

Listed On:  
VLR 09/20/1988  
NRHP 11/03/1988

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name N/A  
other names/site number Nottoway Archaeological Site (44SX6, 44SX7, 44SX98, 44SX162) # 91-75

2. Location

street & number N/A  not for publication  
city, town Stony Creek  vicinity  
state Virginia code VA county Sussex code 183 zip code [redacted]

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

[Signature] September 30, 1988  
Signature of certifying official Date  
Director, Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/camp

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture/agricultural field

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A

walls N/A

roof N/A

other N/A

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

**DESCRIPTION**

The Nottoway Archaeological Site (44SX6, 44SX7, 44SX98, and 44SX162), a series of spatially overlapping prehistoric components dating from the Paleo-Indian through Late Woodland periods, is located [redacted] Nottoway River approximately [redacted] of the town of Stony Creek in Sussex County, Virginia. Prehistoric occupational debris is distributed over a terrace measuring approximately 720 meters in length with a maximum width of 200 meters. Excavations at the site have demonstrated that approximately one meter of cultural deposits containing undisturbed prehistoric features exists in uncultivated areas. In some places in the cultivated fields up to 15 cm of undisturbed prehistoric deposits are preserved under the plow zone with prehistoric features intrusive into subsoil. The principal occupation at the Nottoway Site occurred during the Early through Late Archaic periods (8000 B.C. to 1000 B.C.). Artifacts dating to the Paleo-Indian period (9500 B.C. to 8000 B.C.) and intact deposits and/or features dating to the Early through Late Woodland periods (1000 B.C. to A.D. 1600) also are present.

**Background**

The Nottoway Archaeological Site is located on a terrace overlooking a remnant oxbow [redacted] the Nottoway River [redacted]. The terrace is composed of sand and gravel deposits with the upper one meter of soil formed since the end of the Pleistocene by complex aeolian and fluvial processes. The topsoil is a rich well-drained sandy loam. There is a [redacted] along the Nottoway River, and [redacted] located [redacted]. These wetlands formed a barrier to transportation, channeling all travel on the [redacted] of the Nottoway River across the high sandy terrace of the nominated area.

In this region of the interior Coastal Plain just [redacted] of the Fall Line, the Nottoway River bends north following a geological fault. This means that the river flows parallel to the Fall Line in the vicinity of Stony Creek for a distance of approximately 22 kilometers. This general area contains one of the heaviest concentrations of Native American sites in Virginia, forming two almost continuous avenues of occupation along both

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Archaeology: Prehistoric

Period of Significance  
9500 B.C. - A.D. 1600

Significant Dates  
N/A

Cultural Affiliation  
Paleo-Indian Period, Archaic Period,  
Woodland Period

Significant Person  
N/A

Architect/Builder  
N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Nottoway Archaeological Site (44SX6, 44SX7, 44SX98, and 44SX162), a group of contiguous artifact clusters, in Sussex County, Virginia, contains artifacts, stratified deposits, and features dating from the Paleo-Indian through Late Woodland periods that could significantly contribute to the limited research currently available for the Native American inhabitants of the interior Coastal Plain of southern Virginia. An unprecedented series of cultural strata and features were documented for future research dating from the Early Archaic through Late Woodland periods. The heavy concentration of lithic and ceramic artifacts has provided data on chronological sequences and the culture history of the region. Some of the undisturbed features are characterized by good preservation of organic material, providing crucial data for regional studies on changing subsistence and environmental adaptation. The potential presence of Native American remains dating to the seventeenth century is also significant in documenting early European contact and acculturation with indigenous peoples.

**Background**

The Nottoway Archaeological Site represents a rare combination of prehistoric components dating from the Paleo-Indian through Late Woodland periods. Excavations by Joseph McAvoy, an avocational archaeologist, and the Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks from 1984 to 1987 demonstrated the presence of rich stratified deposits dating from the Early through Late Archaic periods. Although Paleo-Indian projectile points are present, none have been documented from in situ deposits. The possibility of the existence of Paleo-Indian deposits, however, is great.

The Archaic period strata, particularly the Early Archaic, provide abundant features and associated artifacts, a combination that is extremely rare in the Coastal Plain of Virginia. The data possess great

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banks of the Nottoway River. Here a thick stratum of quartzite and quartz river cobbles is exposed along the riverbank. The Native American inhabitants of this area not only had access to an inexhaustible supply of lithic material but also to the varied environments of the wetlands and uplands of the interior Coastal Plain, the adjacent Fall Line, and the nearby Piedmont physiographic province.

