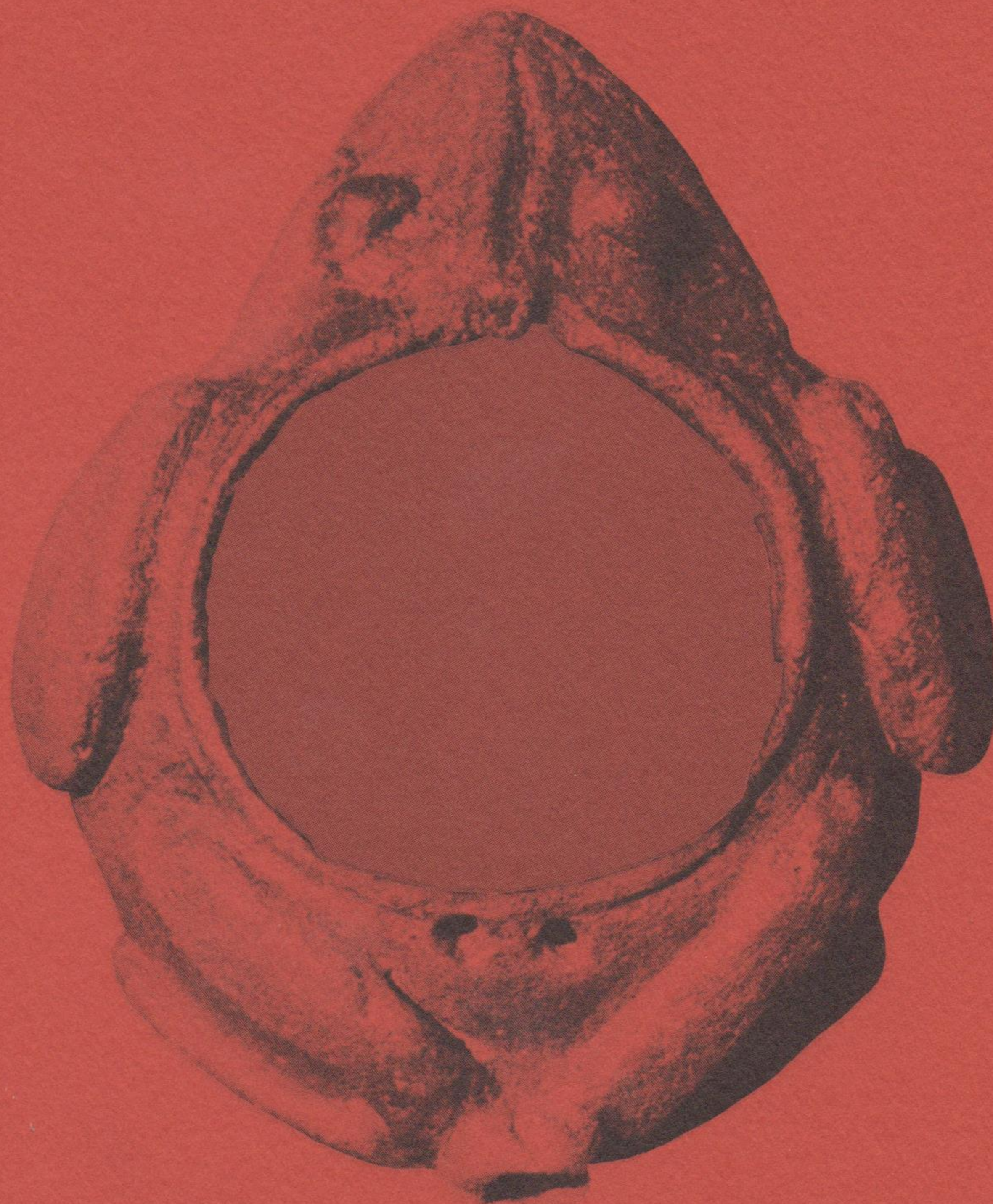


Archaeological Report No. 6

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS
IN MISSISSIPPI
1969-1977**

by
John M. Connaway



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

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with contributions by

Samuel O. McGahey
Samuel O. Brookes
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MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY
Jackson, Mississippi

1981

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Introduction

A major problem in portions of Mississippi and one of the primary reasons for the creation of the Mississippi Archaeological Survey is that of site destruction. Many thousands of village and camp sites, as well as mounds of various types, have been destroyed over the years by such agricultural practices as land-leveling, chisel plowing, and subsoiling, along with highway or road construction, industrial and housing development, land clearing, and other forms of land alteration. The Survey was set up in 1968 under the Department of Archives and History as a method of recording and investigating the cultural contexts of remaining prehistoric Indian habitation and ceremonial sites before the processes of modern settlement and subsistence activities wipe them from the face of the earth.

Since the inception of the Survey, Department of Archives and History archaeologists have recorded hundreds of sites throughout the state, have completed a large number of site surveys in specified areas where Federally funded development projects were planned, and have tested or excavated several sites which were either partially destroyed or to be destroyed. Much of this work has been carried out in conjunction with the archaeological programs of the National Park Service, the National Register, and the Soil Conservation Service.

The present publication is an updated sequel to the original Preliminary Report by Connaway and McGahey (1970). Herein are included brief summaries of salvage work done by the Department's archaeological program since 1969 in an attempt to acquaint the public with some of the results of this work. Without the assistance of amateur archaeologists and collectors and the cooperation of landowners, most of these projects could not have been accomplished, and our gratitude to specific individuals is extended at appropriate points in the report.

