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ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECONNAISSANCE AND TEST EXCAVATIONS IN THE CLINCH RIVER LIQUID METAL FAST BREEDER REACTOR PLANT SITE AREA

By

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A Report Submitted to the Tennessee Valley Authority in accordance with the provisions of Contract No. TV-37432A Between the Tennessee Valley Authority and Dr. Gerald F. Schroedl, University of Tennessee

> Department of Anthropology University of Tennessee Knoxville, Tennessee December 1972

#### PREFACE

Upon a request from the Tennessee Valley Authority an archaeological reconnaissance of the proposed Clinch River Liquid Metal Fast Breeder Reactor site area was undertaken by Dr. Gerald F. Schroedl, Research Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Tennessee. The reconnaissance and testing of archaeological sites were conducted on the two weekends of October 13, 14, and 15 and October 27, 28, and 29, 1972, under the provisions of Tennessee Valley Authority contract TV-37432A.

This project was initiated as part of the continuing interest of the Tennessee Valley Authority in documenting and preserving American Indian antiquities relative to present and continuing construction programs. During the 1940's an archaeological survey of the Watts Bar Reservoir area was conducted along the lower sections of the Clinch River and included the shoreline of the proposed construction site. The work reported here was undertaken to reevaluate archaeological sites previously recorded in the area and to determine the existence of other archaeological resources.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The survey was implemented at the request of the Tennessee Valley Authority's Division of Water Control Planning. Mr. Reed A. Elliot, Director of Water Control Planning, approved a personal services contract for Dr. Schroedl and it was under the provisions of this contract that the survey was conducted. Arrangements for the survey were made through Mr. Corydon W. Bell, Jr., Assistant to the Director of Water Control Planning.

The Tennessee Valley Authority provided four wheel drive vehicles for the survey and technical assistance in the form of maps and aerial photographs of the proposed plant area. In addition, the technical staff of the Tennessee Valley Authority processed and printed the photographs and prepared the maps and figures for this report. The manuscript was typed, duplicated, and collated by the secretarial staff of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Dr. Schroedl, assisted by Robert Newman, graduate student, undertook the survey and John Scharff, John Dempster, Richard Ward, Steve Morrell, Walter Tunnell, and Rand Loftness provided the necessary manpower for testing the sites. Their efforts during unusually cold and wet weather are sincerely appreciated. Mr. Beverly Burbage, past President of the Tennessee Archaeological Society and experienced local historian and amateur archaeologist, and Mr. James Polhemus, experienced local historian and amateur archaeologist, were consulted on the nature and dating of historic structures.

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### INTRODUCTION

The proposed Liquid Metal Fast Breeder Reactor plant is to be located in Roane County, Tennessee, along the lower Clinch River, approximately 30 miles west of Knoxville, 9 miles south of Oak Ridge, and 15 miles above the confluence of the Clinch and Tennessee Rivers (Fig. 1). A large river meander forms the south, east, and west borders of the plant area. Grassy Creek and the Bear Creek Road bound it on the northwest. It is bound by a Natural Gas pipeline and the TVA-AEC property line on the northeast. Three TVA powerlines cross the area; one runs east to west across the northern end of the area, one bisects the area northeast to southwest, and the other bisects the area northwest to southeast.

The area is characterized by steep limestone ridges, hills, and knobs, the most prominent of which is Chestnut Ridge (Fig. 2). Numerous small wet weather streams drain the area, and thick alluvial sediments occur along the river forming a bank which varies in width from a few feet to several hundred feet wide. The entire area is heavily wooded with both coniferous and deciduous trees, and various vines, grasses, and shrubs form a dense ground cover (Fig. 3).

Primary access is provided by a graded and graveled road which follows the course of the river (hereafter referred to as the river road). Additional access to areas beyond the immediate floodplain is limited. Occasional trails, former logging roads, powerline maintenance trails, and a single jeep track are available, but nearly all are impassable without the use of four wheel drive vehicles even during dry weather.

