

A “NEW” ACCOUNT OF MOUND AND VILLAGE SITES IN WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA: THE TRAVELS OF CAPTAIN R. D. WAINWRIGHT

by

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Abstract

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, Captain Robert D. Wainwright, an amateur archaeologist from Virginia, carried out archaeological surveys and excavations in the western piedmont and mountains of North Carolina. Wainwright operated on the fringe of the nascent community of early twentieth-century professional archaeologists, and published written accounts and photographs of his fieldwork in an obscure archaeological journal, *The Archaeological Bulletin*. Until recently, the written accounts of his fieldwork, which contain descriptions of some of the most significant archaeological sites in western North Carolina, have gone unnoticed. In this article, we provide a brief biography of this little-known amateur archaeologist, and place his fieldwork in the broader historical context of early twentieth-century archaeology in North Carolina. We then present the complete text of his account, originally published in three issues of *The Archaeological Bulletin*. In closing, we discuss the significance of his narrative in the context of current archaeological research in the western part of the state. Wainwright’s work and reporting have all the problems typical of the archaeology of his era, but given the paucity of contemporaneous documentation for sites in the western piedmont and mountains of North Carolina, his account provides important archaeological and historical information.

In May of 1913, Robert Dewar Wainwright boarded a train in Roanoke, Virginia, bound for Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Wainwright, a retired captain of the United States Marine Corps, was an amateur archaeologist and artifact collector who spent his summers “hunting for camp sites, exploring mounds and looking for specimens of stone art” (Wainwright 1913b:111). In the following months he would visit and describe some of the most significant archaeological sites in western North Carolina, including the Donnaha site (31YD9), the Cullowhee mound (31JK2), the Andrews mound (31CE3), and the Kituhwa mound (31SW1/2) (Figure 1). At some locations he carried out surface collections and excavations. His narrative also includes

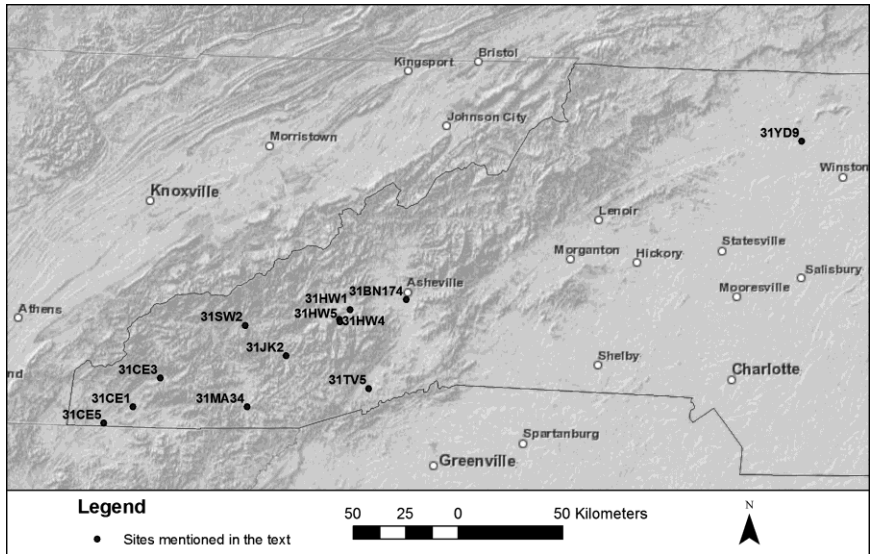


Figure 1. Map of sites mentioned in the text.

descriptions of purported mounds near Andrews and Brevard, North Carolina, which, to our knowledge, are not recorded in other early archaeological accounts of the region. Wainwright published an account of his travels, “A Summer’s Archaeological Research,” in an obscure journal, *The Archaeological Bulletin* (Wainwright 1913b, 1914a, 1914b).

The Archaeological Bulletin was published by the International Society of Archaeologists, a group of amateur archaeologists and collectors, some of whom, including Wainwright, had ties with the Smithsonian Institution, the Bureau of American Ethnology, or the American Museum of Natural History. The *Bulletin* only ran for 10 years (1909–1918), with limited circulation. The publication is typical of pre-professional, early-twentieth century American archaeology. Short reports of excavations, some rigorous for their time, run side-by-side with advertisements for artifact auctions. Until the journal was recently digitized and published online by Google Books, it could only be found in a few libraries (WorldCat 2012). As a result, Wainwright’s narrative appears to have gone unnoticed by North Carolina archaeologists. His account is not cited in the standard reference texts for the archaeology of western North Carolina, and his name does not appear in discussions of the first archaeological expeditions in the region (see for example Dickens 1976; Keel 1976; Ward and Davis 1999; Woodall 1990). While Wainwright’s work in other states has occasionally been cited (see for

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example Holland 1970; MacCord 1989; Marquardt 2008), to our knowledge, the only published reference to Wainwright's work in North Carolina appears in David Bushnell's *Native Cemeteries and Forms of Burial East of the Mississippi River*, a 1920 publication of the Bureau of American Ethnology (Bushnell 1920:134).

In this article, we place Wainwright's fieldwork in the broader historical context of early twentieth-century archaeology in North Carolina, and provide a brief biography of this little-known amateur archaeologist. We then present the complete text of his account, originally published in three issues of *The Archaeological Bulletin*. In closing, we discuss the significance of his narrative in the context of current archaeological research in the western part of the state. Wainwright's work and reporting have all the problems typical of the fieldwork of his era, but given the paucity of contemporaneous documentation for sites in the western piedmont and mountains of North Carolina, his account provides important archaeological and historical information.

Archaeological Research in Western North Carolina between the 1870s and 1933

As in much of the eastern United States, the earliest archaeological studies in western North Carolina were sponsored by museums. From the 1870s through the early 1930s, archaeological fieldwork was carried out primarily by museum personnel and local hired laborers, with the goal of obtaining artifacts for display (Ward and Davis 1999:6). The 1933 excavation of the Peachtree mound and village site (31CE1) near Murphy (Setzler and Jennings 1941) is generally taken to mark the beginning of professional archaeology in the western part of the state (Keel 2002; Ward and Davis 1999).

The first of these early excavations in western North Carolina were sponsored by the Valentine Museum of Richmond, Virginia. In the late 1870s and early 1880s, Mann S. Valentine and his sons, E. E. and B. B. Valentine, directed expeditions in Haywood, Jackson, Cherokee, and Swain Counties, sometimes with the help of local residents, including A. J. Osborne of Haywood County and R. D. McCombs of Cherokee County (Valentine et al. 1889; Ward and Davis 1999:6–7). The Valentines and their associates “opened” the Peachtree mound (31CE1), the Garden Creek mound No. 2 (31HW2), the Wells mound (one of a

group of mounds on the West Fork Pigeon River, west of Waynesville), the Jasper Allen mound (located on Scotts Creek, east of Sylva), the Kituwha mound (31SW2), the Nununyi mound (31SW3), the Birdtown mound (31SW6), and the Cullowhee mound (31JK2) (Steere 2011; Valentine et al. 1889; Ward and Davis 1999:6–7). These investigations were not carried out to modern standards and were highly destructive.

In addition to conducting mound investigations, representatives of the Valentine Museum purchased artifacts from local residents. In the mid-1880s, some individuals took advantage of this new market opportunity, producing carved soapstone figurines which Mann Valentine purchased and publicized as genuine artifacts (Keane 1883; Ward and Davis 1999:6–7). Disillusioned by this experience, the Valentines abandoned their research in western North Carolina. None of their excavations were adequately reported, but the Research Laboratories of Archaeology (RLA) at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, maintain an indexed record of notes and correspondence from the excavations, and a collection of artifacts from the excavated mounds.