Education of the general public with regard to properly conducted archaeological research is an invaluable asset to the Department's program. Reporting of site destruction by interested laymen has resulted in some very important investigations of prehistoric Indian culture throughout the state, as is evident in this entire report, and continued cooperation from the public is vital.

It is hoped that this will be an informative, educational, interesting publication, and above all, a stimulus for the reporting of archaeological sites by the general public. With this in mind, addresses where Department archaeologists may be contacted are given below.

Mississippi Department of Archives and History
Division of Historic Preservation
Box 571, Jackson, Mississippi, 39205
601-354-7326

Mississippi Department of Archives and History
Archaeological Survey
Box 36, Clarksdale, Mississippi 38614
601-624-2550

Sites Examined
by
Mississippi Department of Archives and History
1969-1977

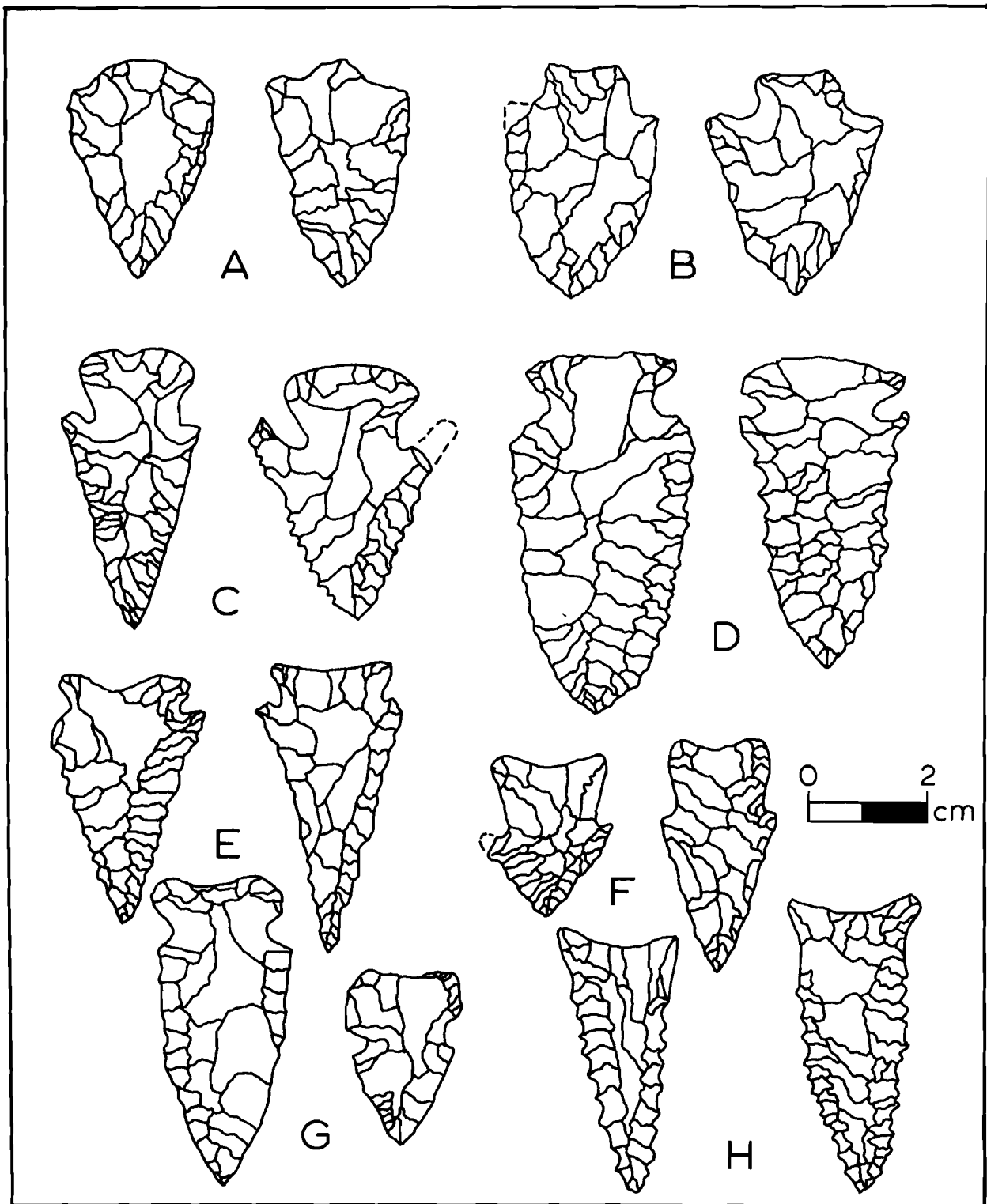


Figure 1. Hester Site: projectile point types. A: Morrow Mountain-Eva II; B: Beachum; C: Lost Lake; D: Pine Tree; E: Decatur; F: Jude; G: Big Sandy; H: Dalton.

Hester Site (22-Mo-569)
(Samuel O. Brookes)

In December of 1973 an early site was reported near Amory, Mississippi. Two collectors had dug a large area and recovered artifacts from the earliest cultures known in the state. Archaeologists from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History visited the site and examined the two men's collections. The following summer funds were secured with the help of a grant from the Tombigbee River Valley Water Management District, and professional excavation was begun by the Department. The project was supervised by Sam Brookes and directed by Sam McGahey, and was first reported on by them in Mississippi Archaeology (1974).

Excavation was oriented toward testing both the depth and the north-south extent of the site. This involved digging a series of test squares in the form of a long profile trench. Results showed that some portions of the site contained cultural deposits (midden) over four feet deep. Of major importance is the fact that much of the site was undisturbed; that is, the remains of older cultures were covered with soil before later groups of people lived on the same area. This deposit provides us with a picture of changing lifestyles over a period of about 6,000 years.