## PREVIOUS RECONNAISSANCE AND EXCAVATIONS

Cyrus Thomas and his associates visited the lower Clinch River in April 1886 and reported a complex of mounds and associated camps, villages, and burials [ Exempted from Disclosure by Statute L. He also noted the archaeological potential of [Exempted from Disclosure] and indicated the presence of Exempted from Disclosure by Statute two mounds at the tip of [ (Thomas 1894: 364-366). Thomas makes no mention of sites in the proposed plant area. Further archaeological survey along the lower Clinch River was not undertaken until 1941 when reconnaissance of the Watts Bar Reservoir area was made. At that time five sites were located in the proposed plant area. None were tested or excavated, and in fact the Watts Bar Reservoir area received only brief archaeological attention because of the outbreak of World War II. Additional survey and excavation along the Clinch River was initiated in 1960 in the Melton Hill Dam Reservoir area (McNutt and Fischer 1960 and McNutt and Graham 1961).



Figure 1. Location of Proposed Liquid Metal Fast Breeder Reactor Plant (adapted from United States Series of Topographic Maps, Scale 1:250,000; Knoxville and Chattanooga Sheets)



Fig. 2--The Clinch River and the Gallaher Bridge from Chestnut Ridge, view to the southwest.



Fig. 3--Abandoned logging road showing dense vegetation encountered on the survey, view to the southeast.

#### THE SURVEY

Because of limited access, heavy vegetation, and rugged terrain it was impossible to cover the entire area on foot. For the same reasons, it is doubtful that such a survey would have been productive since most surface indications of archaeological sites would not be visible. Survey, as a result, concentrated first on relocating, evaluating, and testing sites reported in 1 accomplished without difficulty since all these sites are located [ Statute consisted of driving along every available trail, logging road, and path and covering areas on foot that might have been subject to prehistoric occupation. Because prominent hills and ridges immediately above the river have proven to have been Exempted from Disclosure by Statute favorite locations [ these were covered on foot wherever possible. Similarly all creek banks and beds were checked for possible occupation. Lastly, historic Euro-American settlements noted on the USGS-TVA 7-1/2-minute Elverton and Bethel Quadrangles were located and their historical and archaeological potential evaluated.

Five prehistoric sites (40RE104, 40RE105, 40RE106, 40RE107, and 40RE108) were investigated during the course of the survey. All were originally recorded during the 1941 survey of the Watts Bar Reservoir, and except for a single mound associated with 40RE105 all were relocated and tested in 1972 (Fig. 4). Between four and fifteen test pits were excavated at each site, but diagnostic cultural material was recovered only at site 40RE108. The Appendix provides an account of the material recovered from the test excavations. No additional prehistoric sites were recorded.

In addition to the prehistoric sites, four historic Euro-American settlements and a historic Euro-American cemetery were recorded. These include the Hensley Cemetery (40RE119), the remains of three historic farm houses and their associated features (40RE120, 40RE121, and 40RE122), and an isolated log building (40RE123) (Fig. 4).

#### PREHISTORIC SITES

Site: 40RE104

Location: This site Exempted from Disclosure by State	e is located at rive ][ empted from Disclosure by Statute	Exempted from Disclosure by Statute <b>r mile[</b> ] and ann roximat Exempted from Disclosure by Statute ] latitude.[	itatute :elv[' ]longitude).	.] Statute The [
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<u>Present condition</u>: Trees and moderate to heavy undergrowth cover the site. A drainage ditch running parallel to the river bisects the site, and erosion of the site slopes has occurred. The river road cuts into the knoll and undoubtedly has destroyed a portion of the site.

Work conducted: Surface survey and 6 test pits.

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Figure 4. Archaeological and Historical Sites within the proposed Clinch River Liquid Metal Fast Breeder Reactor Plant Area (adapted from USGS-TVA 7 ½ minute, Elverton and Bethel Valley Quadrangles) <u>Cultural material:</u> 1 cryptocrystalline chipping debris recovered from the drainage ditch.

Recommendation: No further work required.