The Smithsonian Institution also carried out research in western North Carolina in the 1880s, under the direction of Cyrus Thomas. In 1883, John P. Rogan reported the excavation of two mounds in Caldwell County, among other explorations in the upper Yadkin River valley (Powell 1886; Rogan 1883; Spainhour 1886; Thomas 1894). John W. Emmert recorded and excavated several mounds in Buncombe, Haywood, and Madison counties (Thomas 1887, 1891, 1894). The results of this work were published in the annual reports of the Bureau of American Ethnology (Thomas 1887, 1891, 1894) and are also mentioned in at least one Peabody Museum report (Putnam 1884). Thomas's reports were adequate for their time, but provide little more than an approximate location for each recorded mound and a brief description of the stratigraphy and contents of excavated mounds.

Many of the mounds recorded in the Thomas reports were submitted by James Mooney. In fact, while Mooney is most famous for his role as an ethnographer (see Mooney 1900), Thomas (1891:151–159) credits him with recording over two-thirds of the mounds in western North Carolina. In addition to providing written descriptions of mound locations, Mooney mapped the locations of mounds and other important Cherokee places on a series of annotated 1886 and 1892 USGS 30-

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minute series quadrangle maps. These maps have recently been stabilized, scanned, and made available online through the Smithsonian Institution's website (<http://sirius-archives.si.edu>).

The next excavations in western North Carolina were carried out in Haywood County by the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation (Heye 1919). In 1915, George Heye directed excavations at the Garden Creek sites (31HW1, 2, 7, and 8) near Canton, and he also excavated a mound on the Singleton property (31HW4) near Bethel (Heye 1919). Heye's 1919 report of his work in Haywood County contains more detail than most of Thomas's reports, but it still falls short of standards for archaeological reporting to be established during the 1930s.

At the close of the era, in 1926, Charles O. Turbyfill, a Waynesville native who assisted Heye with logistics in western North Carolina, completely excavated the Notley mound (31CE5) in Cherokee County (Turbyfill 1927). Turbyfill devotes only a single paragraph to the excavation of the Notley mound in a short paper on file at the National Museum of the American Indian (Turbyfill 1927).

As readers will see in the reprinted text that follows, Wainwright's descriptions of archaeological sites are similar in content and style to the brief site descriptions presented in the mound exploration reports of the Bureau of American Ethnology (Thomas 1887, 1891, 1894). Wainwright identifies archaeological sites using the names of landowners, and sometimes locates sites with distances relative to nearby towns, railroads, and rivers. He provides dimensions for mounds, cursory descriptions of stratigraphy in the case of excavations, and more detailed descriptions of excavated graves and associated artifacts. Wainwright took some photographs of his excavations, and his published accounts are presumably based on more extensive field notes.

Keel (2002:136–137) rightly expresses frustration with the field methods and records from this pre-professional period of research, observing that during a span of six decades, “a few sites had been rudely excavated and poorly reported. No theoretical framework was available to the researchers of those times to study or interpret their data. Techniques for defining and recording proveniences were crude at best. Field notes documenting this work, at least the ones seen by me, are practically useless.”

To some extent, this critique applies to Wainwright's work. By present-day standards, his excavations of graves and mounds would be characterized as looting. However, by the standards of his time, Wainwright's reporting can be characterized as better than average. His site locations, most often defined by landowner names, were probably adequate for his day. In a few instances he provides descriptions of artifact scatters that compare favorably with survey records from later decades (see for example Wainwright 1913a). Wainwright's descriptions of mound and burial excavations, while single-mindedly focused on unearthing artifacts, are generally consistent in detail from site to site, and in some cases, his artifact descriptions are detailed enough to assign an approximate range of dates to his excavated sites. Moreover, as readers will see in the reprinted text that follows, Wainwright makes notes about site formation processes and offers some discussion of culture history in his narratives, suggesting that his interest in archaeology surpassed a desire to collect curios.

Captain R. D. Wainwright as Archaeologist

Robert Dewar Wainwright was born in Augusta, Maine, on August 23, 1849, into a family with a long history of military service (Figure 2). His grandfather, Major R. D. Wainwright, was a United States Marine who stood down 283 armed inmates with a party of only 30 Marines during a riot at the Massachusetts State Prison in 1824 (Buckingham 1920:138–142). Wainwright's father, Robert M. A. Wainwright, was a lieutenant in the United States Army, and served in the Mexican War from 1846 to 1848; and his uncle Richard was a Commander in the U.S. Navy during the Civil War (North 1870; Robarts 1887). Wainwright followed in his father's and grandfather's footsteps, and joined the United States Marine Corps. He served from 1869 until 1893, when he retired due to injuries sustained during military service; he was deafened in one ear when a cannon was fired next to him while onboard a ship, and he suffered severely from asthma in later life (Susan Bush, personal communication 2012; Hamersly 1890; Stone 1920).

Wainwright was initially stationed in Massachusetts, but traveled extensively during his years of military service. He was involved in the rescue of a steamer stranded on a reef off the coast of Brazil in 1872. In 1888, while on duty with the U.S.S. Essex, he marched from the harbor of Inchon to Seoul, Korea, to guard the United States Consulate during a

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Figure 2. Portrait of Captain Robert Dewar Wainwright. Courtesy of the Wainwright family.

period of political unrest (Daugherty 2009:28). Wainwright retired from the Marine Corps in 1893, and spent the last years of his life in Roanoke, Virginia. Wainwright died in the Naval Hospital in Norfolk, Virginia, on October, 21, 1920. He was buried two days later in Arlington National Cemetery (Stone 1920).

According to an interview published by the *Roanoke Times* (RT) in 1917, Wainwright developed an interest in archaeology as “a small child.... For a number of years his father, also an army officer, was detailed on Indian duty in the then undeveloped West. During this period Captain Wainwright acquired invaluable knowledge of Indian craft and habits and an insight into their lives and customs which has contributed much towards his success as an archaeologist” (RT, 21 September 1917:6).

Wainwright never lost his interest in Native American material culture, and he devoted much of his retirement to archaeological pursuits. In January, 1894, Wainwright excavated several groups of graves at Burial Ridge in the Tottenville section of Staten Island, New York. George H. Pepper, a better-known early American archaeologist, was also working at Burial Ridge at the time, and it seems likely that the two men may have been in communication (see Skinner 1909:11–12). Wainwright presented a paper on this fieldwork at the Proceedings of the Natural Science Association of Staten Island in 1897. Excerpts from this paper are reproduced in the third volume of the *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History* (Skinner 1909:12–14), and his work in New York is also cited in the “Archeologic Notes and News” of the tenth volume of *The American Anthropologist* (Anonymous 1897:55).

From at least 1904 to 1917, Wainwright carried out surface collections and excavations in North Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky, and Florida, primarily during the summer months. It is not certain when Wainwright first collected in North Carolina, but by 1900 a stone pipe in his collection from the state was illustrated by Warren K. Moorehead in his *Prehistoric Stone Implements*. In 1904 Wainwright discovered a projectile point cache near “Spier’s Ferry,” North Carolina (Wainwright 1913a), and in the summer of 1913 he worked in the western piedmont and mountains of North Carolina (Wainwright 1913b, 1914a, 1914b). In 1914 and 1915 he carried out surveys and mound excavations in western Virginia and eastern Kentucky, and from 1916 to 1917 he worked in southern Florida and returned to work in western Virginia (Wainwright 1914c, 1916a, 1916b, 1917, 1918a, 1918b).