Prehistoric occupational debris is scattered densely over the entire terrace included in this nomination, an area 720 meters in length with a maximum width of 200 meters. The Nottoway Site is designated as 44SX6, 44SX7, 44SX98, and 44SX162 in the state's archaeological inventory, representing four discrete artifact clusters within a continuous scatter of material debris (Figure 1). These locales have been heavily surface-searched by collectors since at least the turn of the twentieth century.

In 1955 Clifford Evans, of the U.S. National Museum, recorded the complex as Stony Creek #4. This research at the Nottoway Site significantly contributed to the first definitive study of prehistoric ceramic and lithic artifacts in Virginia. The pottery sample from 44SX6 and 44SX7 formed the basis for Evan's definition of the Stony Creek Series. He also noted that two local collectors "had amassed thousands of perfect points in less than a year" from these sites. One of the collectors, William G. Lufburrow, wrote in 1952, "I cannot logically explain the Stony Creek area. Collectors have explored the area on numerous occasions, farmers and farm hands are always in the fields, yet there seems to be no end to the number and variety of artifacts within the area."

Two of the site locales, 44SX6 and 44SX7, were recorded as N-6 and N-7 by Lewis R. Binford while undertaking his Ph.D. dissertation research in the Nottoway and Meherrin River drainages in the mid-1950s. Jeffrey L. Coe, Director of the Research Laboratory of Anthropology at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, also noted the importance of the complex and designated 44SX6 and 44SX7 as Va. 81 and Va. 82, respectively. The recognition of the importance of the nominated area by Evans, Binford, and Coe, all prominent figures in twentieth-century American archaeology, underscores its research significance.

The true significance of the Nottoway Site, however, went virtually unnoticed by professionals until recently. Most archaeologists, like Evans, felt that all the material from this area was restricted solely to the disturbed plow zone. Testing conducted in 1984 by Joseph McAvoy, an avocational archaeologist, instead demonstrated that approximately one meter of cultural deposits including prehistoric features exists in uncultivated areas. In certain places in the cultivated fields up to 15 cm of prehistoric deposits are preserved under the plow zone, with prehistoric pit features intrusive into the subsoil. McAvoy's surface

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collecting and testing has recovered artifacts dating from the Paleo-Indian through Late Woodland periods (9500 B.C. to A.D. 1600). A small percentage of the Native American material is made from exotic stone--argillite, rhyolite, and Williamson and Bolster Store cherts that originated either in the Piedmont of North Carolina or along the Fall Line of Virginia. Of particular importance is the fact that the cherts frequently are associated with Paleo-Indian sites (9500 B.C. to 8000 B.C.).

McAvoy repeatedly surface-collected all four site locales from 1984 to 1987, and tested them in four areas designated Areas A through D (Figure 1). Area A is on a high point of undisturbed woods overlooking a large spring adjacent to 44SX7 (Photos 1 and 2). There he excavated over 22 square meters revealing stratified cultural deposits to a depth of one meter dating back to the Early Archaic period (Palmer; ca. 8000 B.C.). Fire-cracked rock hearth features dating to the Middle and Late Archaic periods (Morrow Mountain, Halifax, and Savannah River; 5500 B.C. to 1000 B.C.) were also identified (Photo 3). At least four in situ pit features dating to the Early and Middle Woodland periods (ca. 1000 B.C. to A.D. 1000) were revealed through McAvoy's testing as well as features dating to the Late Woodland period (below). 44SX7 is thus characterized by the presence of well-preserved deposits that potentially span the entirety of Native American cultural history in eastern Virginia. The presence of a black cemetery adjacent to Area A must also be recognized since it is located in an area ideal for prehistoric habitation. Though the unmarked graves intrude into prehistoric deposits, the undisturbed soil between the graves undoubtedly contains significant Native American material.

Of special interest is the late Native American pottery also found at 44SX7. Numerous sherds of Gaston Ware (A.D. 1400 to 1660) and a few sherds of Courtland Ware (A.D. 1660 to 1750) have been collected from the surface of the site. In addition, Late Woodland Townsend Ware, Roanoke Ware, and triangular projectile points have been recovered from three large in situ pit features. This late prehistoric and seventeenth-century Native American component may represent one of the Nottoway Indian towns encountered during the first recorded European exploration of the region by Edward Bland's party from Fort Henry (vicinity of Petersburg) in August 1650 and for which only minimal archival documentation exists.