Site: 40RE105

Location: This site is located at river mile[

Limestone outcrops extending to the rivers edge form the northern boundary <sup>Exempted from Discigsure by Statute</sup> )] According to previous site survey data

(University of Tennessee. Site Survey Records for Roane County), a mound is located [ ]from the village or camp area.

Exempted from Disclosure by Statute

Work conducted: Surface survey and 11 test pits.

Cultural material: 1 cryptocrystalline chipping debris from test pit No. 5.

Site: 40RE106

Location: This site is located on either side of a[

e] The river road bisects a portion of the site [Exempted from Disclosure by Statute ].

Present condition: Trees, grass, and small shrubs cover the site. Most of the site [Exempted from Disclosure by ] has been graded or bulldozed and used as fill [Exempted from Disclosure by Statute

Grading and widening of the river road has destroyed the majority of the western portion.

Work conducted: Surface survey and 14 test pits.

<u>Cultural material</u>: 1 round wire nail recovered from disturbed deposits in Test pit No. 3.

Recommendation: No further work required.

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Site: 40RE107

Location: This site is located on[

) Exempted from Disclosure by Statute

<u>Present condition</u>: Pine trees planted in rows and small deciduous trees, shrubs, and grasses cover the site. Minor erosion occurs <sup>Exempted from Disclosure by Statute</sup> and the surface has been disturbed by cultivation and possibly some grading.

Work conducted: Surface survey and 4 test pits.

<u>Cultural material</u>: 4 cryptocrystalline chipping debris and 1 cryptocrystalline preform from Test pit No. 3; 2 cryptocrystalline chipping debris from Test pit No. 4.

<u>Recommendation</u>: Testing suggests that at least one undisturbed occupation occurs below plow disturbed sediments. Further testing is required.

#### Site: 40RE108

Location: This site is situated on[

its southern boundary and a [ Frempted from the [ ] forms its northern boundary. The greatest concentration of cultural material and a shell midden occur [ Exempted from Disclosure by Statute ].

Present condition: Rows of planted pine trees, shrubs, and grasses cover the site. Heavy brush and vines occur along the river bank. (Fig. 5). The 1941 survey reported the occurrence of a shell midden [

J. The 1972 survey was unable to locate this deposit and it has probably been completely destroyed. In addition, there is evidence of bulldozing in this portion of the site. Most of the shell midden [ Exempted from Disclosure by Statute] of the site also has been destroyed by erosion, but an area 150 feet long and 20 feet wide remains intact (Fig. 6).

Work conducted: Surface survey and 9 test pits.

<u>Cultural material</u>: 1 knife or projectile point tip, 2 grit tempered plain body sherds, 1 limestone tempered plain body sherd, 1 limestone tempered fabric marked body sherd from Test pit No. 7. Numerous whole and fragmented river mussel shells were recovered from Test pits 2, 6, and 7.

Recommendation: Excavation of the shell midden should be undertaken.

Exempted from Disclosure by Statute



Fig. 5--Site 40RE108, test pit No. 6 in center, Clinch River to the right, view to the south.



Fig. 6--Site 40RE108, test pit No. 6 and shell midden exposed in river bank, view to the east.

#### HISTORIC SITES

Site: The Hensley Cemetery (40RE119)

Location: This cemetery is located

Exempted from Disclosure by Statute

It is marked on the USGS-Exempted from Disclosure by Statute

TVA 7-1/2-minute Elverton Quadrangle [].

Description: The cemetery consists of a fenced area 75 feet on a side enclosing five marked graves. Identifiable markers include those of S. S. Hensley (1854-1927), Lou Anna Peters (1885-1917), Callie D. Peters (1883-1941), and Stella Harvey (1921-1922). Their graves are concentrated along the northern edge of the cemetery. All are marked with headstones and all except Stella Harvey have foot markers (Figs. 7, 8, and 9). In addition, there is one small illegible metal marker in the southeast corner of the cemetery.

