

PH0690309

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JAN 18 1978
DATE ENTERED JAN 18 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Coker Spring

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Coker Spring Road

CITY, TOWN
Aiken

STATE
South Carolina

--- VICINITY OF
3

CODE
045

COUNTY
Aiken

CODE
003

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<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
Aiken County Historical Commission

STREET & NUMBER
Chesterfield Street S. c/o Aiken County Museum

CITY, TOWN
Aiken

STATE
South Carolina

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Aiken County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER
Park Avenue

CITY, TOWN
Aiken

STATE
South Carolina

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Inventory of Historic Places in South Carolina

DATE
1973

--- FEDERAL STATE --- COUNTY --- LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS South Carolina Department of Archives and History

CITY, TOWN
Columbia

STATE
South Carolina

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Coker Spring is a fresh water spring located on Coker Spring Road in Aiken, South Carolina. Archeological remains found near this property suggest that this was probably a water supply for prehistoric Indians. The spring later served as the source of drinking water for the early settlers of Aiken (ca. 1830-1890).

The spring is covered by a springhouse which is constructed of brick, covered with stucco. The front facade features a pedimented entrance way with a wide entablature. Brick (covered with stucco) retaining walls extend along the left and right sides of the springhouse. The springhouse and retaining walls were restored in 1972.

The restoration was based on old photographs such as the one found in Gasper L. Toole's "Ninety Years in Aiken County," and information discovered through the archeological digs of Walter J. Joseph, Jr., supervisor of Works Technical at the Savannah River Plant, and Dr. George R. Caskey, Jr. Their excavations revealed that the springhouse was constructed sometime early in the 1800s and that the Greek-style facade was a later addition of the 1850s.

Surroundings: Coker Spring is located on a hillside surrounded by oaks and pines. There are tentative plans to develop the surrounding area into a park. The School of Landscape Design at Clemson University has prepared a sketch for a bog-garden and a garden for the blind. There are also possibilities of classes in nature study, with the County Regional Library being located three blocks away.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The first recorded owner of Coker Spring was Ephraim Franklin who obtained the spring as part of a 286 acre land grant in 1787. Apparently the spring then changed hands several times. In 1834 it appears in the records of a survey for Joseph Cosnam. A tract of 100 acres is described as "situate (sic) in Barnwell and Edgefield Districts ... near the Coker Spring" which was on the land of William W. Williams.¹ The spring gained prominence as a regular stop on the stagecoach route from Abbeville to Charleston, (as shown by Mitchell's Pocket Map of South Carolina, Philadelphia, 1843). It also became the major source of drinking water for the town of Aiken which had been chartered in 1835.

On October 4, 1842, Coker Spring Tract of ca. 1000 acres was purchased by William Peronneau Finley at a public sale after the sheriff had seized the property to satisfy a judgment against William W. Williams. In 1844 Finley then deeded a plot of ca. 207 square feet to the town of Aiken saying that "free use of the said Spring to be had and enjoyed by the citizens and inhabitants of Aiken and the public generally for themselves, their servants, cattle and horses, forever."²

As public property the spring was used by house servants for family laundry, but this use soon diminished as the residents began to follow Mr. Finley's advice. The spring became a popular spot in the town. A pavilion was built on the hill, and there were band concerts, dances, and picnics. In 1871 Paul Hamilton Hayne wrote in Appleton's Journal:

But there are pleasanter sights awaiting us, if we choose to prolong our ramble. The first is a view of the Coker Spring (named after the original owner of the adjacent lands) which is only fifteen minutes' walk from the Railroad Avenue, along a broad, well-travelled road. It bubbles up in the green lap of a delightful, picturesque valley and is surrounded by a neat enclosure, to protect it from wandering cattle.³

(continued)

1. Barnwell County Deeds (South Carolina Department of Archives and History) Deed Book T, p. 382.

2. Barnwell County Deeds (South Carolina Department of Archives and History) Deed Book BB, p. 126.

3. Paul Hamilton Hayne, "History of Aiken" in Appleton's Journal, December 1871, p. 625.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Braddy, Edgar N. A Rich Heritage of Stories on Happenings in Aiken County, South Carolina 1835-1935 (Aiken, South Carolina: 1955).

Hayne, Paul Hamilton. "History of Aiken." Appleton's Journal (December 2, 1871) 624.