Based on accounts of his work published in *The Archaeological Bulletin* and a single survey report submitted to the Bureau of American Ethnology (Wainwright 1914c), Wainwright had a standard methodology

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for making collections. He traveled by railroad from Roanoke to locations with known archaeological sites, especially mounds and prehistoric Native American graves. He would ask local residents for information about nearby archaeological sites, recording his informants' names in his notes. In some cases he seems to have carried out small-scale pedestrian surveys, writing short site descriptions and making small surface collections (see for example Wainwright 1914c). For his excavations he often hired or otherwise persuaded local farmers and laborers to assist him, and in some cases he claims to have trained his assistants in excavation methods (Wainwright 1913b:114).

Wainwright also appears to have had a working knowledge of regional artifact typologies and a system for tracking the provenience of the artifacts he collected and purchased. A reporter from the *Roanoke Times* (RT) newspaper stated that “when shown a specimen of Indian craft, Captain Wainwright can locate with precision the locality in which, and the condition in which it was found,” and that Wainwright’s collection was “cataloged and indexed in such a manner that it contains a detailed account of the discovery of each relic” (RT, 21 September 1917:6).

The reporter’s claims are supported by one of Wainwright’s submissions to *The Archaeological Bulletin*, “Captain Wainwright’s Pipes” (Wainwright 1913c:120–121). In this short entry, a single plate illustrates 20 pipes from the Eastern United States, and the accompanying text provides a location of origin and brief description for each pipe. In the photograph it appears that each pipe has been marked with one or two small white paper labels.

Wainwright apparently had a large and well-organized artifact collection. According to his interviewer:

A number of museums of various institutions have made bids for this collection, notable among them the Smithsonian Institute at Washington. Captain Wainwright, however, prefers that it should go to a smaller institution, on account of the fact that in such the collection would be intact and retain its identity as a whole. He is negotiating with one of the State universities in reference to this matter. [RT, 21 September 1917:6]

Wainwright’s concern about the disposition of his collection also sets him apart from many of his contemporaries. Two short notices printed in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* (RTD) indicate that Wainwright arranged to donate his collection to Washington and Lee University in

1917 (RTD, 14 October 1917), and that the university received the collection in 1919 (RTD, 8 May, 1919). There is an unattributed “donated prehistoric collection” of artifacts at the Anthropology Laboratory at Washington and Lee University that may contain some of Wainwright’s collected material (Sean Devlin, personal communication 2012). The collection includes at least two Qualla phase rim sherds, an incised sherd marked “Florida” with a small paper tag, and at least one black-and-white sherd from the American Southwest. This collection would appear to be consistent with the collection described in the *Roanoke Times* interview with Wainwright, but there is no definitive documentary evidence linking the unlabeled boxes of artifacts curated at Washington and Lee to Wainwright. Moreover, if this is Wainwright’s collection, the pipes, copper artifacts, and complete projectile points appear to have been removed.

Wainwright’s archaeological activities were not guided by a well-defined theoretical framework, and his primary “research goal” was to obtain artifacts. However, his narratives suggest that his intellectual perspective was not unlike that of contemporary scholars. Like many of the ethnographers and archaeologists of his era, Wainwright seems to have viewed Native Americans as members of “vanishing” societies (Thomas 2000:44–47). He may have envisioned Native American grave goods and other artifacts as remains of those societies that needed to be preserved for the sake of posterity (Wainwright 1913b:111). Some of his writings suggest that he was sympathetic to the suffering of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Native American societies, and that he was interested in basic questions of culture history, such as the differences between the material culture of historically known Native American groups and Mississippian societies (Wainwright 1913b:111, 1914a:6–8).

Below, we present Wainwright’s accounts of his work in the western piedmont and mountains of western North Carolina, originally printed in the fourth and fifth volumes of *The Archaeological Bulletin*. We include reproductions of his figures, with the exception of Plate XV, which depicts an excavated Native American grave from the Yadkin River valley. Typographic and grammatical errors original to the text have been left unaltered, but we present corrections in brackets when important details, such as place names, appear to have been incorrectly transcribed by the journal editors. Following the reprinted text, we offer a brief interpretation of Wainwright’s travels and fieldwork.

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Wainwright's Narratives

A Cache (Wainwright 1913a:63)

On August 16, 1904, I left Rival Hall, N.C. for Spiers Ferry on the Toakin River, five miles distant [probably Rural Hall, for Speas Ferry on the Yadkin River]. On arrival I found a long elevation running parallel to the river. Between this ridge and the river is a floor of hardpan about an eighth of a mile wide, caused by many freshets. At the river's edge and running with it for about a mile is a sand ridge some four feet high, at the upper end of which I found quantities of flakings, pieces of pottery, and numerous arrow points. Midway on the ridge I unearthed with my fingers eight large spears four and five inches in length. These flints were ready for the last chipping. As many of these had been found at the same place, there is no doubt that it was a cache of these implements, all of which were of slate. Human and animal bones in several places protruded from the ridge. Indian fire places are still seen containing refuse of mussel shells, bones, broken pottery, etc.

A Summer's Archaeological Research (Wainwright 1913b:111-114)

About the first of May, 1913, I started on my usual summer trip—which time of the year I devote to Indian archaeology—hunting for camp sites, exploring mounds and looking for specimens of stone art of the almost forgotten race which roamed this fair land, ere the white people intruded to the sad detriment of the red man. Leaving Roanoke, Va., I proceeded to Winston-Salem, N.C., thence across the Yadkin river into Yadkin county, North Carolina. After a day or so stay at East Bend, N.C., I visited the farm of Mr. Geo. Steelman, which property lies a great part along the Yadkin river, Yadkin county, North Carolina. At this place, and also at others along the river, are sand ridges, made by the overflow of the river. At some places the river has again risen to a great extent and has washed away parts of these ridges down to what must have been the original surface of the land. This particular ridge on the property aforesaid is about four feet high, extends about five-eighths of a mile along the river and is about fifteen feet in diameter. The section at the northern end has been washed by freshets of the river for about 150 feet in a semi-circular direction towards the west. Many graves of Indian occupancy have been washed bare, exposing the skeletons. Excavated this section as thoroughly as possible, handicapped by want of laborers, all of whom were busy on their farms. Found all the skeletons except

one in perfect condition, and in nearly all cases the knees showed by their position that the Indian had been buried with his knees drawn up, and afterwards, by weight of material, probably, had been capsized to the left – the Indian lying on his back, face uppermost, and in one or two cases face turned to the side. These skeletons were found within a few feet of each other and all nearly on the same level, that is about four feet down from original surface. In nearly every case—at the same level as the burial and very close to it—were the remains of a fire. In these remains I found tortoise shell, deer bones and often large sections of pottery, discolored by the fire. These fires, I judged, showed that funeral feasts were held at the grave.

Doing surface work first on the washed ridge, I found quantities of [page 112] broken pottery rims, etc., showing fine ornamentations in nearly every case. Many very fine arrow points, though no spears, except one or two of rough stone, several celts, or tomahawks, one or two stone axes of fair workmanship, many stems of pipes, mostly of pottery, beads of shell of different sizes and workmanship, also some of other material, and in every direction calcined stones were plentiful. A number of copper beads, a pendant of same material, shaped hook like, drilled at top, and tubes wrapped to a point, were also found; no doubt washed from graves—all these badly corroded.

In regard to the arrows, they were made mostly of two or three materials—a dull black flint, and of a material I think chert, yellowish clay color, specked with russet brown spots. A number were of yellowish clay color, seemingly very old, as they were covered with a patina and were worn smooth, seemingly more or less finished. Shells of the tortoise, mussel and periwinkle were also strewn over the ground.