<u>Recommendation</u>: No archaeological work is required. Since the cemetery is of local historic significance it should be left intact if possible or relocated if necessary.

Site: 40RE120

Location: This site is located approximately[

]<sup>Exempted from Disclosure by Statute</sup> [ Exempted from Disclosure by Statute [ Exempted from Disclosure by Statute ] of 40RE105. Exempted from Disclosure by Statute

<u>Description</u>: The site consists of a limestone fireplace with two opposing hearths, a limestone lined root cellar, and a brick lined well or cistern. No structural remains or foundation supports were associated with the fireplace. This structure and its associated features could date from the second half of the nineteenth century.

<u>Recommendation</u>: The site should be mapped, photographed, and detailed drawings made. No excavations are required.

Site: 40RE121

Location: This site is located at the[

#### Exempted from Disclosure by Statute

<u>Description</u>: This site consists of the remains of a house well, cellar, two small outbuildings, and three rectangular pits, all enclosed by a hand split picket fence. A brick chimney with a single hearth, four limestone corner supports, and two porch supports characterize the house (Fig. 10). Several floor supports are lying between the limestone foundations suggesting that the structure may have been constructed with hand hewn logs. A shallow rectangular depression is centrally located within the structure approximately five feet in front of the fireplace. The well, located



Fig. 7--Hensley Cemetery (40RE119), Headstone of S. S. Hensley (1854-1927), note footmarker in the foreground, view to the east.



Fig. 8--Hensley Cemetery (40RE119), Headstones of Callie D. Peters (1883-1941) and Lou Anna Peters (1885-1917), view to the east.



Fig. 9--Hensley Cemetery (40RE119), Headstone of Stella R. Harvey (1921-1922), view to the east.



Fig. 10--Site 40RE121, chimney of hand made bricks, view to the northeast.

near the south side of the house, is brick lined and filled with debris. Situated in front of the house is a rectangular stone lined cellar with a south facing entry. Facing the cellar is a rectangular log crib (Fig. 11). Four posts representing the remains of a small shed are located directly south of the chimney. The rear of this structure and the log crib form a portion of the picket fence which encloses the area. In addition, three square pits of undetermined function are located along the north side of the house. Surface material consists of jars, broken glass, and other household debris. This material suggests that the house was abandoned in the middle twentieth century. The fireplace and log crib suggest that the farmstead may have been built in the second half of the nineteenth century possibly as early as 1860.

<u>Recommendation</u>: This group of associated structures should be mapped and detailed photographs and drawings should be made. Excavation of the well should be undertaken to establish an initial construction date. Removal of the surface vegetation is required to locate and define additional features and structural details.

Site: 40RE122

Location: This site is located approximately[

Exempted from Disclosure by Statute

<u>Description</u>: The site consists of a wood frame house and barn. Both are standing, but numerous roof and floor supports have collapsed.

<u>Recommendation</u>: Although both structures appear to date from the early twentieth century, the site should be mapped and detailed photographs and drawings made.

Site: 40RE123

Location: This site is located along[

Exempted from Disclosure by Statute

<u>Description</u>: The site consists of a single isolated rectangular log structure (Fig. 12). The structure measures 10 by 15 feet and is constructed of large hand hewn logs fitted at the corners in half-dove-tail fashion. A partially collapsed peak, frame roof covers the structure. There is a single entry near the corner on one side, but there are no windows or fireplace. This suggests that the structure was utilized as a storage facility rather than a dwelling. The size of the logs and the construction technique suggest that the building may date from the second half of the nineteenth century. No associated structures were noted in the immediate vicinity.

<u>Recommendation</u>: Excavations are not required, but detailed photographs and drawings of the structural features should be made.



Fig. 11--Site 40RE121, log crib, note connecting picket fence at the left, view to the southeast.



Fig. 12--Site 40RE123, isolated log structure, view to the northeast.