Toole, Gasper L. Ninety Years in Aiken County (1956), p. 112. (continued)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY One acre

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	7
---	---

4	3	2	5	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	7	1	2	9	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B

--	--	--	--	--	--

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ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Katharine McNulty (Mrs. Lonnie Garvin)

ORGANIZATION

South Carolina Department of Archives and History

DATE

September 3, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

1430 Senate Street

TELEPHONE

(803) 758-5816

CITY OR TOWN

Columbia

STATE

South Carolina

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

Charles E. Lee

TITLE Charles E. Lee
State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 12-29-75

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Henry Buntz
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ATTEST: *Charles E. Lee*
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 1/18/78
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
DATE 1-17-78

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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NOV 22 1977

DATE ENTERED

JAN 18 1978

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE One

(Information taken from unpublished manuscript by J. Walter Joseph, Jr. titled Excavation of Coker Spring.)

Description of archeological research conducted at the site:

Enclosed photographs (5 and 6) provide the best visual documentation available for the excavations at Coker Spring.

The excavations occupied fourteen Saturdays between January 8 and May 27, 1972. They were conducted entirely by volunteers under the direction of amateur archeologist J. Walter Joseph, Jr. of Aiken, South Carolina.

The main objective of the project was to define the springhouse structure and its adjacent features. A 12' by 27' unit varying in depth from 7" to 29" was opened in front of the springhouse to expose brick paving and the original ground surface. Additionally, an area approximately 27' long between the house and the rock retaining wall for the roadbed down the hill behind it was excavated to a depth of 12" to 24". This was not carried any deeper for fear of undermining the single course of stones comprising the retaining wall. Finally, an exploratory trench 3' wide and 24.5' long was extended from the unit in front of the springhouse, north to the edge of the Coker Spring Road.

The springhouse structure was found to have a roughly rectangular front face 6' 6" high (not including the collapsed facade peak) by 10' 4" wide, with a sloping rear 4' 5" deep. An opening 22" high by 24.5" wide provided access to the interior. Construction was of brick, covered with a sandy beige stucco.

In order to restrict flow from the spring, concrete had been poured into the springhouse and a concrete pad 41" by 46" and 13" deep built up in front of it to the bottom of the opening. This pad had been poured over a course of bricks which rested on a layer of dirt covering the original brick paving. Apparently, the pad was built after the paving had been buried by dirt washing down the hill, by people unaware that the paving existed.

The retaining walls were 8' long, curved and nearly symmetrical. These, too, were stuccoed brick. On the east retaining wall, the stucco ended about 3.5" above the paving, indicating that it had been applied after the paving had become covered by dirt. The pattern on the brick paving by the west retaining wall showed that this wall had been relocated several inches after its initial construction.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE TWO

The brick paving between the retaining walls was penetrated by two 4" square holes, one on each side of the springhouse as shown in the enclosed diagram. At one time, they may have supported a roof in front of the spring.

Artifacts were recovered by hand since wet ground from the still active spring made screening impossible. A list is enclosed. The excavated material was segregated by depth, but artifacts were found to be evenly distributed throughout.

Description of restoration work:

Restoration work was conducted by the Aiken County Historical Commission. The original brickwork was cleaned and the pediment of the facade was replaced before the entire structure was restuccoed. The original brick paving and outfall were left exposed. The concrete pad in front of the springhouse was not removed because it was feared that the area might flood. The restored springhouse was surrounded by a low retaining wall to prevent the brick paving from being covered with dirt that continues to erode down the hillside.

Photographs used in the restoration research are enclosed (7-9). The earliest dated picture of the spring is a postcard of "Cocoa Springs, Aiken, S.C.", copyrighted in 1904 by the Rotograph Co. (number 7).

Because the springhouse is shown in such good condition, the postcard would seem to predate photographs numbered 8 and 9. However, it shows a rustic fence inconsistent with the picket fence in the other photographs; it shows the retaining walls stuccoed rather than with lower portions of bare brick; and it omits the steps behind the structure. The treatment of the retaining walls seems to indicate that the postcard was based on a later picture than the enclosed Burdick o Happ (Nos. 5 and 6) photographs. These photographs probably date from the latter 1800s.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE one

Coker Spring apparently maintained its prominence through the 19th Century. Eventually, however, it fell into ruin.