Projectile points, which change in style through time, are the easiest artifacts to use in separating different early cultural periods. Several styles of such points found at Hester are shown in Figure 1. The earliest points, Dalton (H), are found at the bottom of the page. As time passed, the bases were notched to provide better hafting of the point to the spear shaft. After the end of the Early Archaic Period the fine workmanship found on many points ceased. Around 5500 B.C. the cruder Beachum points (Figure 1, B) came into use, and the last occupation at Hester was by people using the Eva-Morrow Mountain style spearpoint (Figure 1, A). Though all of these points are small, they predate the invention of the bow and arrow and served mostly as darts used with the atlatl or spear-thrower.

Dates for these points are not confirmed as yet by radiocarbon dating techniques, but are thought to be approximately as follows:

Dalton	9000 - 8500 B.C.
Big Sandy	8500 - 8000 B.C.
Jude	8000 - 7500 B.C.
Decatur	7500 - 7000 B.C.
Pine Tree	7000 - 6500 B.C.
Lost Lake	6500 - 6000 B.C.
Beachum	5500 - 5000 B.C.
Eva-Morrow Mountain	5000 - 4500 B.C.

The people who lived at the Hester Site were hunters and gatherers. Agriculture had not been introduced to the eastern United States. Materials from the site are on display in the Amory Regional Museum. The report of this first season of investigation is available (Brookes 1980). A second season on the Hester Site was completed in 1978 and will be reported in the near future by Brookes.

Denton Site (22-Qu-522)

Since the publication of the first popular report in 1970 (Connaway and McGahey), significant data has been obtained from this site which changes the picture presented earlier. Radiocarbon dates of 3280 B.C. \pm 125 (UGa-212) and 3125 B.C. \pm 130 (UGa-284) have been obtained from the University of Georgia, setting the age of the site back well beyond what was previously suspected. These dates are the result of tests run on small fragments of charcoal collected throughout several feet of midden. Although there are a few artifact types at the site indicative of a Poverty Point Period occupation, the vast majority blend in quite well with a Middle Archaic settlement. For instance, there are over 155 different items associated with the lapidary industry, including many stone beads and bead preforms. Some of the bead types are usually found in Poverty Point contexts, but the ones from Denton now appear to have been made earlier.

A more thorough excavation and analysis of the site is needed before positive statements can be made about subsistence and social patterns. It appears that the site was a small, multi-family settlement occupied over a long period of time, possibly at seasonal intervals. Its situation on the bank of an old Mississippi River channel indicates the inclusion of fishing and water-oriented food gathering in the subsistence habits of the people. However, very little organic material was recovered from the midden to substantiate this or any other types of subsistence patterns. Hunting is indicated by a variety of projectile points and other artifacts, while plant food processing is suggested by the presence of nutstones and grinding stones.

The presence of a relatively large number of zoomorphic effigy beads indicates a well defined social, religious, or political organization. These artifacts could well represent a high degree of shamanistic control in the community or could have some connection with totemism in the social organization. Whatever the case, these artifacts must have had great significance, considering the amount of time and patience it took to create them. Many speculations can thus be made regarding their function.

A thorough examination of the possibilities regarding the Denton lapidary industry and an analysis of the various other types of artifacts found there have been published as a technical report by the Department of Archives and History (Connaway 1977).



Plate 1. Longstreet Site: excavation showing strata profiles.

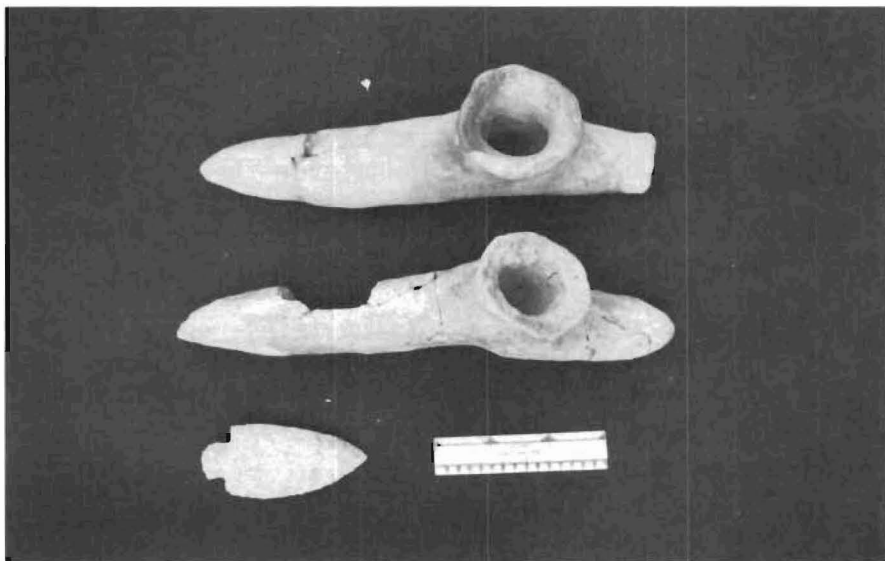


Plate 2. Longstreet Site: clay pipes, projectile point.

Longstreet Site (22-Qu-523)

The Longstreet site was a Middle to Late Archaic Period settlement in Quitman County, Mississippi. It is situated approximately 400 yards north of the present course of Opossum Bayou and covers about four acres. A major portion of the site consisted of a large hill measuring approximately 300 by 150 feet and about eight feet high. The Archaic midden could be seen as an outcropping on all sides of the hill, which was apparently a remnant of an old natural levee formed by an extinct river course. A scattering of later Baytown and Mississippi Period artifacts found on the surface of the hill indicates a brief occupation some 3500 to 4000 years after its initial settlement.