#### SUMMARY AND EVALUATIONS

The 1941 survey concluded that the prehistoric sites within the plant area represented Woodland Period components (University of Tennessee Site Survey Records for Roane County, Tennessee). Except for site 40RE108, however, virtually no diagnostic cultural material was recovered during the 1972 survey. Thus it was impossible to confirm the cultural affiliations of sites 40RE104, 40RE105, and 40RE106 and test excavations indicate that no further work is required at these sites. Additional survey with the aid of a topographic map of suitable scale should be undertaken, however, to locate the mound reportedly associated with 40RE105. Evaluation of the mound and its potential for further investigation could then be made.

Site 40RE108 represents an Early Woodland Period occupation and it is likely that 40RE107 also is an Early Woodland Period site, although distinct diagnostic cultural remains were not recovered. Little is presently known about Woodland Period occupation on the lower Clinch River, and excavation of the shell midden at 40RE108 might help to establish possible cultural relationships between Woodland Period sites in the Melton Hill and Norris Reservoirs (cf. McNutt and Fischer 1960, McNutt and Graham 1961, Webb 1938) with those of the main Tennessee River Valley. Complete excavation would take approximately one month. Undisturbed cultural deposits are present at 40RE107. Although they appear to be sparse and scattered, further testing should be undertaken and possible excavations considered.

The historic structures in the plant area are especially interesting. Site 40RE121 represents a discrete occupation confined to a limited area and as such could provide important data about early Post-Civil War Euro-American settlement in East Tennessee. Detailed photographs, drawings, and maps could be made and controlled surface collections and excavation of the well completed in two to three weeks. Sites 40RE120, 40RE122, and 40RE123 do not require excavation, but drawings and photographs of these structures would be an important addition to Appalachian Folk studies. It is likely that persons interred at the Hensley Cemetery lived in one or several of these historic structures. Consequently, the cemetery might help to establish dates of construction and eventual abandonment of these historic sites.

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# APPENDIX

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## ANALYSIS OF MATERIAL RECOVERED FROM THE TEST EXCAVATIONS

All material encountered in the test excavations was saved for analysis. The majority of this was water rolled and broken pebbles and cobbles found scattered throughout the soil matrix. None of these are listed with the test pit data. Pieces of cryptocrystalline silica (calcedonies and cherts) ranging in size from less than one inch to several inches long were recovered at all sites. Although this kind of stone was extensively utilized for the manufacture of projectile points, knives, scrapers, and other implements, there is no evidence that the pieces recovered from the test excavations are exhausted cores or lithic debris. Similar "chunks" were encountered at several locations during the survey, and these were scattered over large areas, but there were no cores, chipping debris, or preforms suggesting that the areas were ever utilized as aboriginal quarries.

Cultural material was sparse and in most instances limited to occasional firecracked rocks with chipping debris being rare. Pottery, chipped stone artifacts, and faunal remains were recovered only at 40RE107 and 40RE108. Euro-American manufactured artifacts were not collected from the historic white settlements recorded during the survey.

Site: 40RE104

- Test pit No. 1 (3 x 3 x 2 feet) 2 firecracked rocks 2 cryptocrystalline chunks
- Test pit No. 2 (3 x 3 x 2 feet) 2 firecracked rocks
- Test pit No. 3 (3 x 3 x 2 feet) 2 firecracked rocks
- Test pit No. 4 (3 x 3 x 1.2 feet) no material
- Test pit No. 5 (3 x 3 x 0.8 feet) no material
- Test pit No. 6 (3 x 3 x 1.1 feet) no material

Site: 40RE105

- Test pit No. 1 (3 x 3 x 1.8 feet) 4 firecracked rocks
- Test pit No. 2 (3 x 3 x 2.4 feet) 6 firecracked rocks

Test pit No. 3 (3 x 3 x 2.8 feet) no material

Test pit No. 4 (3 x 3 x 4.7 feet) no material

- Test pit No. 5 (3 x 3 x 1.6 feet) 18 firecracked rocks 14 cryptocrystalline chunks 1 cryptocrystalline chipping debris
- Test pit No. 6 (3 x 3 x 1.4 feet) 5 firecracked rocks