Plate XV – One of Capt. Wainwright's excavations. (This plate shows an excavated grave and is not reproduced here.)

In the first graves excavated, found skeleton as above described, as regards position; very small beads around neck of shell and copper, a disc of copper four inches in diameter and center drilled lay on its chest. All copper articles badly corroded.

In another grave, some material like sinew was found along side of [page 113] head; two articles, celt like, of iron, and one stone tomahawk lay close to the skeleton; also a fine stone pipe, monitor shape.

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On May 8, excavated two skeletons; position the same as others. First skeleton had lumps of red ochre under chin; no other articles found with it. The second skeleton was buried with mouth open; no articles with it.

On May 9, exhumed a large male skeleton; mouth open, left side of skull very much flattened, remains buried as others; a stone tomahawk rested on his left forearm, another on right side of head touching jaw. Shell beads, large, round and tubular, chalk-like and soft, also quantities of small shells around neck, drilled as beads, claws of some animal in front of chin, not drilled. Seven or eight lumps of plumbago slightly larger than a walnut lay between his lower left arm and side of body. On the right side of head were quantities of the small bones of tortoise. Fingers of left hand in mouth, body buried as already described for others.

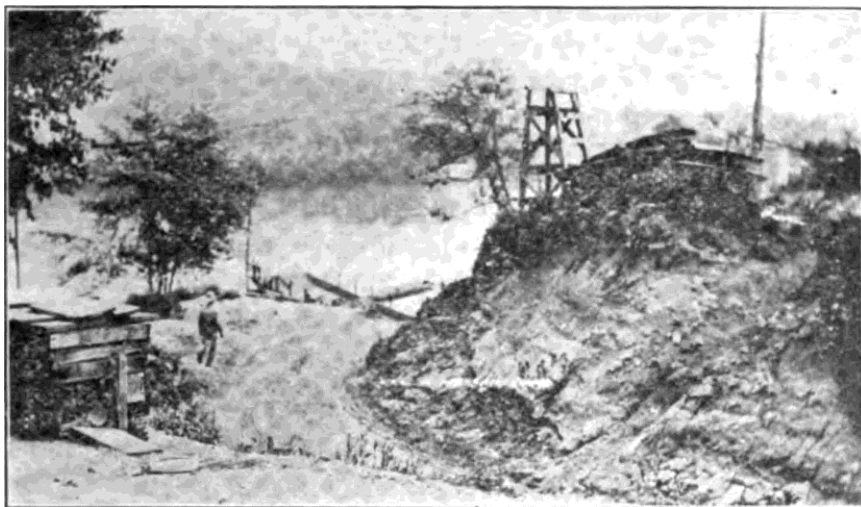


Figure 3. Plate XVI – Along the Yadkin River.

May 10 – Exhumed skeleton, position as before described, found on either side of head a small quantity of large and medium size tubes of copper, one eighth inch in diameter, coloring the skull a greenish color; mouth wide open.

May 11 – Excavated and exhumed skeleton; mouth open, reclining as before described; small beads of shell and copper around neck.

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Copper disc, four inches in diameter, drilled at top and center, lay on chest, some beads adhering to it. Also a piece of coarse matting of vegetable material was with the beads. Medium size tube pipe of pottery, bowl turned up, was found with the remains.

May 12 – Exhumed skeletons of a female and child, face of child and [page 114] female faced downward, body doubled up; large leg bones on chest, a few beads, blue colored ones, small shell disc, not drilled, with child; child seems buried kneeling as though its face was downward; its legs were under the body.

On account of not having help, was forced to stop my excavations here, and also as the remainder of the ridge, not river-washed was in wheat.

May 13 – Mr. Tom Taylor, an employee of Mr. Steelman, and whom I had instructed in excavation, exhumed a skeleton on same property as before and found remains 1½ feet under ground, position of skeleton as usual. Articles found: Broken pipe of pottery—I think broken in excavation—small beads and shells drilled as beads. Visited several sites on Yadkin river, same county as before.

First – Across the road from Mr. Steelman’s property, due west, found a low hill in field, close to a creek. Found on it chippings of chert and quartz, a few broken arrow points and some broken pottery.

Secondly – Found on property of Mr. J. D. Flynn, broken pottery, flakings of flint, a few arrow points—property ¾ mile from road, due south on sand ridge along Yadkin river, Yadkin Co, N.C.

Thirdly – Found on property of Mr. Davis, 2 ½ miles north of Mr. Steelman’s property, a ridge of sand one-half mile long, extending nearly north on the Yadkin river, Yadkin county, N.C. This ridge is about three feet high and about 250 feet in width, is strewn with broken pottery and flakings of flint and quartz. A few arrow points found. Mussel shells are numerous, as well as deer bones and tortoise shells, also calcined stones.

Lastly – Found on property of the late Mr. Poindexter, at Poindexter ferry, opposite Donaha, N.C., on Yadkin river, Yadkin county, N.C, a sand ridge about ½ mile long and 150 feet wide. Ridge covered with broken pottery, mussel shells, flakings of flint and quartz. No excavation

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could be made, as ridge was in wheat. Along side of the road which cuts through the ridge, going down to the ferry, I saw the skeleton remains of an Indian, and where it had been taken out of the side of the cutting. (To be continued)

Capt. R. D. Wainwright's Pipes (Wainwright 1913c:120–121)

Plate XX shows Capt R. D. Wainwright's collection of pipes, showing them one-sixth natural size.

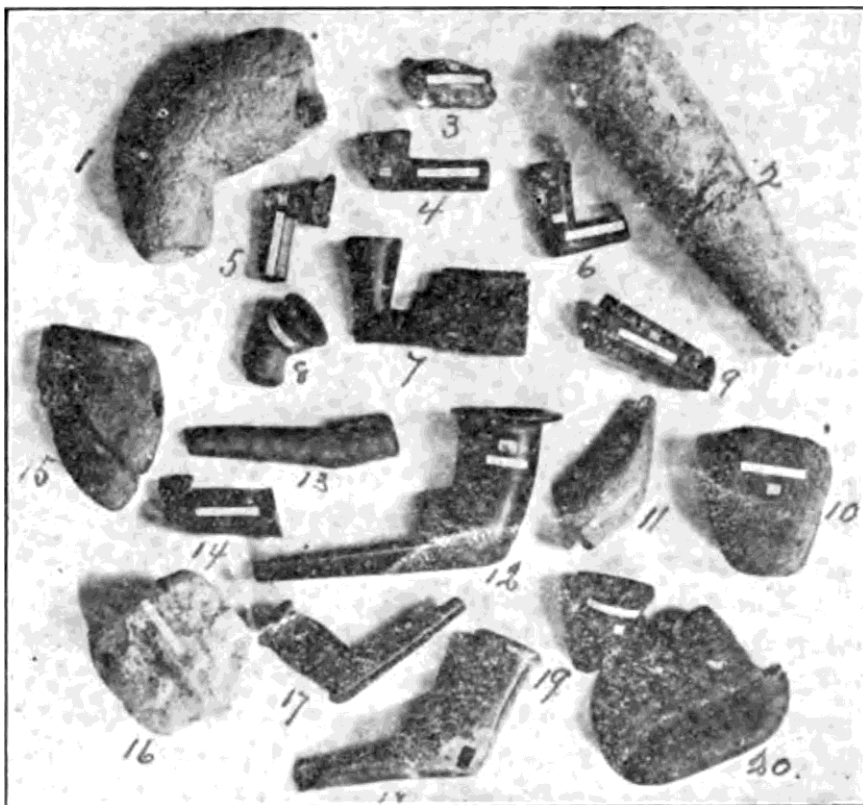


Figure 4. Plate XX.