In February of 1972, a small test excavation, consisting of a number of borings and one 10-foot square test pit, was conducted on the site by Department of Archives and History archaeologists John Connaway and Sam McGahey. This work was done as a result of proposed land-leveling at the site and the similarity of this site's artifact assemblage with that of the nearby Denton Site where excavations had been carried out the previous year. The purpose of the test was to determine the depth and extent of the buried Archaic midden, the nature of the material in comparison with other Archaic sites, particularly Denton, and the age of the site. The results would then lead to recommendations for future excavation and preservation.

Six boreholes were placed in the hill at some of the highest areas and showed in every case a dark midden with small particles of burned clay, ranging from 1.5 to 4.5 feet below the surface, depending on the height of the hill at each point. This confirmed the presence of midden under the major portion of the hill and its continuity from one side to the other. The test pit was then dug near the top of the hill where boreholes had indicated the midden to be well beneath the plow zone. The midden was encountered at about 2.5 feet below the surface and varied from 0.3 to 1.5 feet in thickness. Profiles of the test pit walls showed up three distinct middens or occupation zones, some containing sediment layers and in places actually separated from each other by sterile sand layers (Plate 1). This would indicate a certain amount of natural levee buildup during occupation. Most likely the site was, at that time, right on the bank of a river or large stream.

The use of the site by its original occupants is still debatable. Plant remains found in the midden included charred persimmon seed, hickory, walnut, acorn, and pecan shell, and some small unidentified seeds. Bones consisted of a very small quantity of unidentified fragments of mammal and fish bones. Artifacts from the midden included a few projectile points, some fragmentary, amorphous lumps of fired clay of various sizes, and a number of flint or chert flakes. Specific conclusions about this site would be difficult to make considering the limited size of the excavation and the relatively small amount of

material collected. Indications are that it was a small hunting and gathering camp. Whether it was seasonal or permanent has yet to be determined, but the separation of the middens by natural levee sediments may indicate seasonal occupation.

Two samples of charcoal from the midden yielded radiocarbon dates of 2925 B.C. \pm 145 (UGa-336) and 3050 B.C. \pm 120 (UGa-337). These are very close in time to the dates from the Denton site. The artifact assemblage at Longstreet is very similar to Denton, but the projectile points have a tendency to be more barbed and more carefully flaked. Also, Longstreet does not have the lapidary industry found at Denton. This may indicate some differences in social organization and function of the two sites, as well as in the permanency of their occupations.

It was shown by this testing that a more extensive excavation was needed in order that better comparisons might be made and a more intensive study of all aspects of the settlement might be carried out. Of primary concern was the fact that Longstreet was one of the few Middle Archaic sites with an undisturbed midden known in the Delta area, making it a potentially invaluable aid in reconstructing the little-known way of life of peoples at that time. Unfortunately, while the Department was attempting to secure funds for extensive excavation of the site, it was destroyed by land-levelers.

The destruction of the site was reported to Department archaeologists in February, 1975, by a local amateur, Dr. Van Burnham. Subsequent investigations (Connaway 1975a) verified that the hill referred to above had been leveled, exposing a number of dark pits outlined in the yellow sand layer beneath. Some of these refuse pits contained amorphous lumps of fired clay and a few chert flakes, evidently remains of the Archaic occupation. Others contained Baytown Period potsherds, along with a few charred nutshells and seeds. One such pit, near where the center of the hill would have been, contained a human burial in very poor condition. In association with this skeleton were two clay platform pipes, each about eight inches long, large Baytown Period potsherds, and a three inch long, stemmed projectile point (Plate 2). This material appeared to be part of an intrusive burial pit dug into the hill at a much later time.

The details of the site's stratigraphy will never be known and many questions about the past cultures associated with it will remain unanswered. Destruction is especially appalling in this case because of the near uniqueness of the site: Longstreet and Denton were the only two known Middle Archaic Period sites in the Delta with deeply buried, undisturbed midden.

The Gates Site (22-Pa-521)

During the summer of 1971, Department archaeologist Sam Brookes carried out test excavations on the Gates site in Panola County. The work was co-sponsored by the Department of Archives and History and private citizens of Sledge, Mississippi. Surface collections from the site indicated Archaic and later occupations. This and the gradual destruction of the site by cultivation aroused the interest of Raynor Starr, an amateur archaeologist from Sledge, who subsequently collected donations to fund investigations.

Excavation of a small area yielded two perpendicular wall trenches which represent two sides of a house pattern approximately 12.5 feet square (Figure 2). This type of house construction (wall poles placed upright and close together in deep, narrow trenches) is generally associated with Mississippian culture. Only one fragment of pottery from this time period, of the type Barton Incised, was found on the site. All other potsherds, including a few examples mixed in the wall trench fill, were of Woodland Period origin. These included the types Mulberry Creek Cordmarked and Larto Red Filmed.

