

VLR Listed: 8/16/1983
NRHP Listed: 9/29/1983

NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic CORNETT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE (44WY1) (VHLC File No. 98-54)

and or common N/A

2. Location

street & number [redacted] XX not for publication

city, town Austinville XX vicinity of

state Virginia code 51 county Wythe code 197

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> In process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Neuhoff Farms, Inc. c/o Mr. Jim Neuhoff

street & number 2149 Electric Road S.W.

city, town Roanoke N/A vicinity of state Virginia 24018

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Wythe County Courthouse

street & number N/A

city, town Wytheville state Virginia 24382

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Virginia Historic Landmarks Comm- mission Survey (site no. 44WY1) has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1976 federal state county local

depository for survey records Research Center for Archaeology
P. O. Box 368

city, town Yorktown state Virginia 23690

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date <u>N/A</u>

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The Cornett Archaeological Site (44WY1), a prehistoric site dating to the Late Woodland Period (ca. A.D. 1000-1600), is situated on a sandy, secondary terrace along the [redacted] Austinville in southern Wythe County, Virginia. Prehistoric occupational debris is distributed within an oval area measuring approximately 540 feet by 320 feet (Figure 1). Presently under cultivation, the site represents a village, possibly palisaded and with a central plaza.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Situated on a secondary terrace [redacted] in southern Wythe County, the Cornett Archaeological Site is presently under cultivation. Characterized by extensive cultural debris within an oval encompassing slightly less than five acres, the site represents one of the first prehistoric sites identified by archaeologists in southwestern Virginia. The Cornett Archaeological Site has been designated 44WY1 in the state's official inventory of archaeological sites.

Heavy rains in 1917 and 1940 brought attention to the site due to the exposure of human burials and associated artifacts. As part of a state-wide archaeological survey, Howard A. MacCord visited the Cornett Archaeological Site in 1948 and described it as one of the most promising Late Woodland Period sites in western Virginia. Dr. Clifford Evans subsequently inspected the site in 1950 as part of his Virginia archaeological ceramic study. His research on the site focused on an extensive collection in the possession of Dr. C. A. Michael of Austinville. Evans noted a wide variety of artifacts coming from the site including discoidals of stone and pottery, numerous pipe fragments, celts, shell beads and gorgets, a wide variety of projectile points most of which were triangular in shape, and ceramic sherds. The 209 sherds examined were characterized by a sandy paste and exhibited a wide range in surface treatment including net impressed, cord marked, corn cob roughened, and simple and complicated stamped. Decorations included punctations, incising, finger pinching, applique coils, and folded rims. Of the 24,047 sherds examined by Evans for his Virginia study, only 5 sherds, all from the Cornett Site, illustrated complicated stamping (curvilinear). Evans thus saw these 5 sherds as a unique representation in Virginia of direct affiliation with ceramics to the south in North Carolina which are more closely associated with the Mississippian Tradition.

Dr. C. G. Holland in 1963 obtained a surface collection from the Cornett Archaeological Site as part of his archaeological survey of southwestern Virginia for the Smithsonian Institution. Besides 7 limestone tempered Radford Series sherds, he obtained 239 sand tempered sherds which he used in defining the Wythe Series (named after the county). Recently, Paul S. Gardner has placed the Wythe and Clarksville Series within the Dan River Series, first defined in North Carolina. This illustrates the widespread cultural tradition shared by tribal societies from the fall line along the Roanoke River to west of the Blue Ridge escarpment in the contiguous areas of Virginia and North Carolina.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)		