Test pit No. 7 (3 x 3 x 1.5 feet) 15 firecracked rocks 2 cryptocrystalline chunks

- Test pit No. 8 (3 x 3 x 2.3 feet) 17 firecracked rocks 1 cryptocrystalline chunk
- Test pit No. 9 (3 x 3 x 1.9 feet) no material
- Test pit No. 10 (3 x 3 x 2.1 feet) no material
- Test pit No. 11 (3 x 3 x 1.8 feet) no material

#### Site: 40RE106

- Test pit No. 1 (3 x 3 x 0.6 feet) 1 firecracked rock
- Test pit No. 2 (3 x 3 x 0.6 feet) no material
- Test pit No. 3 (3 x 3 x 6 feet) 2 firecracked rocks 1 round wire nail
- Test pit No. 4 (3 x 3 x 1.4 feet) no material
- Test pit No. 5 (3 x 3 x 5 feet) no material
- Test pit No. 6 (3 x 3 x 1.2 feet) no material

- Test pit No. 7 (3 x 3 x 1.0 feet) 9 firecracked rocks
- Test pit No. 8 (3 x 3 x 1.3 feet) 2 firecracked rocks
- Test pit No. 9 (3 x 3 x 1.6 feet) 3 firecracked rocks
- Test pit No. 10 (3 x 3 x 1.2 feet) 3 firecracked rocks 1 piece unworked hematite 1 cryptocrystalline chipping debris
- Test pit No. 11 (3 x 3 x 1.4 feet) 2 cryptocrystalline chunks
- Test pit No. 12 (3 x 3 x 1.4 feet) 1 firecracked rock 1 cryptocrystalline chunk
- Test pit No. 13 (3 x 3 x 0.8 feet) 3 firecracked rocks 1 cryptocrystalline chunk
- Test pit No. 14 (3 x 3 x 1.3 feet) 2 firecracked rocks

Site: 40RE107

- Test pit No. 1 (3 x 3 x 3.2 feet) 10 firecracked rocks 1 cryptocrystalline chunk
- Test pit No. 2 (3 x 3 x 4.2 feet) 15 firecracked rocks 1 cryptocrystalline chunk
- Test pit No. 3 (3 x 3 x 2.7 feet) 25 firecracked rocks 19 cryptocrystalline chunks 4 cryptocrystalline chipping debris 1 cryptocrystalline preform

Test pit No. 4 (3 x 3 x 3 feet) 4 firecracked rocks 5 cryptocrystalline chunks 2 cryptocrystalline chipping debris

### Site: 40RE108

Test pit No. 1 (3 x 3 x 6 feet) 9 firecracked rocks 9 cryptocrystalline chunks

- Test pit No. 2 (3 x 3 x 1.0 feet) 4 firecracked rocks 2 cryptocrystalline chunks 1 river mussel shell fragment
- Test pit No. 3 (3 x 3 x 2.4 feet) 7 firecracked rocks 2 cryptocrystalline chunks
- Test pit No. 4 (3 x 3 x 1.0 feet) 9 cryptocrystalline chunks
- Test pit No. 5 (3 x 3 x 1.6 feet) no material

Test pit No. 6 (3 x 3 x 4 feet) 3 firecracked rocks 1 cryptocrystalline chunk numerous whole and fragmented river mussel shells (probably Amblema sp.)

Test pit No. 7 (3 x 3 x 3.8 feet) 24 firecracked rocks 2 cryptocrystalline chunks 1 knife or projectile point tip 2 grit tempered plain body sherds 1 limestone tempered plain body sherd 1 limestone tempered fabric marked body sherd 1 unidentified mammal bone fragment numerous whole and fragmented river mussel shells (probably <u>Amblema</u> sp.); occasional freshwater gastrapods (<u>Io fluvialis</u> and <u>Pleurocera</u> sp.)

Test pit No. 8 (3 x 3 x 1.9 feet) 1 firecracked rock

Test pit No. 9 (3 x 3 x 2 feet) 1 cryptocrystalline chunk