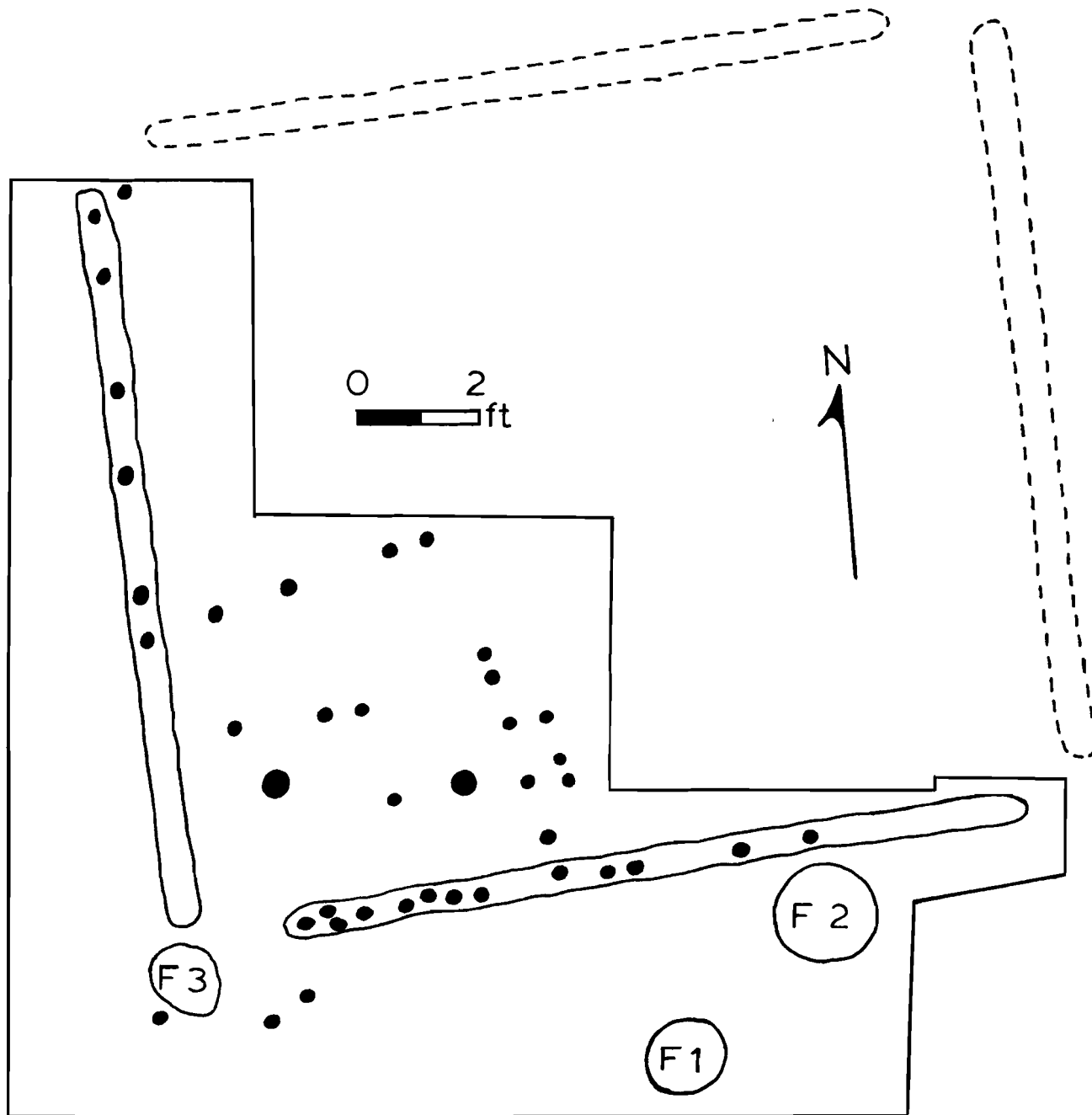
Other features recorded in the excavation included three pits ranging from 12 to 17 inches in diameter and from 7 to 18 inches in depth. No materials diagnostic of any particular culture period were found in these pits. Also found were 18 postmolds, all about two inches in diameter and four inches deep, inside the house pattern. Some of these formed straight rows suggestive of the walls of two houses of a type of construction using postholes rather than wall trenches. The excavation area was not expanded sufficiently to investigate the remainder of any of the above mentioned house patterns.

Surface collections from the site contain about 25 flakes of various types, 68% of which showed varying degrees of edge work for use as small cutting tools. Projectile points are a variety of stemmed and corner notched specimens, including some that resemble such types as Opossum Bayou, Benton, Ledbetter, Pontchartrain, Bradley Spike, and Gary. These suggest cultural associations primarily from Middle through Late Archaic times. Also suggestive of this are five bannerstone fragments and a sandstone bead preform. Unfortunately, no subsurface Archaic midden was found. All the features were encountered at a depth of only 12 inches, just beneath the plow zone.

The site may have been only intermittently occupied by the earlier people, perhaps as a seasonal hunting camp, leaving very little midden accumulation. Woodland people lived there later for an undetermined length of time and perhaps built houses. It is possible that the houses with postmold wall outlines were of Woodland origin, while the wall trench house represents a small Mississippi Period farmstead. However, midden stratigraphy and the upper portions of the features were destroyed

by cultivation and insufficient data was recovered for definite conclusions, so most of the foregoing is speculative.

One important aspect of this project is the interest and assistance given by local citizens and amateurs. It is uncommon for such local participation to include monetary support and Raynor Starr is to be especially commended for his efforts in obtaining it. As a result, a certain amount of knowledge has been gained concerning the prehistory of the area and a full report by Sam Brookes will be published in the future.



Gates Site 22-Pa-521

Figure 2. Gates Site: house pattern, features.

Teoc Creek Site (22-Cr-504)

The Teoc Creek site is a large village site, semicircular in shape, situated on a high natural levee formed by the Yalobusha River. The midden content is almost entirely attributable to the Poverty Point Culture, primarily a pre-ceramic people living throughout much of the southern Mississippi Valley in Late Archaic times. The midden arc, which covers close to 10 acres, is characteristic of many Poverty Point settlements.

