

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 Minim Island Shell Midden (38GE46)

and/or common Locally known as the "Indian Mound"

2. Location

street & number [REDACTED] not for publication

city, town Georgetown vicinity of _____ congressional district _____

state South Carolina code 045 county Georgetown code 043

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>N/A</u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: <u>not in use</u>

4. Owner of Property



5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Clerk of Courts, Georgetown County

street & number P.O. Box 1270

city, town Georgetown state South Caro. 29440

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title 38GE46 Minim Island Shell Midden has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date recorded June 13, 1974 federal state county local

depository for survey records Institute of Archeology and Anthropology, Univ. of S.C.

city, town Columbia state South Caro. 29208

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

General Site Description

The Minim Island site consists of prehistoric midden deposits of shellfish remains, floral and faunal remains, and interred human burials. Cultural materials in the form of ceramics and lithics occur throughout the midden. The shellfish remains are predominately oyster (*Crassostrea virginica*); however, clam (*Mercenaria* sp.), and whelk (*Busycon* sp.) exist in smaller numbers. These deposits are concentrated in a mound-like accretion extending for a distance of

_____ the partially exposed shell midden averages about 3 feet in depth in the center while the peripheral

_____ severe attrition generated from the waves of passing watercraft, and the northwestern edge has been disturbed with the construction of early historic rice dikes. Although portions of the midden have been disturbed along the periphery, the interior portion is intact and undisturbed. The basal portion of the site appears to lie somewhat below present-day sea level and the high marsh surface has encroached upon the edges of the midden. These conditions suggest a significant environmental change since the initial deposition of the site. Presently it is difficult to establish the original boundaries of the site because of the environmental changes and the subsequent erosion. However, the present dimensions which are set forth in Section 10 of this form describe the site as it exists.

Physical Environment

The site is situated on the fringe of the Lower Coastal Plain, bordering on the salt marsh/tidal river zone between the mainland shoreline and the barrier islands of the Santee Delta. This specific area is influenced by tidal fluctuations and it is characteristic of marsh environments. The natural vegetation of the site is a mixed community of live oak and cedar that dominate the canopy and understory. The peripheral edges of this marsh hummock support wax myrtle and occasional red cedar, both of which mix with needlerush, glasswort, and salt meadow cordgrass. The surrounding area is predominately salt meadow cordgrass. The local terrain beyond the site is represented by the occasional appearance of other hummocks and extensive meadows of cordgrass. This marsh environment, which continues throughout the coastal zone, terminates with the contiguous upland environment composed of pines and various species of oaks.

The climate of the area is mild and temperate. Coastal conditions are somewhat modified from the inland climate, with higher minimum and lower maximum temperatures during the winter months. Rainfall averages about 50 inches annually, with heaviest rains in the summer.

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 checked="" 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/ humanitarian
<input 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 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 *N/A* Builder/Architect *N/A*

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

see Continuation Sheet, Item #8, Page 3

9. Major Bibliographical References

see Continuation Sheet, Pages 4 and 5

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property [redacted]

Quadrangle name [redacted]

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	[] [] [] [] [] [] [] []	[] [] [] [] [] [] [] []	[] [] [] [] [] [] [] []
E	[] [] [] [] [] [] [] []	[] [] [] [] [] [] [] []	[] [] [] [] [] [] [] []
G	[] [] [] [] [] [] [] []	[] [] [] [] [] [] [] []	[] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

B	[] [] [] [] [] [] [] []	[] [] [] [] [] [] [] []	[] [] [] [] [] [] [] []
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	[] [] [] [] [] [] [] []	[] [] [] [] [] [] [] []	[] [] [] [] [] [] [] []
F	[] [] [] [] [] [] [] []	[] [] [] [] [] [] [] []	[] [] [] [] [] [] [] []
H	[] [] [] [] [] [] [] []	[] [] [] [] [] [] [] []	[] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

Verbal boundary description and justification [redacted]

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

grass.