Archeological: Archeological excavations have been conducted at Coker Spring by Dr. George R. Caskey, Jr. and Walter J. Joseph, Jr., Supervisor of Works Technical at the Savannah River Plant. Their findings include Indian pottery shards dating from the birth of Christ to 1000 A.D.; a broken projectile point dating ca. 6500 B.C.; and miscellaneous items from the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. These artifacts indicate the spring was probably a water supply for prehistoric Indians, just as it was for later historic occupants of the area. The prehistoric artifacts suggest frequent Indian visits, but no specific Indian village has been found in association with the site.

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JAN 18 1978

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE two

Walter, Joseph J. "Excavations at Coker Spring." South Carolina Antiquities Vol. IV, No. 2 (Columbia, South Carolina: Archeological Society of South Carolina, Winter 1972), pp. 19-22.

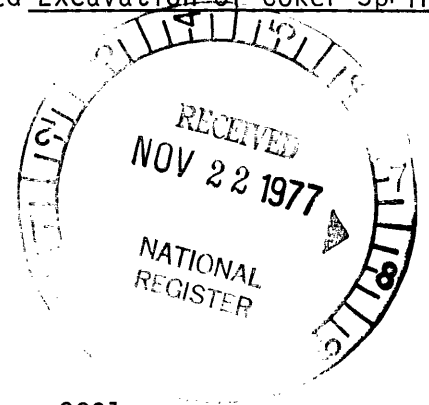
Aiken Tribune. May 8, 1875, p. 3.

Barnwell County Records (South Carolina Department of Archives and History) Deed Book T, pp. 380-382; Deed Book X, pp. 377-379; Deed Book AA, pp. 200-201; Deed Book BB, pp. 124-126.

Written comments by Dr. Robert L. Stephenson, Director Institute of Archeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina. June 1974.

Table I

COKER SPRING ARTIFACT SUMMARY (a)



Glass

Unidentified Bottle Sherds	2091	
Soft Drink Bottle Sherds	441	
Alcoholic Beverage Bottle Sherds	140	
Mason Jar Sherds	51	
Mirror Sherds	41	
Drinking Glass Sherds	14	
Marbles	4	
Bottle Stoppers	3	
Beads	2	
Total Glass		2787

Ceramic

Indian Pottery Sherds		
Complicated Stamped	3	
Linear Check Stamped	2	
Cord Marked	1	
Earthenware Sherds	98	
Porcelain Sherds	13	
"Blue Danube"	77	
Stoneware Sherds	40	
Stoneware Bottle Sherds	5	
Tile Sherds	9	
Doll Hand	1	
Electrical Insulator	1	
Total Ceramic		250

Metal

Miscellaneous Fragments	560	
Shotgun Shells, Bullets	14	
Nails	9	
Lids, Can Tops	5	
Thumb Tacks	4	
Bottle Tops	3	
Horseshoes	2	
Light Bulb Bases	2	
Mechanical Pencil Fragments	2	
Electrical Wire	1	
Faucet Handle	1	
Spring	1	
Knife	1	
Key	1	
Toy Rockinghorse	1	
Total Metal		607

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Table I
(cont'd)

Stone			
Chips	14		
Projectile Point	1		
Total Stone		15	
Miscellaneous			
Bone Fragments	8		
Buttons	6		
Plastic Pieces	5		
Phonograph Record Fragments	4		
Knobs	2		
Rubber Jar Seal	1		
Hypodermic Syringe	1		
Eraser Tip	1		
Pencil Lead	1		
Ping Pong Ball	1		
Smoking Pipe Stem	1		
Collar Button	1		
Comb	1		
Total Miscellaneous		33	
Total Artifacts			3692 (a)