A number of archaeologists representing various institutions have investigated Teoc Creek since 1966 and all of these studies have been detailed in the 1977 publication Teoc Creek, A Poverty Point Site in Carroll County, Mississippi (Connaway, McGahey, and Webb). Essentially, the earlier studies of 1966 and 1969 involved the collection of surface materials, conducting subsurface borehole traverses across the site in two directions, and the placing of small test pits at strategic locations about the site, all in order to determine the internal cultural and stratigraphic consistency of the midden. It was learned that the site was of a single cultural component (Poverty Point) and that the midden depth ranged from only a foot or so to some 10 or 12 feet below the natural levee crest. Also, test pits showed large burned clay areas thought to be house floors or hearths.

The questions posed by these investigations, especially the nature of the burned clay floors, led to excavations by the Department of Archives and History in 1970. Uncovering of a large midden area showed the clay to be scattered hearths (Plate 3). In association were hand-shaped clay cooking balls, known as Poverty Point objects, and projectile points and other stone tools, indicating a food processing and cooking area. No postmolds were ever found in the dark midden to indicate the presence of any type of house structure. Excavation of this area was carried through successive arbitrary levels of 0.4 foot to a depth of about three feet, where the midden terminated.

In an attempt to correlate previous borehole findings with the excavated midden, a deep trench was cut with a backhoe across the site in an east-west direction (Plate 4). This trench transected the natural levee, where midden was located at depths up to 12 feet, cut across the interior of the midden arc, and connected with the midden being excavated. Maintaining straight walls in the trench was hampered by a six foot deep water table and very sandy soil. Profiles, which can be seen drawn into the walls in Plate 4, showed that the excavated midden appeared continuous with one of the deeper middens beneath the natural levee.

A series of nine radiocarbon dates, given in Appendix II, showed a time span of occupation ranging from about 1700 B.C. in the deep midden

to about 1000 B.C. in the upper level of the excavated midden, near the surface.

Investigations at Teoc Creek have shed some light on the Poverty Point culture. The site was apparently occupied over a period of some 700 years, indicating an excellent location for food and other resources. The settlement grew larger over the years as the river gradually built higher the land upon which it was situated. Cooking and tool manufacture in the same portion of the site indicates no particular spatial division of activities by sex. The lack of evidence of house structures may be accounted for by the limited area of excavation. Hunting was important, along with a variety of craft activities, as evidenced by the presence of a large number of projectile points and other stone tools, as well as stone ornaments. More thorough investigations are needed to understand the details of these activities, as well as the settlement pattern and types of dwellings used.



Plate 3. Teoc Creek Site: excavation showing hearths.



Plate 4. Teoc Creek Site: trench showing deep midden strata.



Plate 5. Grand Gulf Mound: excavation of mound.

Grand Gulf Mound (22-Cb-522)

The Grand Gulf Mound is a small, Early Marksville Period burial mound located on a high terrace overlooking the Mississippi River. The site in Claiborne County was visited in 1972 by Department archaeologists Sam Brookes and Byron Inmon, who found that about two thirds of it had been destroyed by a bulldozer. At that time there were plans by the Mississippi Power and Light Company to build a nuclear generating plant on the site and funds were requested from them for excavation of the mound remnant.

Excavation by Brookes and Inmon proceeded during the summer of 1972, using 10 foot square excavation units and digging in arbitrary 0.2 foot levels. One half foot thick balks were left between squares which allowed east-west and north-south stratigraphic profiles to be recorded. Plate 5 shows the south face of the mound, with balks in place, after complete excavation of the first series of squares. Light and dark areas in the profile indicate various stages of construction or mound fill.

Study of these stratigraphic profiles revealed that the mound had been constructed in four stages, beginning with a low, underlying earthen platform covered with a thin layer of brown soil. The second building stage was of light soil, seen in Plate 5 as the lighter color in the left (west) portion of the mound. The third stage is the dark mantle just above it, while the fourth stage is represented by the thick, dark, right-hand (east) portion of the mound.

No distinct features or skeletal remains were found in the mound remnant, although there is little doubt it was constructed for burial purposes. Several pottery fragments and vessels (Plate 6) were excavated, indicating an Early Marksville Period origin. Descriptions of these and other artifacts, as well as all other aspects of the excavation, have been detailed in a report by Samuel O. Brookes (1976).



Plate 6. Grand Gulf Mound: ceramic vessels from mound.

Boyd Site (22-Tu-531)

The Boyd site was recorded in 1969 by Department of Archives and History archaeologists during a survey of proposed land-leveling areas in Tunica County. This site, which consisted of a village area of about thirty acres, was scheduled for leveling by the owners. A small portion on the bank of an old Mississippi River channel had not been plowed and was selected for test excavations (Plate 7). A salvage grant from the National Park Service was approved in 1970 and excavation was begun. Since the village midden indicated the presence of house remains in a Baytown Period context, it was hoped that these would show up and could be recorded. Very little is presently known about dwelling construction during that period of time.

No house patterns were encountered, but a large number of trash or refuse pits were excavated. Unexpectedly, two occupation zones or middens, separated by a layer of sterile sand, could be seen (Plate 8). Each of these zones had indigenous trash pits containing the remains of animal and plant foods, as well as pottery types peculiar to the culture of that zone. Thus, much was learned about the sequence of particular pottery styles through time, along with some ideas about subsistence patterns of the inhabitants.