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title James L. Michie, Archeologist

organization Institute of Arch. and Anthro. date May 5, 1981

street & number University of South Carolina telephone 777-8170 777-7464

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

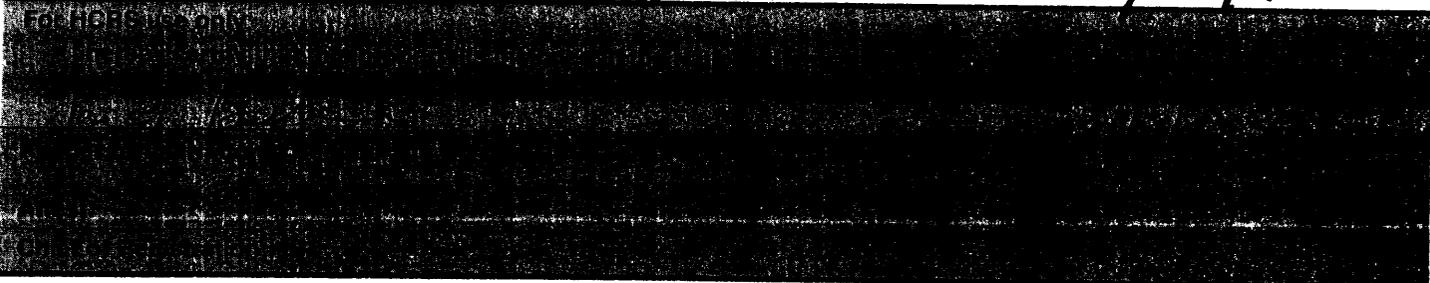
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Charles E. Lee

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 6/29/82



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Previous Archeological Investigations

The Minim Island site was first discovered in the winter of 1969, by several relic collectors who were conducting a personal investigation of archeological resources in the Santee Delta. The site was brought to the attention of the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina, and was later investigated by Institute employees. Both of these inquiries yielded cultural materials suggestive of temporal variability, in addition to various food remains and portions of human burials. At a later time the midden was visited by Dr. Donald R. Sutherland, Staff Archeologist with the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, at the request of the landowner, Mr. Graham Reeves. During the visit Dr. Sutherland made surface collections from the eroded beach and inspected cultural materials and soil that had been dredged from the edge of the site. Shortly, thereafter, Dr. Robert L. Stephenson, the Institute Director and State Archeologist, arranged for further investigations with Sutherland and the landowner. With this later visit the site was further documented and photographed, and specific site attributes were recorded.

As a parallel with the latter visit, Soils Systems, Inc. of Marietta, Georgia, had contracted with the Army Corps of Engineers to survey various portions of the Intracoastal Waterway. As a partial fulfillment of the contract, the survey would provide further documentation of the midden deposits. With this additional evaluation, and those reflected in other investigations, the site was deemed to have exceptional potential for yielding information germane to the understanding of prehistoric coastal cultures.

Cultural Components

The diagnostic ceramics from the Institute's collection indicate a wide range of human occupation that spans approximately 3,500 years. Habitation apparently began with the introduction of Late Archaic/Early Woodland ceramics and terminated with Late Woodland cultural materials.

The early occupation is represented by lesser amounts of Thom's Creek pottery. This specific pottery type is associated with the terminal phase of the Late Archaic and the beginning of the Early Woodland about 2,500 years B.C., and for the most part is distributed throughout most of the Coastal Plain and coastal salt marshes. In the coastal zone the pottery occurs with various types of shell middens which include the small amorphous middens and the large, impressive shell rings (Hemmings 1969, 1970; Michie 1976, 1979; Trinkley 1980). These various sites occur with or without a diverse assemblage of material culture, which suggests a multi-faceted cultural system.

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The remainder of the Woodland Period (1200 B.C. through A.D. 1000) is represented by Refuge ceramics (1200 B.C.-800 B.C.), Deptford (800 B.C.-A.D. 500), and Wilmington (A.D. 600-1000). In the Southeast the Woodland reflects a general continuation of earlier subsistence patterns, and the possibility of horticulture during the later phases (Griffin 1967).

The Refuge ceramics may have developed from the earlier Thom's Creek technology, and based on a limited amount of excavated data, subsistence and settlement patterns are quite similar. Both Waring (Williams 1968) and Lepionka (1980) have reported similar food remains, and their sites are situated in marshy environments inland from the coast. DePratter (1977) has recently demonstrated the presence of Refuge ceramics buried deeply below present-day marsh deposits at a considerable distance from the mainland in coastal Georgia, indicating a broader settlement pattern than previously recognized. The Refuge Period also expresses considerable material culture diversification characterized in the earlier ceramic period. Refuge seems to be an extension of the Thom's Creek culture.

