by the survey team, and artifacts collected were given a rough provenience. The earlier Vinton collection, donated to the Center for Archaeological Research, was collected over a random area. Selected artifacts from the site are illustrated, both from the survey collection and the John Vinton collection (Figure 57).