Area B (44SX162), located approximately 18 meters northeast of Area A, is in the cultivated field. McAvoy excavated over 23 square meters uncovering an undisturbed stratum 7.6 to 15.2 cm thick below the plow zone. This deposit contained Palmer and Kirk Corner Notched points (8000 B.C. to 6800 B.C.), and below them large flakes and unifacial tools of cream-colored chert that may reflect Paleo-Indian habitation.

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More than 113 square meters, designated Area C, were excavated at 44SX6 (Photo 4). Here McAvoy found a heavy concentration of material dating from the Early Archaic through Woodland periods on a high knoll. In a 46.5 square meter area of the knoll more than thirty Archaic features were identified in undisturbed deposits extending to a depth of one meter, with six features containing associated carbonized faunal and floral materials. McAvoy has obtained five radiocarbon dates on charred wood and plant material associated with fire-cracked rock hearth features and diagnostic Archaic projectile points. Another radiocarbon sample was obtained on organic material at the base of the oxbow adjacent to the site dating when the Nottoway River changed its course.

McAvoy excavated over 16 square meters at Area D, located approximately 61 meters northeast of Area C in a cultivated field. Here deposits dating to the Early Archaic period were found below the plow zone to a depth of between 51 and 67 cm below modern grade.

From November 1986 to May 1987 the Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks tested 44SX6 in Area C with a 2 by 4 meter trench (Photo 5, Figure 2). The trench encountered Woodland pottery in the upper 20 cm, but mainly uncovered projectile points, scrapers, retouched flakes, and numerous flakes and fire-cracked rock throughout the deposits to a depth of one meter (Photo 6). The lowest deposits, represented by Palmer projectile points, date to the Early Archaic period (ca. 8,000 B.C.).

The southern edge of the site is defined by 44SX98 situated at the crest of a high knoll in a cultivated field. Surface examinations note predominantly Archaic occupation here. Of special significance, terminal Paleo-Indian occupation is indicated by the recovery of a Hardaway projectile point in this portion of the site.

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research potential, capable of refining the chronological sequence of Archaic projectile points, broadening Archaic culture history, and reflecting changing Archaic adaptation to the local environment. Many of the Archaic features contained organic materials such as charred wood, nut, and animal bone fragments, crucial information for the regional study of changing subsistence patterns and cultural ecology. Archaic period Native American lifeways currently are poorly understood for southeastern Virginia, further enhancing the significance of the well-preserved archaeological deposits at the site.

The presence of exotic lithic material, other than the local quartzite and quartz found in the nearby Nottoway River, provides evidence for interaction with neighboring regions and perhaps seasonal movements of Native Americans. Argillite and rhyolite from the Piedmont of North Carolina could reflect the existence and extent of long-distance trade routes throughout the Archaic and Woodland periods. The Williamson and Bolster Store cherts from quarries to the west along the Fall Line may provide evidence for the seasonal movement of Native Americans between that area and the interior Coastal Plain physiographic provinces, particularly during the Paleo-Indian period.

The [redacted] the Nottoway River [redacted] to the district could provide a wealth of environmental data for the interior Coastal Plain during the Archaic and Woodland periods. McAvoy has demonstrated the presence of well-preserved organic material contained in the deposits of the silted-in oxbow. This material is important not only for documenting changes in the local environment through time, but also may provide an interpretive context for understanding the changes in adaptive patterns of Native Americans over the approximately ten thousand years of occupation at the Nottoway Site.

Preserved Woodland period deposits and features could greatly add to the understanding of the cultural history, the ceramic sequence, and the subsistence and settlement patterns of Native Americans. Although ceramics from throughout the Woodland period are present at the Nottoway Site, Late Woodland ceramics, particularly Gaston Ware, predominate at 44SX7. The study of this component could provide an understanding of Native American culture before the advent of European contact. This site is certainly in the area of, and may be one of, the Nottoway Indian towns encountered by Edward Bland in 1650, thereby having potential for studies on the effects of early Native American and European interactions in the region. The Nottoway Site already has proven significant by providing type collections used by Clifford Evans in defining the Stony Creek Ceramic Series, a dominant prehistoric ware in southeastern Virginia.

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