



Faculty Forum



You Cannot Conceive The Many Without The One
-Plato-

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**Prehistoric Cultures of
Allendale County**
By: Professor Lawrence D. Strong

There have been many groups of people living in Allendale County for years. Archeologists call these different groups of people cultures. Each culture lived for many 100's of years, or even 1000's of years, and then something would happen to them because of war, disease, climate change, or some other reason. Then another culture came along and started in Allendale County. At the end of this article there is a chart showing the different culture periods.

As an amateur archaeologist, I have been collecting projectile points in Allendale County for 30 plus years. I have found approximately 20,000 points (whole points or broken, but identifiable) on about 400 different sites in Allendale County. I have created a site form for each site in which I recorded its location, types of points and other materials found, along with other pertinent information about the site.

My contribution to research may be in using this quantity of projectile points in determining the largest prehistoric cultures of Allendale County. It is likely that each male carried a knife or point hafted on a shaft. I believe it is possible to make a correlation between the number of people living in the county at a known period and the number of projectile points found.

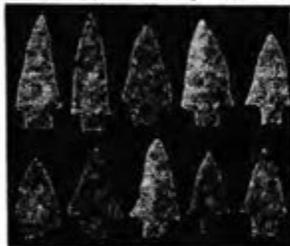
Much work has been done in dating points, mostly using carbon dating. The carbon of bones or ashes found near a point is carbon dated to establish the age of the point. The Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology from Columbia along with myself classified these points as to their cultural periods. A chart has been established showing the age of each point if it is categorized correctly. These points date as far back as 13,500 years. The classification chart shows all of the different cultures in the southeast. (*See chart on page 6.*)

The question arises; how many of these prehistoric cultures existed in Allendale County? Well, it turns out almost every culture was a part of Allendale prehistoric culture except the Bifurcate phase based my collection. This document will list the prehistoric cultures that contained the largest populations of Allendale County. (*See chart on page 5.*)

Why was Allendale County such an attractive place for early cultures? It had moderate climate and lots of food certainly. The northeast boundary is the Salkehatchie River, which is a good river for traveling and finding food. The east boundary is the Savannah River, one of the largest rivers in the Eastern United States. It was wonderful for travel and provided lots of provisions. The county also has many streams and Carolina bays. The Carolina bays are unique to the eastern United States. They are wetlands that contain many species of plants and animals. Even the oldest Paleo cultures treasured the bays. One other important factor for living in Allendale County is the chert quarries. Chert was the number one stone resource in this area for making projectile points, knives, and axes. It was easier to work with than quartz or rhyolite.

According to my data, the largest culture to occupy Allendale County was the

“Savannah River” people. 20% of my collection is from this time period. This culture, named after the Savannah River points, contains



Savannah River Points

the largest number of points collected, and is unique to the Eastern United States. Thousands of these points were found. There must have been large groups of these people through out the county. The time period would have been from 5000 to 3000 years ago according to archaeologists, which would be considered the late archaic period and perhaps crossing over to the early woodland period making it a transitional stage. There is quite a bit of information available on these people.

Artifacts from digs on Groton Plantation are exhibited in the library at USC-Salkehatchie. These people consumed seafood and left huge piles of shells on the banks of the Savannah River. The first pottery in the United States appeared at this time. The appearance of pottery implies a more sedentary life style since it takes a month or more for clay pots to dry sufficiently before firing and also because ceramics are so breakable if they were moved from one place to another. Spanish moss was used in making their ceramics so this pottery is called fiber tempered. The use of agriculture also started around this time. The bow and arrow was probably invented at the end of this time period, as this is the last culture when the projectile points are large. Could the technology of the bow and arrow have anything to do with their demise of the Savannah River culture? We could ask a similar question about the fall of any previous culture: Was it some cultural change that caused the end of the Roman Empire, the Spanish or English realms, or the Viking civilization?

After the Savannah River culture, the next largest quantity of points came from the

Mississippian culture. About 15% of my points are from this period. Although I found fewer points from this culture, this had to be the most



Mississippian Points

intricate and complex of all the prehistoric cultures. The time for this culture is 1000 to 300 years ago. We know more about this culture because it existed when early European explorers such as Desoto came in contact with them and documented their observations. These people had chiefdom forms of

governments, created earthwork, and had flat top pyramidal mounds. One large site is located next to Johnson's Landing in Allendale County on the Savannah River. They created rectangular structures and became master farmers. The early Americans are responsible for many of the fruits and vegetables that we eat today such as corn, tomatoes, white and sweet potatoes, peppers, squash, pumpkins, and beans, just to mention a few.

Next in numbers are the Woodland people. These people lived here from 3000 to 1000 years ago. Roughly 13% of my points are from this cultural period. These



Woodland Points

sites are identified with quantities of pottery shards and their associated points. Hunting and gathering had been the basic methods for gaining food. This was the time when farming became more of a way of life. They began making more intricate bone and stone tools. We have evidence of textile manufacturing and shelter construction.

There are artifacts of the Woodland people along every stream in the county with their arrowheads and tempered ceramics.

The fourth largest culture according to numbers was the Morrow Mountain. Approximately 11% of all my points are from this period. These are listed as middle Archaic points. The time period is 8000 to 6500



Morrow Mountain Points

years ago. I have classified these points as to the degradation of the chert. Chert fades with age and turns from its natural color to yellow or white. I think many of these points were even older than 8000 years. Some of these points look like early Archaic points. The cultural periods from Paleo to late Archaic had no agriculture or pottery except toward the end of the late Archaic period. The people of these cultures were hunters and gatherers. The Morrow Mountain people traveled a lot, up and down the creeks getting food. Their points have been found everywhere in the county. This proves that they were very mobile.