1 – Found on Blackwater river, estate of Tim Holland, six miles from Wirtz, Va. Soapstone.

2 – Found on the sand ridge at Poindexter's ferry, opposite and across Yadkin river from Donaha, N.C.

3 – Found on the estate of S. T. Conley, two miles east of Andrews, N.C.

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- 4 – Found near Valley River, N.C, by J. McWhitaker.
- 5 – Found by Mr. Pullium on property of W. P. Walker, two miles west of Andrews, N.C.
- 6 – Found near mound along Tuckasegee river at Governor’s Isle, N.C., property of Kape [Kope] Elias.
- 7 – From Canada; presented
- 8 – Found by myself at Morganton, N.C.
- 9 – Found near Valley River, N.C. by McWhitaker.
- 10 – Found on Miller’s creek, one mile northeast of East Bend, N.C., by F. P. Presnel; material, sandstone.
- 11 – Found on Borden property, three miles west of Donaha, N.C.; pottery. [page 121]
- 12 – Excavated with Indian skeleton, Richmond county, New York, by myself. A North Carolina type of pipe; broken by the Indian who drilled it, and probably fastened it together with sinew.
- 13 – Excavated with Indian skeleton on property of George Steelman on Yadkin river, Yadkin county, N.C. Pottery.
- 14 – Found near lumber mill along Valley river, just east of Andrews, N.C., by Mr. Fisher.
- 15 – From grave near San Juan river, Utah; owned originally by Jake Gold, an old collector of the southwest; presented.
- 16 – Found on Miller’s creek, one mile northeast of East Bend, N.C., by F. P. Presnel; sandstone.
- 17 – Excavated with Indian skeleton on property of George Steelman in Yadkin county, N.C.
- 18 – Found on estate of H. S. Martin, about one-fourth mile north of Poindexter’s ferry, Yadkin river, opposite and across river from Donaha, N.C ; soapstone.
- 19 – Found near Valley River, N.C, by J. McWhitaker; very old pipe.
- 20 – Found in West Virginia; presented by W. K. Moorehead.

A Summer’s Archaeological Research (Wainwright 1914a:6–9)

In June, I arrived at Cullowhee, Jackson county, North Carolina. A short distance from Mr. White’s store, southwest direction in bottom land, is a mound about one hundred feet in diameter and five feet high. It has been very much higher, but now somewhat plowed down. It has been excavated long ago. No history as regards it. Field now in corn, so it could not be examined by excavation.

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As one arrives at the wooden bridge, as he approaches Cullowhee from the west, the road cuts through an elevation; on one side about three feet down I discovered fire place containing calcined stones. On the elevation on right side of road, broken pottery is common; flakings are not common of any material; found two or three fine arrow points, one seemingly patinated. This place has been thoroughly searched many times and numerous articles are in the hands of a few, not to be parted with at any price.

My next visit was to Andrews, N.C., on the Murphy division of the Southern railroad. In the bottom land alongside of Valley river, southwest of town and about half a mile distant is a very large mound, property of Mr. McLane Walker, on which is the dwelling of the property owner. The residence is a large one. The mound's dimensions are as follows: Length 148 ½ feet, width 107 ¼ feet, height 10 feet; it was five feet higher, but was leveled for building. Mound is in fine condition; has been tunneled from side many years ago, though no trace of tunnel now exists. Bones, pipes, etc., reported found. A photo of the mound is in my possession. In a field adjoining the mound to the west, I found two beads, fairly large size, of glass, probably traders' beads; flakings of flint and quartz and sections of pottery are very numerous. Much material has been gathered here, especially these so-called traders' beads. Evidently the Cherokees camped on the old Mound Builders' fields very often. No knowledge as to who were the builders of these mounds can be obtained, the Cherokees informing me that they were there when their people came to this section of the state.

Excavated a mound in front of Byson Hatrel [Bryson Hotel] at Andrews, N.C., on Mr. Walker's property and to the right of his residence. Mound is five feet high and about thirty-five feet in diameter. Excavated it thoroughly, and though said to have been excavated before, which I doubt, as the soil, yellow clay, was firm but not loose. I found no signs at all of any occupancy of any material except the yellow clay. Visited the property of Mr. W. P. Walker, at this time in corn, said property being two miles west of Andrews and situated on left side of railroad as one goes towards Murphy, N.C., and near a creek, is what looks like a mound, now very much plowed down; on its immediate vicinity, quite a number of Indian [page 7] remains have been plowed up and now several portions of skeletons are on the surface. The bones of one, the skull being carried off, are in fine condition, though the remains were buried in the bottom land. Pottery of large and small pieces is

abundant over the surface, but particularly so where the skeletons have been plowed up; beads (glass) and arrow points have been numerous, so it is reported. Flakings of any material are very scarce. So I judge this field to be one for burial and not a camp site. Pottery I believe to have been buried with remains in whole condition and broken by the plow in most instances. No excavation was possible on account of field being planted.

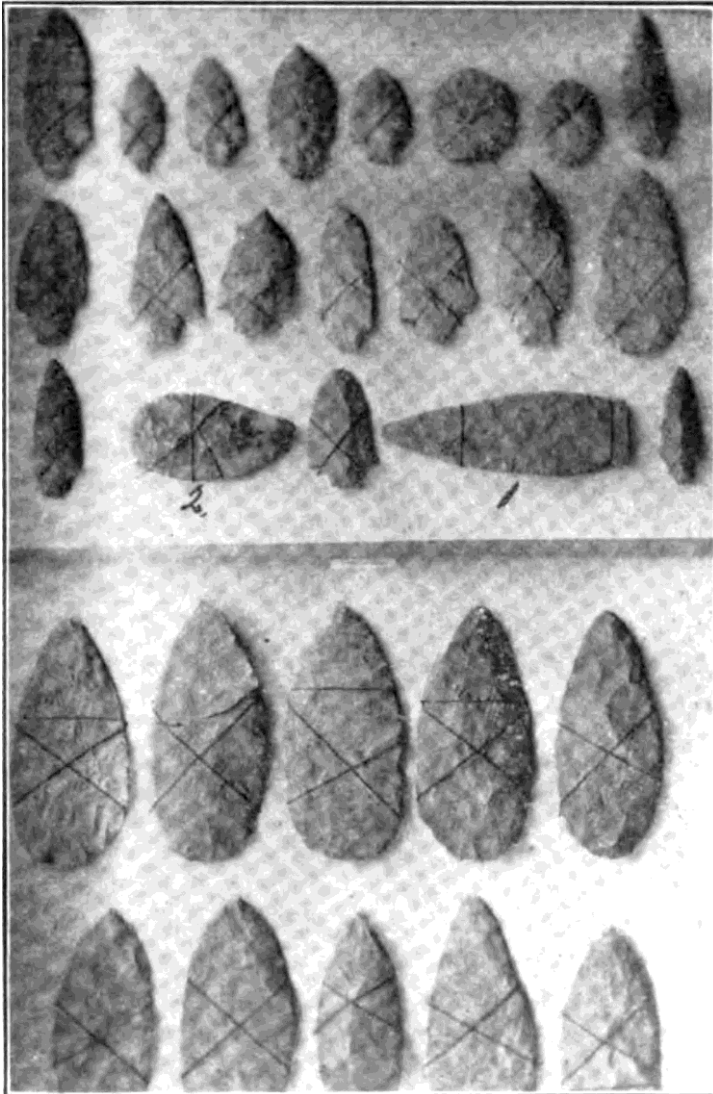


Figure 5. Plate III – Representative Spears of the Yadkin.