Specific dates ca. A.D. 1000-1600 Builder/Architect N/A

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Cornett Archaeological Site (44WY1), a prehistoric site dating to the Late Woodland Period and located in southern Wythe County, has proven to be significant in ceramic studies related to the prehistory of southwestern Virginia and neighboring regions. Further ceramic studies from data available from the site are likely to enable archaeologists to define better the nature of cultural interactions with societies further to the south in North Carolina and adjacent areas. The Cornett Archaeological Site is also significant for regional studies on Late Woodland Period demography, subsistence, community organization, and settlement patterns. Such studies are possible due to the presence of documented features, such as burials, and preserved organic materials within the sharply defined site boundaries representing a village with a possible palisade and central plaza.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Cornett Archaeological Site has played a prominent role in ceramic studies related to the prehistory of southwestern Virginia as seen in Dr. Clifford Evan's Ceramic Study of Virginia Archeology published by the Bureau of American Ethnology in 1955 and Dr. C. G. Holland's Archeological Survey of Southwest Virginia published by the Smithsonian Institution in 1970. A subsequent study in 1980 by Paul S. Gardner indicates that further analysis of the predominant ceramics from the site, the Wythe Series, would better define the western variation within the Dan River Series. The Dan River Series is thought to be associated with closely related tribal societies that lived from the fall line along the Roanoke River to west of the Blue Ridge escarpment in the contiguous areas of Virginia and North Carolina. Of further significance are the curvilinear complicated stamped sherds first noted by Evans from the site which are found in greater frequency here than any other site in Virginia east of the Tennessee drainage system. These unique ceramics represent direct affiliation with ceramics in North Carolina which are more closely associated with the chiefdom societies of the Mississippian Tradition. The ceramics at the Cornett Archaeological Site would provide one means of studying the nature of cultural interactions with these societies.

As a result of heavy rains in 1917 and 1940, human burials and associated artifacts were exposed. The likelihood of other burials being present at the site in subsurface features is high and should provide data significant to regional studies on Late Woodland Period demography and socio-political/religious organization.

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(See Continuation Sheet #3)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 5.5 acres

Quadrangle name Austinville, Virginia

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	[REDACTED]			B	[]	[]	[]	[]
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing	
C	[]	[]	[]	D	[]	[]	[]	[]
E	[]	[]	[]	F	[]	[]	[]	[]
G	[]	[]	[]	H	[]	[]	[]	[]

Verbal boundary description and justification

(See continuation sheet #4)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

organization Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission August 1983

street & number 221 Governor Street telephone (804) 786-3144

city or town Richmond state Virginia 23219

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature H. Bryan Mitchell

H. Bryan Mitchell, Executive Director

title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission date AUG 16 1983

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Cornett Archaeological Site, Wythe County, VA
Continuation sheet #1 Item number 7

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7. Description

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS (continued)

In 1976 Wayne E. Clark, staff archaeologist for the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission's Research Center for Archaeology, resurveyed the site. He described a dark brown oval of midden soil on top of a natural levee characterized by high densities of artifacts and discarded shell which measured approximately 540 feet northeast-southwest by 320 feet northwest-southeast. The center of the soil stain was lighter both in color and artifact/shell concentration, possibly representing the plaza of a village. The well-defined external boundary of the oval indicates the likely presence of a palisade.

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8. Significance

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (continued)

The likelihood of other subsurface features such as trash and storage pits and post holes from former structures being present is similarly high. Preserved organic materials such as shell and bone have been documented from the surface of the site. Surface conditions at the site are characterized by a dark brown to black oval of midden soil with a high density of artifacts and discarded shell over an area approximately 540 feet by 320 feet. Within the center of the oval soil stain, the density of artifacts and shell quickly declines in association with a lightening of soil color, perhaps indicative of a central plaza. The likely presence of a palisade is indicated by the occurrence of a well-defined external boundary of the oval soil stain. All of the above characteristics clearly indicate that archaeological excavations at the Cornett Archaeological Site should provide significant data for regional studies on Late Woodland Period subsistence, community organization, and settlement patterns. The clarity of the Cornett Archaeological Site's boundaries as defined by the easily recognized oval soil stain indicates that the site is in a good state of preservation.

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Cornett Archaeological Site, Wythe County, VA

Continuation sheet #3

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Evans, Clifford

1955 A Ceramic Study of Virginia Archeology.
Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin, 160.

Gardner, Paul S.

1980 An Analysis of Dan River Ceramics from Virginia
and North Carolina. M.A. thesis, Department of
Anthropology, University of North Carolina.

Holland, C. G.

1970 An Archeological Survey of Southwest Virginia.
Smithsonian Contribution to Anthropology,
number 12.

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA (continued)

