

The Stamp of the Swift Creek Culture: An Analysis of Middle Woodland Pottery at the Traversant Site in Georgia

The Woodland period (1000 BC – AD 1000) in the Southeastern US is characterized by sedentary horticulturalists living in villages located along major rivers. The Middle Woodland subperiod (300 BC – AD 600) is further defined by the appearance of distinctively decorated pottery. Specifically, Swift Creek pottery (ca. AD 100- 600/850) is known for its elaborate curvilinear designs that were stamped onto pre-fired vessels using carved wooden paddles. The pottery is said to be unique in that no two designs were exactly the same. It has been argued that this pottery was traded exclusively among elites at larger Swift Creek sites as Kolomoki (AD 350-750) located in south Georgia. The purpose of this project is to challenge this model of exclusive trade by identifying Swift Creek pottery at smaller sites. The Traversant site, a small village situated on Flat Shoal Creek in Pine Mountain, Georgia, with a distance of 198 kms (123 mi) from Kolomoki, has shown to hold an abundance of Middle Woodland sherds. But, has Traversant produced any Swift Creek pottery? By using Snowvision, an advanced software program developed specifically for pattern matching ceramic artifacts from Swift Creek sites, it becomes evident that this pottery type existed at Traversant, albeit in small quantities. Its presence is important for many reasons but the main one being it revolves around the nature and extent of the sociopolitical and economic relationships that existed between large and small sites that may have been trading and exchanging Swift Creek pottery.

KEYWORDS: *Swift Creek, Middle Woodland, Snowvision, Traversant, Kolomoki, Curvilinear*