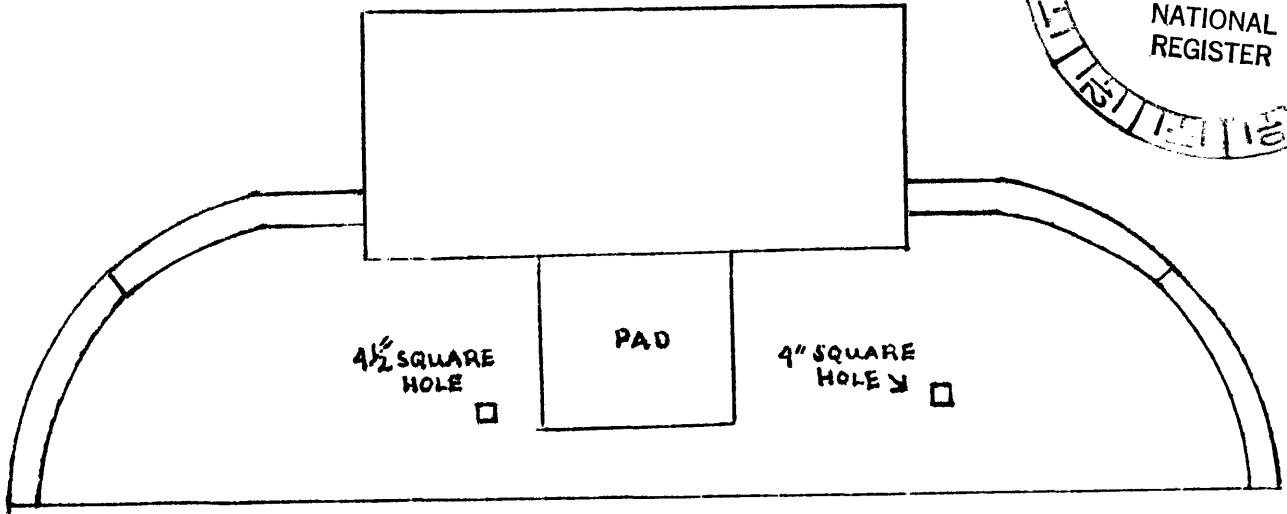
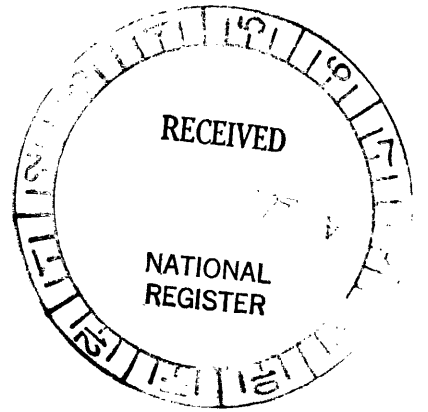
Note:

(a) Brick, mortar, shell, and wood excluded

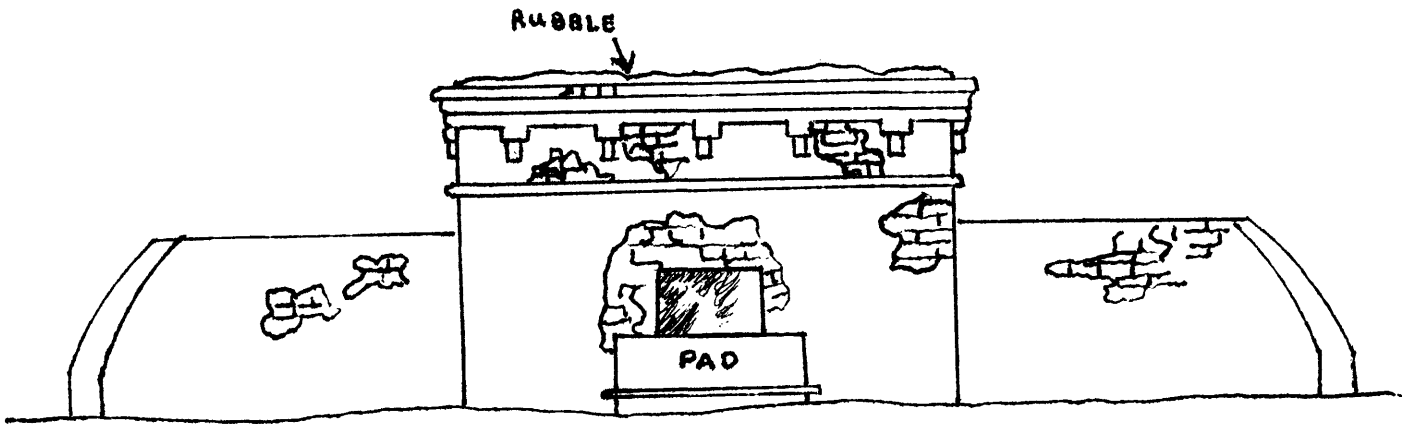


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COKER SPRING Aiken County, S.C.



TOP VIEW



FRONT VIEW

Springhouse structure after Excavation
(taken from unpublished manuscript by J. Walter Joseph, Jr.
titled Excavation of Coker Spring)

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