The earlier or deepest midden was deposited during the Tchula Period. Radiocarbon dates of 220 B.C. \pm 90 (UGa-166) and 85 A.D. \pm 100 (UGa-164), obtained from two pits, give an estimated time range for this occupation. Potsherds typical of this period were found in all the Zone I pits. Faunal analysis indicated the largest source of meat used was fish, with mammals being secondary, as would be expected from the location of the site on the river bank at the confluence with a small stream. Plant foods included pecan, persimmon, walnut, and acorns.

Zone II, the later midden, was deposited during the late Marksville to late Baytown Periods. This was indicated by radiocarbon dates of 250 A.D. \pm 80 (UGa-158), 450 A.D. \pm 75 (UGa-163), and 540 A.D. \pm 70 (UGa-159) from three trash pits. Pottery types typical for these periods were found, along with an abundance of fish and mammal remains. As with the earlier pits, the majority of the bones were from fish. Plant foods were the same, with the addition of hickory nuts.

One burial, disturbed by more recent pit digging, was found at a depth of about three feet (Plate 9). Many of the bones were fragmentary and the sex of the individual could not be determined. Estimates for height were, if for male: 5 feet, 5.8 inches; if for female: 5 feet, 4.1 inches. Age would have been between 17 and 21 years at the time of death. The skeleton was found lying on its back in an extended position, with the lower legs crossed. Cultural association could not be determined because of the lack of associated artifacts.



Plate 7. Boyd Site:
view of site and
excavation.

Plate 8. Boyd Site:
excavation showing
strata profiles.



Although the original goals of the excavation were not all realized, others just as important were. Patterns and techniques of dwelling construction for these early periods remain a mystery. However, the excavation did yield much information on subsistence. Apparently the initial settlement on the site was relatively small, since evidence of it was only found in the area of the excavation. The later Baytown occupation showed a large population increase and the existence of a large, permanent village. In both cases, a great reliance was placed on fishing and much of the everyday life of the people must have centered around water-oriented activities. Most travel in this area was surely by way of dugout canoe. Unfortunately, with the limited extent of the excavation, very little can be inferred about the social and religious organization of the site's inhabitants.

In 1971 the Department of Archives and History published a complete technical report on the excavation of this site (Connaway and McGahey 1971).

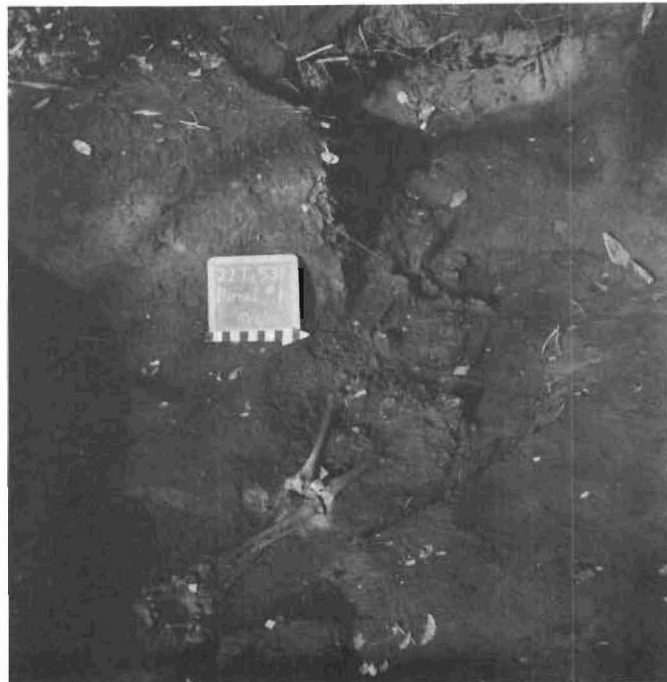


Plate 9. Boyd Site: burial.

Jackson Landing - Mulatto Bayou Earthwork* (22-Ha-515)
(Samuel O. McGahey)

This site, owned by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, is the largest single earthwork known on the Mississippi Gulf Coast and the largest surviving prehistoric earthwork known within the state of Mississippi. It is located in Hancock County, adjacent to Mulatto Bayou, just east of the mouth of the Pearl River, about 40 miles northeast of New Orleans.

Situated on a Pleistocene terrace, the site is located at the southernmost extension of this high ground, without intervening marsh in the state of Mississippi. The major feature of the site is a large semicircular wall with two openings or gates (Plate 10). The wall itself is some 1500 feet long, and extends from the marsh on the west of the site toward, but not quite reaching, a low swampy area on the eastern end. The western end of the earthwork is some 12 or 13 feet above the surrounding ground. The earth for the wall's construction came from an obvious borrow pit on the north side of the wall immediately adjacent to it throughout its entire length. The additional depth of the pit plus the actual height of the wall itself gives a total height of 17 or 18 feet on the northern side near the west end - a very impressive structure.

The eastern end of the wall has suffered more from erosion than the western end and is consequently not as high. Gate #1, a large intentional opening in the wall, is located some 420 feet from the western end. Gate #2 is located about 120 feet from the eastern end. The location of this gate close to the eastern end, coupled with the abrupt ending of the eastern end short of another swamp, may indicate that the wall, as originally planned, was never finished. A third depression in the wall, although not deep enough to be called a "gate," lies some 120 feet west of gate #1. The eastern end of the wall, as well as a large area to the northeast of the wall, was covered by a fairly extensive shell midden. The shells were of the Rangia genus of brackish water clams. The probable sources for this food item were the heads of a couple of small bayous just northeast of the site.