The next largest culture according to the number of points in my collection is my favorite

because of its name. It is called the Allendale culture period. Around 7% of my collection is from this period. The name was given to the projectile point because so many of these points have been found in Allendale County. These points are from the middle archaic period that dates from 6500 to 5000 years ago. This is the period when the atlatl



Allendale Points

(a spear thrower which increase the spear thrust because it remains in contact with the spear longer and at the same time improves accuracy) was used, even though some archaeologists believe that the atlatl dates to the Paleo period Other point types closely related are the Guilford, Brier Creek and Sycamore points.

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Dr. Lawrence Strong completed his Ph.D. in Mathematics at the University of Mississippi, one year after having joined the faculty at USC Salkehatchie in 1974. He has been a valuable member of the academic community at USC for more than 31 years and has recently being named a "Disguised Professor" by the USC Board of Trustees. This paper is a result of his work for the 2004-05 Faculty Reduction in Teaching Load Award and reflects his lifelong interest in archeology and fascination for the ancient cultures of North American. Dr. Strong is married to Bess and is the father of three children, three stepchildren, and grandfather of many more. He will be presenting a review of his work with Dr. Al Goodyear of the South Carolina Archeology and Anthropology Institute in February 2006 at the USC Salkehatchie West Campus as a part of the 40th Anniversary Art and Lecture Series.

**PREHISTORIC TIME TABLE OF ARTIFACTS FOUND IN
SOUTH CAROLINA**

Time Period	Period	Sub-Period	Phase	Diagnostic Artifacts
1700 AD			Mississippian	Mississippian
1000 AD			Woodland	Woodland
1000 BC	Archaic	<i>Late</i>	Awendaw	Otaree Stemmed, Gary Stemmed, Sand-tempered plain and finger-pinched pottery
1,400 BC			Stallings/ Horse Island	Savannah River Stemmed, Fiber-and Sand-tempered plain and punctate pottery
2,500 BC			Savannah River	Savannah River Stemmed
3,000 BC		<i>Middle</i>	Allendale	Guilford Lancolate, Brier Creek Lancolate, Benton Stemmed, Allendale
4,500BC			Morrow Mountain	Morrow Mountain Stemmed
6,000 BC			Stanly	Stanly Stemmed
6,500 BC			Kirk	Kirk Stemmed, Kanawha
7,000 BC		<i>Early</i>	Bifurcate	St. Albans, MacCorckle, LeCroy
8,000 BC			Palmer	Palmer/Kirk Corner-Notched
9,500 BC			Taylor	Taylor side-Notched
10,000 BC	Paleoindian	<i>Late</i>	Dalton	Dalton/Hardaway-Dalton
10,500 BC		<i>Middle</i>	Redstone/Suwannee	Redstone/Suwannee
10,900 BC		<i>Early</i>	Clovis	Clovis
11,500 BC to 16,000 BC			Pre-Clovis	Prismatic Blades, Bladelets, Bend Break Flakes, Biface Knives?

COUNTY: ALLENDALE

Drainage: SAVANNAH, SALKEHATCHIE/COOSA WHATCHIE

COLLECTOR: LARRY STRONG (TOTALS)

P OI NT TYPE	TOTAL	C.P.C	R.&V. C.	BL K	MING	UNID	CHT	QTZ.	O.Q.	ARG	RHY.	TUFF	U.METV.	O
Clovis	4	4												
Suwannee?	3	3												
Dalton	71	67									2 (1*)		2	
Hardaway (S/N)	2	1									1			
Taylor	441	422					1	11	2		4(1F/B)			1
Bifurcate	3	2									1(F/B)			
Kirk Corner Notch	623- 1K/B	596	1					16	1		7	2(1***)		
Kirk Stemmed	88	88												
Stanley	37	34									1(Abbey?)		2	
Morrow Mtn.	1876	1776	2					79	4	7	11		6	
MALA/Allendale	1225	1214(7*)						10						
Guilford	63	29(9 ends)						8		1	11		14	
Brier Creek	223- 12&	222(1*)(19 ends)						1						
SRP Stemmed	3270	3128(10*(37 ends)						51	1		24(1F/B)			
Savannah River	116	103(26*)						1			8		4	
Rocker Base	10	10												
Mack	223	210(2*)						1			11(7#)			
Yadkin	394	392						1			1(F/B)			
Yadkin Variant	181	189									1			
Woodland Stem	1311	1271	2					26	2		8		2	
Woodland Notch	976	815(8 end)	148					1			3		2	7\$
Trianguloid	719	710	1						5				3	
Triangular	1939	1921						16			1(F/B)			1
Biface-Uniden	41	33					2	3	1				1	
Biface Frags-Uniden	3271	3191	1					48	5	10	9(F/B)		12	1
Out of State-Uniden	27													
Base Notch/Eva	9	9												
Pentagonal	1	1												
Copena	1	1												
Biface, L/H Bevel	2	2												
Totals	17,150	16,435	155				3	264	22	18	102	2	114	10

*Endscraper Distals **Black, Basalt-like ***Differentially Crystallized #1 Porphyritic/6 Flow-Banded \$Unknown Raw Material(3 corner/1 side-notch-Tn??) &Stemmed
 CLASSIFIER(S): Goodyear/Charles/White/Steffy/Steen DATE: 1996/1999/2002/2003



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