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People of the Shoals: Stallings Culture of the Savannah River Valley (Native Peoples, Cultures, and Places of the Southeastern United States)

Kenneth E. Sassaman

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Even for ancient hunter-gatherers, everyday life included adventure, personal relationships, and economic hardship. Interpreting and humanizing the experience of one group of pre-Columbian people, Kenneth Sassaman describes the mysterious rise and fall of the Stallings Culture and the research that brought its story to light.
Known best for their innovations in making pottery, these prehistoric foragers occupied the middle Savannah River valley of Georgia and South Carolina some 4,000 years ago. Sassaman offers several controversial theories about the Stallings people, arguing that they arose from interactions between two distinctive ethnic groups, organized themselves around clusters of related women, not men, established permanent villages like their counterparts on the coast, and abandoned the middle Savannah River valley when the social costs of traditional living became intolerable. Basing this work on 12 years of field research, he presents fascinating new findings about the Stallings way of life, including details about ritual, marriage alliances, community organization, and food economy.
Without violating the strictures of scientific practice, Sassaman tells this story in a style that engages the imagination and pushes the limits of archaeological interpretation in novel directions. Written for the general reader as well as the professional, the book relates lessons from the past to present-day issues and shows how knowledge about the ancient past is constructed within the context of modern experiences.

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