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On the property of S. T. Conley, which is about two miles east of Andrews, N C., and situated close to the Southern railroad, on a slight rise from the river and in bottom land, excavated a place which had been [page 8] a mound several feet high, but now almost plowed down, but Mr. Conley remembered it as quite a mound many years ago. About three and a half feet down, came to two large slabs of stone, about one and a half feet square, stones lying side by side and touching each other. Stones were lying on edge, which was about three inches thick. Found remains of a skeleton close to stones, some teeth, a small piece of a rib and two small sections of wrist bones of what was the right arm. On these bones were very large beads, made of the column of conch shells. On the rib was a shell disc $8\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter and engraved; also several small pieces of shell, perforated and scalloped on edge. The shells, beads and disc were very soft and extremely hard to excavate, and when dried were like chalk. At the right of where the skull should have been and close to that place was a small bowl, having about a pint capacity; bowl was of a yellow clay and not ornamented, bottom of bowl towards the place of skull. The bowl contained a lump of red hematite, stone knife and two shells—one mussel and one clam. The back teeth having no roots, I took them to a dentist who said they were first teeth and the person must have been eleven or twelve years of age.

On the hills back of the power house at Andrews, N C., in many places are what is left of stone graves, the stones having been carted away for road repairs. Mr. Everett, who resides on one of these hills, remembers these stone graves as being about fifty in number and about four or five feet high. Had several places dug where stone piles had been but found nothing, though one had been dug a few days before by Mr. Everett's boys and a few bones and a lot of traders' beads were found. I picked up two from the grave. A Mr. Taylor had excavated many of these graves many years ago. I believe, after careful thought, that the grave I dug at Conley's was of the time of the mound builders. Those plowed up remains on the Walker property, two miles west of Andrews, N.C., were graves of Cherokee Indians of about the time of the first arrival of the traders, as shown by the glass beads, and those graves on the hill were Cherokee also. Knowing that the white man was now cultivating the bottom lands, the Indians buried on the hills in graves about two feet deep, piling on rocks and small stones to keep the wild animals from the remains.

June 18th. Visited Governor's Island, N.C, on the Murphy branch of the Southern railroad, and inspected an Indian mound one fourth mile east from the railroad station and close to the Tuckasegee River. The dimensions of the mound, actual measurement, are 110 feet in diameter, height six feet. Was informed by an old settler that he remembered it when it was ten feet high. It is on the property of Mr. Kope Elias, who informed me that it had been thoroughly excavated many years ago. Around the mound and in the adjoining field, now all covered with growing corn, I found many small pieces of pottery, some hammer stones and sinkers of various sizes. No arrows or flaked articles, or flakings whatever. The question why no flakings bothers me quite a lot. Visited [page 9] Rosman, N.C., on Murphy division of Southern railroad; found along French Broad river at the village, some pieces of pottery and flakings of flint and quartz. Mr. Glazener, an old man of the village, informed me Indian articles had been plentiful where the post office now stands; now and then an arrow point is found in the fields nearby. All other Indian articles disappeared long ago. (To be continued)

A Summer's Archaeological Research (Wainwright 1914b: 29–30)

August 9th. Visited Calvert, on the Brevard division of the Southern railroad. One-half mile from the station is the home of Mrs. Galloway, and one-half mile southeast from her home is a long ridge near a spring and creek. Part of the ridge is covered with very thick grass and the rest is in corn. In the corn field can be found an abundance of broken pottery, quartz and flint flakings—a number of rough arrow points were found.

One mile northwest of Pisgah Forest and on an elevation on which is Mr. T. L. Gash's residence, I found signs of quite a camp site. Procured from Mr. Gash quite a number of arrow and spear points, mostly made of quartz and quartzite and very rough. A few fine flint points, some flakings of quartz, a little broken pottery and one muller in fair condition, well formed and flattened on one side, was all that I found.

On August 11th, I located a camp site near the bridge over Dav-[page 30] idson's river, not far from Pisgah Forest. Here I found many pieces of pottery, calcined stones, quartz and flint flakings, and one fair arrow point.

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August 14th. Visited Mr. Shipman's property, one mile northwest of Brevard. East of but close to the residence is an elevation not far from a creek, where quite a number of artifacts have been found in the past. In addition to the usual flakings and pottery fragments I found a piece of a soapstone pot.

At a point near the bridge over the Southern railroad out a short distance from Brevard, I examined what is left of a mound that at one time was about 30 feet in diameter. Height unknown as the mound had been "opened" years ago. It is said that bones, pipes and flint implements were found in the mound.

On the property of Mrs. M. M. Wilson, one and one-half miles from Brevard, I excavated a mound that, owing to years of cultivation, is now only two feet high. It consists of yellow clay with a burnt strata 19 inches below the surface. No artifacts were found.

The following list indicates the result of my summer's collecting:

5 axes, different types. 9 celts, two of Iron. 2 long pestles, 17 mullers of various sizes. 3 stone cups. 1 large pitted stone. 1 lap and cup stone. 1 stone sinker. 8 gorgets and ornaments. 12 stone pipes, 1 pottery pipe and one unfinished stone pipe. 1 hoe. 1 bone bead and one bone needle. 3 shell disks. Many shell beads. Glass beads. 2 pottery vessels, and numerous pot sherds. Matting from grave with skeleton.

Red ochre and plumbago including one lump of red ore found in bowl with stone knife and shells.

Copper—drilled disks, long tubes, beads and rolled specimens.

Soapstone—one large bead, and one oval dish.

Three unclassified articles—one small figure of woman that seems to be the front of a pipe: one fish head, and one soapstone slab with notches on the sides.

Many flaked articles such as arrow and spear heads, bunts, scrapers, etc.

Notes on Wainwright's Travels

In this section we provide a brief interpretation of Wainwright's narrative, identifying correlations with known archaeological sites and discussing his references to archaeological sites that appear to have been destroyed in the years between his travels and the first systematic surveys of the region.

In "A Cache," Wainwright provides a brief, but fairly detailed description of a cache of bifaces he excavated in 1904. He writes that he "left Rival Hall, N.C. for Spier's Ferry on the Toakin river, five miles distant" and then identified the cache on a sand ridge near the river. We interpret Wainwright's location to be Speas Ferry, west of Rural Hall, on the Yadkin River, and suggest that the spurious place names here (and elsewhere) are the result of transcription errors. Wainwright would return to the Yadkin River to carry out excavations in 1913, and his description of the archaeological site at this location seems consistent with findings from more recent archaeological surveys from the Yadkin River (Woodall 1975, 1990; Woodall and Claggett 1974).

During the first weeks of May, 1913, Wainwright visits the farm of George Steelman on the Yadkin River near East Bend, North Carolina. Wainwright observes prehistoric Native American graves washing out of the levee near the river, and spends at least five days excavating these features. He describes graves containing flexed or semi-flexed individuals with fire pits or hearths nearby. Most of the graves contain shell and copper beads. Other artifacts removed from the Steelman farm graves include: two celt-like iron pieces, a stone ax or celt, a stone pipe, red ochre, animal claws, shell beads, tubular copper beads, "lumps of plumbago slightly larger than a walnut" (probably graphite or hematite), blue (presumably glass) beads, a complete bowl, and tortoise bones.

After completing excavations in the river levee on the Steelman property, Wainwright visits four archaeological sites, which he identifies with landowner names. He makes surface collections at these locations, but does not carry out excavations. The last of these sites, located on the Poindexter property at Poindexter Ferry, is in the vicinity of the Donaha site (31 YD9). Wainwright reports seeing an Indian grave in a road cut on this property.