The cultural systems associated with Deptford appear as an extension of Refuge and Thom's Creek, in terms of coastal adaptations. Although the ceramic technologies are different, coastal procurement systems are basically the same. Diversification in the types of material culture also remain similar. Specific cultural materials would include modified pieces of bone and antler, flaked projectile points, various stone tools and food processing items, and other tools too numerous to mention (see Milanich 1973).

With the appearance of the Wilmington ceramics, the cultural system changed significantly and associated shell middens suggest only a limited number of activities. Such sites have been interpreted as shucking stations or habitations by transient people (Michie 1980; Trinkley 1981). The small number of Cape Fear ceramics from the site also represent a similar cultural system involving limited activity at shell middens.

Thus, the cultural components at the Minim Island site have demonstrated a long range of human occupation extending throughout the Woodland Period. With this occupational spread on a single midden, the site has a potential for answering questions regarding coastal occupation through several millennia. The site is, therefore, significant in terms of its potential contribution to knowledge about prehistory.

There is also some indication of an intrusive historic component. The landowner has reported that were indications, some years ago, of human burials in pine boxes having eroded out of the site. There is also a story of a 19th century shipwreck nearby, the casualties from which were buried on this site. However, these are matters that are yet to be verified archeologically.

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Significance

The Minim Island shell midden is significant on at least three levels: 1) its potential for addressing specific research problems is substantial, 2) it is partially inundated by sea level and, hence, it can contribute to the understanding of past sea level fluctuations, and 3) it is the only large Deptford shell midden known to exist on the South Carolina coast. The midden is eroding at an alarming rate because of its location adjacent to the Intracoastal Waterway.

Various areas of research may be investigated in this midden and the recovery of specific data can contribute significantly to the understanding of coastal populations. These avenues of research are listed below:

1) Culture History

Presently, the ceramic chronologies are poorly known in South Carolina. The Minim Island midden, with its sequence of pottery types, can add greatly to our understanding of culture change and time/space relationships along the coast.

2) Subsistence:

Changes in subsistence strategies through time can be studied through analysis of floral and faunal remains. Both terrestrial and marine species can contribute significantly to understanding patterns of sustenance and seasonal occupation.

3) Cultural Ecology:

Changes in adaptation through time can be studied, given the correlation of stratified deposits and temporal indicators with specific floral and faunal remains. Through such studies archeologists can understand the interaction between human populations and the environment.

4) Mortuary

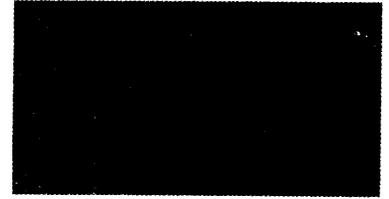
The presence of human bones suggests prehistoric interments within the shell midden. This is unusual for the majority of South Carolina shell middens, especially those associated with the Woodland Period. The potential for discovering additional burials is excellent, and such discovery can add greatly to our understanding of mortuary practices among prehistoric societies.

5) Paleopathologies:

In addition to mortuary practices, the skeletal material can provide information regarding health conditions of the prehistoric inhabitants. Presently, there is little information available concerning disease patterns in the coastal areas.

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6) Bone and Antler Technologies:

During the Late Archaic/Early Woodland Periods, and successive stages of cultural development, prehistoric inhabitants made extensive use of bone and antler for specific tools. Such cultural materials within the midden can generate considerable information in regard to the methods of manufacture and utilization of these various tools.

7) Lithic Technology:

The lithic materials (bifaces) also have a potential for addressing questions of form and function. Beyond the value of temporal indicators, flaked bifaces and chipping debris can provide valuable insights into activities that were being performed at the site. Wear pattern studies can determine functions while formal studies can yield information regarding sequences of resharpening.

The Minim Island site, therefore, demonstrates many various avenues of significance. It is an extremely important site, and virtually one of a kind along the coast of South Carolina. Through proper management it can contribute to the further understanding of human processes in coastal areas.

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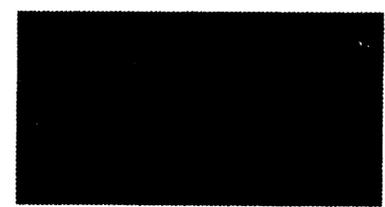
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