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The site commonly known as Steelman's Bottom (or Steelman's Place) was revisited by Douglas L. Rights, who made an extensive surface collection (now housed at RLA). Although the site is not described in Rights's 1924 or 1947 works, his 1947 publication includes a 1926 photograph of the "Indian Village Site at Steelman's Place, Yadkin River" (Rights 1947:Plate 45) and an accompanying photographic plate depicting a large, reconstructed jar "found at Steelman's Place" (Rights 1947:Plate 46). There are no references to Wainwright's work in the sources examined, and it is possible that Rights was unaware of Wainwright's prior visit. Much later, Woodall (1990:8) reported that the large site at Steelman's Bottom was "badly pillaged" during the 20th century, and had been damaged by earthmoving. Wainwright's report of blue (presumably glass) beads at Steelman's Farm, along with later reports by Rights (1947:272) of trade (presumably glass) beads at or near Donnaha, are the only archaeological evidence for late-seventeenth to early-eighteenth century settlement on the upper Yadkin.

From Yadkin County, Wainwright travels west to Cullowhee, in Jackson County, arriving in June. He offers a very short description of the Cullowhee, or Rogers Mound (31JK2). This mound, located on the campus of Western Carolina University, was leveled in 1956 (Keel 1964). According to Wainwright, the mound measured approximately 100 feet in diameter and five feet high at the time of his site visit. He did not attempt to excavate the mound because it was planted in corn. Wainwright notes that the mound had been plowed down, and had been previously excavated. This is most likely a reference to the excavations by the Valentine Museum.

Wainwright's estimated dimensions for the Cullowhee Mound seem reasonable, based on observations made before and after his visit. In December of 1881, A. J. Osborne wrote to B. B. Valentine, stating that the mound at Cullowhee was "such a size mound as the one your Father and myself was on in Haywood on Plott's farm" (Osborne 1881). During a 1937 visit to the mound, Hiram Wilburn, a surveyor and historian for the National Park Service, estimated that the mound was only one foot tall. Wilburn's site photograph seems to support this claim (Figure 6).

After departing Cullowhee, Wainwright travels to Andrews, North Carolina, where he describes the Andrews Mound (31CE3). The



Figure 6. The Cullowhee Mound (31JK2), photographed by Hiram Wilburn in 1937. Courtesy of the National Park Service.

Andrews Mound was located on the east bank of the Valley River, just below the Valley River Bridge in Andrews. The mound was partially intact in 1972 when Joffre Coe nominated the mound for the National Register of Historic Places (form on file, RLA). A house, later used as an inn, was constructed on top of the mound in the first half of the nineteenth century. This construction damaged the mound but prevented it from being completely demolished. Coe suggested that the mound represented a Cherokee townhouse with a uselife dating to approximately A.D. 1600 to 1800. The mound was bulldozed by the landowner in 1975 to build a shopping center.

Wainwright estimated that the Andrews Mound measured 148.5 feet long by 107.25 feet wide by 10 feet high, but that the mound was five feet higher before it was leveled for building. This estimate seems to be supported by photographs of the mound taken during the 1960s during the Cherokee Project, on file at the Research Laboratories of Archaeology at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (Figure 7).

Wainwright then states that he excavated a mound “in front of Byson Hatrel in Andrews, N.C., on Mr. Walker’s property and to the

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Figure 7. The Andrews Mound (31CE3) and the ruins of Walker residence, photographed ca. 1971. Courtesy of The Research Laboratories of Archaeology, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

right of his residence.” It seems probable that “Byson Hatrel” is a typographical error, and Wainwright was referring to the “Bryson Hotel.” According to a 1916 Sanborn map, this building was located at the corner of Cherry Street and First Street in Andrews, approximately 0.9 miles east of the Andrews Mound. Wainwright claims the mound was five feet high and 35 feet in diameter, contained no artifacts, and was composed entirely of yellow clay. No mounds or other archaeological sites have previously been recorded in this location, and there are no accounts of a mound in this vicinity in the Valentine records or Thomas’s mound reports. (This is one of at least two supposed mounds investigated by Wainwright in which he did not find evidence of occupation; the other was located on the Wilson property near Brevard. It is not possible to determine if these were in fact mounds.)

Wainwright next visits the property of Mr. W. P. Walker, two miles west of Andrews, and reports a possible plowed-down mound near a creek. He reports that many Indian graves and artifacts, including numerous beads and arrowheads, have been encountered in the immediate vicinity of the mound. He was not able to excavate the mound because the field was planted. This may be a reference to a mound near the site of the Western Carolina Regional Airport (formerly

the Andrews-Murphy Airport), sometimes also referred to as the Bead Mound (see Browder 1980; Croy 1975:272–278; Freel 1956:35). The Andrews Airport mound has never been identified archaeologically, but according to the written accounts by Browder (1980), Croy (1975), and Freel (1956), and local oral history, the mound was excavated by Arthur Palmer in 1936, and its contents were put on display in his roadside museum (Duncan and Riggs 2003:187).

Following his work on the Walker property, Wainwright carries out an excavation on the property of S. T. Conley, two miles east of Andrews, close to the Southern railroad, on a slight rise in the floodplain of the Valley River. According to the landowner, the location was once a mound several feet high, but had been plowed down. There are no previous records of a mound in this vicinity. Current site file records indicate that the closest known site, 31CE55, was recorded during the Cherokee Project, and there was no obvious evidence of a mound at this location in the 1960s. However, Wainwright's discovery of stone slabs, an apparent shell gorget, and columella beads suggests that he may have indeed encountered the remnant of a previously-excavated Mississippian-period mound.

In closing remarks about his trip to Andrews, Wainwright reports seeing the remains of stone graves “on the hills back of the power house.” He reports that as many as 50 graves were there at one time, but suggests that by 1913 they had been looted, and the stones taken away for road repairs.

Wainwright leaves Andrews and heads east to Governor's Island, where he provides a useful description of the Kituhwa Mound and associated village (31SW1/2). He estimates that the mound measures 110 feet in diameter and six feet high, and states that an old settler remembered it being 10 feet high. The property owner, Mr. Kope Elias, told Wainwright that the mound had been excavated years before. This is a likely reference to the Valentine expedition. Wainwright reports finding pottery and hammerstones in the field near the mound. Hiram Wilburn recorded an estimated diameter of 140 feet and a height of nine feet for the mound during his visit to the site in 1937, which suggests that Wainwright's size estimate is reasonable (Figure 8).

Wainwright continues east, and ends his “summer's research” in Transylvania County, recording sites near Calvert, Pisgah, and Brevard.

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Figure 8. The Kituhwa Mound (31SW2), photographed by Hiram Wilburn in 1937. Courtesy of the National Park Service.

Wainwright's notes on these sites are quite pithy, but in the few lines he devotes to Transylvania County, he claims to identify a previously excavated mound near a bridge over the Southern Railroad outside of Brevard. He also states that he excavates a low mound remnant on the property of Mrs. M. M. Wilson, located one and a half miles from Brevard.

Only two possible mound sites, 31TV5 and 31TV6, have ever been recorded in Transylvania County. Both were recorded by Joffre Coe while he was a student at Brevard College in the 1930s. 31TV5 is a natural knoll above the Puette site (31TV1), which was later determined not to be a mound (Holden 1966). 31TV6, "the Main St. Mound," was apparently located on Main Street in Brevard, and is documented in an early-twentieth century will (Steere 2011:98), but attempts to relocate this site or find convincing archaeological evidence for its existence have proven unsuccessful (Holden 1966; Steere 2011). Other historical references to mounds near Brevard can be found in a recently published history of the Brevard Rosenwald School (Reed 2004:44, 80), and in an 1883 edition of *The Overland Monthly Magazine* (Boyle 1883:536–539). Research into these accounts is ongoing.

**Conclusion: The Significance of Wainwright's
Travels in Western North Carolina**

R. D. Wainwright's account is significant both as a primary source of archaeological and historical information and for the light it sheds on the murky early decades of archaeological research in North Carolina.

His narrative provides useful details for four known sites, Donaha (31YD9), the Cullowhee Mound (31JK2), the Andrews Mound (31CE3), and Kituhwa (31SW1/2). Wainwright offers a brief snapshot of each site in 1913, after these places had been damaged by several decades of plowing and looting, but before the Cullowhee and Andrews mounds had been completely destroyed.

The Cullowhee Mound and Andrews Mound may have been the remains of Cherokee townhouses, rebuilt in place over several generations, as was the mound at the Coweeta Creek site (31MA34) (Rodning 2002, 2010). The townhouse at Coweeta Creek had at least six construction stages, measured approximately 50 ft by 52 ft at its maximum size, and may have reached a maximum height of four feet (Rodning 2002:12–15, 2010:66–67). Rodning (2002, 2010) estimates that the townhouse was first built in the 1600s and occupied until the early 1700s.

Wainwright's size estimates suggest that the Cullowhee Mound, with a height of five feet in 1913, may have represented the remains of a townhouse similar to the one at Coweeta Creek in terms of size, scale, and use. Standing 10 to 15 feet high, the Andrews Mound may have represented a townhouse mound that was larger and occupied for a longer time than the townhouse at Coweeta Creek, or, like the Peachtree Mound, it may have been a Mississippian platform mound that was later used as the base for a townhouse by a Cherokee community.

In contrast to the Cullowhee and Andrews mounds, the mound at Kituhwa has been the focus of systematic archaeological research (Riggs and Shumate 2003). In this case, Wainwright's size estimate and description support our understanding of the Kituhwa Mound as a large townhouse mound severely truncated by plowing.

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Wainwright's descriptions of archaeological sites that may represent unrecorded mounds in Cherokee and Transylvania counties are also compelling. His narrative offers additional anecdotal evidence for a Mississippian mound or Cherokee townhouse in the vicinity of the Western Carolina Regional Airport in Cherokee County.

Wainwright's descriptions of two possible mounds near Brevard are vague, but the two sites appear to have been located in the floodplain of the French Broad River. If he encountered actual prehistoric mounds in Transylvania County, as opposed to cultural features located on a natural topographic rise, he may have been describing the remnants of Woodland period platform mounds, similar to the Biltmore Mound (31BN174) (Kimball and Shumate 2003; Kimball et al. 2010), or burial mounds, such as the mound on the Alexander farm excavated by J. W. Emmert in southern Buncombe County (Thomas 1887:75). The French Broad and Pigeon River drainages in nearby Buncombe and Haywood counties were the locus of at least two major Woodland period ceremonial sites, centered on the Biltmore Mound and the Garden Creek site (Keel 1976; Kimball et al. 2010). Woodland-period platform mounds in the Southern Appalachian rarely exceeded two meters in height, and would have been more easily plowed away and damaged than their Mississippian and Cherokee counterparts (Anderson and Mainfort 2002; Jefferies 1976, 1994; Kimball et al. 2010). Woodland-period burial mounds were frequently targeted by looters, and many were likely destroyed by the early twentieth century.

In addition to providing new details about particular archaeological sites, Wainwright's narrative serves as an important, understudied example of archaeological research in North Carolina at the turn of the twentieth century. From the 1870s into the first decades of the twentieth century, basic archaeological methodologies and professional standards were yet to be established, and avocational archaeologists like Wainwright were still able to excavate archaeological sites with impunity (Keel 2002; see also Thomas 2000:133–138). As an amateur engaging in archaeological fieldwork as a retirement pastime, Wainwright seems to have operated on the fringe of the nascent community of early twentieth-century professional anthropologists. However, the inclusion of his 1897 report on the burials at Tottenville suggests that he was considered a reliable source by Alanson Skinner and Clark Wissler of the American Museum of Natural History (Skinner 1909). Wainwright's field methods, though unacceptable by current standards, were in many ways

on par with those of John Emmert and Warren K. Moorehead of the Bureau of American Ethnology (see Thomas 1894). One can only imagine how many of Wainwright's contemporaries carried out similar expeditions with coarser methods, and without setting a word in print.

Wainwright's references to his mode of travel also merit discussion. Like the Valentine brothers and the representatives of Smithsonian and Heye Museums, Wainwright traveled to archaeological sites primarily by rail, and then presumably by foot, horse, and automobile. By 1900 the Southern Railway had stations in Winston-Salem, Asheville, Brevard, Waynesville, Bryson City, and Murphy, and by 1910, three years prior to Wainwright's trip to western North Carolina, there were additional stations in Ela, Cherokee, and Andrews (Lewis 2007).

Given the shortage of flat terrain and easily navigable passes in western North Carolina, it comes as no surprise that late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century rail lines passed very close to (and in some cases, through) some of the largest and most significant archaeological sites in the region. Major mound and village sites located within three miles of the Western North Carolina Railroad or the Southern Railway include the Biltmore Mound, the Garden Creek sites, the Jasper Allen Mound, Kituhwa Mound and village, and the Andrews Mound. The Donnaha site is also located within one mile of the railroad. The proximity of these sites to the railroad helps explain why an amateur archaeologist from Roanoke, Virginia would be aware of an archaeological site with exposed graves along the Yadkin River, and how he could easily locate sites like the Kituhwa and Andrews mounds. In addition to spreading through print media, news of these sites would have traveled quickly by word of mouth along the rail lines. In some cases, ground-disturbing rail construction would have exposed archaeological features and artifacts, catching the attention of artifact collectors.

Wainwright's account is a vivid reminder of how many archaeological sites in the river valleys of the western piedmont and mountains of North Carolina have been destroyed by development, erosion, and digging. Moreover, Wainwright's narrative reminds us that many of these sites had already been destroyed by the early twentieth century, decades before the first attempts at systematic regional archaeological surveys. As we attempt to reconstruct the long-term settlement history of western North Carolina, we must keep this site destruction in mind. In many cases, we may be missing key nodes in

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past settlement systems (e.g., Cherokee townhouses, Mississippian-period platform mounds, and Woodland-period platform and burial mounds), and we must make some effort to address these missing data points in our analyses.

In closing, we would also suggest that our “discovery” of Wainwright’s long-ignored narrative is an important reminder that more and more examples of early twentieth-century gray literature are now readily accessible as searchable, online electronic documents. Additional data may be present in newspapers (now increasingly searchable online), correspondence, and other sources. These materials are helping to generate more robust histories of early archaeologists and the development of the discipline (see for example Christenson 2011; HAIG 2011–2012).

While archaeological accounts written by amateur archaeologists and collectors prior to the 1930s should certainly be read with caution, they can also provide useful archaeological and historical information. In this case, Wainwright’s accounts offer new insight into several very important but poorly understood archaeological sites in western North Carolina. We and others are continuing to research Wainwright’s work in North Carolina and adjacent states, and are attempting to locate his artifact collection. We encourage other researchers in North Carolina and farther afield to delve more deeply into the work of Wainwright and other early archaeologists and collectors whose records, while imperfect, may contain archaeological and historical information that has yet to be examined.

Notes

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