In the last few years, the eastern end of the wall and the associated clam midden in the area had become the "digging grounds" for relic collectors in the area who were looking for trade beads and other items known to have come from the area. This vandalism of the site prompted the Gulf Coast Chapter of the Mississippi Archaeological

*This is a condensed version of a report by J. Mark Williams. Manuscript copy is on file at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson.

Association, under the direction of J. Mark Williams, and a group of students from the University of Southern Mississippi, under the direction of Dale Greenwell, to undertake controlled excavations of the site before further damage occurred. A summary of these excavations has been presented in Mississippi Archaeology (Williams 1974).

Excavations were initiated on April 15, 1972 and continued on weekends until August 26, 1972. Several goals were selected to guide the excavations. The first and most important goal was to determine when the earthwork was built. Second, as much data as possible should be collected on historic occupations of Indians on the eastern end. Third, data should be collected on an early midden on the bluff south of the west end of the wall. Finally, the temporal relationship of the wall to both these midden areas was to be determined.

Five excavation units were begun on various parts of the site. Each unit consisted either of a variable number of five foot squares excavated in arbitrary six inch levels, or of trenches three feet wide and of various lengths also excavated in six inch levels. All soil was screened through a half-inch mesh screen for artifact retrieval.

According to stratigraphy revealed by the excavations, the site was constructed in three stages. The initial construction was apparently made on land that had either never been occupied or else had been cleared prior to construction. There were no artifacts or midden under the base of the wall. The initial building phase was a low wall, four or five feet high and 10 to 15 feet wide. This fill as well as later fills contained no artifacts. A radiocarbon date from this stage yielded a date of 400 B.C. \pm 100 (UGa-402). The medium dark-brown fill was mottled with charcoal in places. The next construction stage (construction stage two) consists of a layer of light orange sand covered with a cap of medium dark-brown sand mottled with clay. The unity of these layers is not certain but seems probable. Two radiocarbon dates were obtained on samples from construction stage two. From the lower part came a date of 215 A.D. \pm 315 (UGa-459). From the upper part came a date of 290 A.D. \pm 80 (UGa-458).

The midden deposit to the south of the west end of the earthwork was tested and found to consist primarily of clam shells and middle to late Marksville pottery. The ceramics thus corroborate a probable Marksville cultural connection. No artifactual evidence was found which relates to the earlier date of 400 B.C.

The midden deposit of clam shells and ceramics on the eastern end of the earthwork, on the basis of late ceramic types and associated European artifacts, was demonstrated to be almost entirely of historic Indian origin, and to have nothing to do with the earthwork itself. Possible cultural affiliations of the historic component are Acolapissa, Biloxi, or Pascagoula.

There are questions remaining to be answered. The function of the wall itself remains an unsolved problem. The two common explanations for such structures are that they are ceremonial or protective. As was stated, the fill within the wall was devoid of artifacts although it should be pointed out that only a small percentage was excavated. Evidence of ceremonial use is possibly there. A protective or defensive structure seems unlikely in this case since access could be gained to the southern side of the site by water.



Plate 10. Jackson Landing-Mulatto Bayou Earthwork: view of excavation.



Plate 11. Acree Site: mound remnant after leveling.



Plate 12. Acree Site: shell hoes.



Plate 13. Acree Site: bone and antler tools.

Acree Site (22-Bo-551)

In December, 1973, it was reported to Department of Archives and History archaeologists that the Acree site in Bolivar County, Mississippi, was to be land-leveled. The owner was contacted and agreed to allow salvage excavations on the site while leveling commenced on a nearby area. During the month, Department archaeologists began work on that portion of the site where levelers had removed the plow zone.

The Acree site was first recorded by Phillips, Ford, and Griffin in their Lower Mississippi Valley Survey of 1940-1947 (1951:53). They reported two small mounds at this time, along with scanty surface material and human bones (1951:314). Presently the site consists of a village area of about four acres and the remains of one of the small mounds reported earlier (Plate 11). Before leveling, the mound measured approximately 100 feet in diameter by three feet high. A portion of the west side had been incorporated into a railroad bed many years before. The smaller of the two mounds had already disappeared.

The Survey team, with the help of several local amateurs, excavated a number of refuse pits which were exposed by the levelers. These pits ranged from two to four feet in diameter and all appeared to be U-shaped. The entire contents of twelve pits, including all the dirt, were removed and stored for water screening at a future time. Later, using the method of washing through a window screen, floral and faunal remains, along with artifacts, were extracted for analysis. This material included the bones of various fish, birds, and mammals, along with charred seeds, such as hickory nut and acorn, and mussel shells, some of which were perforated for hafting (Plate 12). It is surmised that the latter were tied to wooden handles and used as digging implements. Large numbers of potsherds of a variety of Baytown Period types were also found in the pits. All these pits were either in the vicinity of, or underneath, the larger mound mentioned above.

The village midden appeared to be relatively shallow and much of it was removed by the land-levelers. The remainder has since been deep plowed and is likely destroyed. Other than refuse pits and a few scattered human burials, no features were discerned in the village area. Several such burials were uncovered to the east of the mound, but they had been too badly damaged by cultivation and land-leveling for proper recording. Surface collections in the village area have yielded the same Baytown Period pottery types found in the pits, along with projectile points and bone awls (Plate 13) common to this time period. Since the site was leveled, a number of Marksville Period potsherds have been plowed up, exposing a cultural occupation not previously known at the site. Evidently the Marksville deposit was deep enough to have been undisturbed by the plow until the upper soil layers were removed by leveling. Since both middens are now disturbed, the relationship between the earlier and later occupations may never be known.

The mound contained a few areas of red, burned clay which may have been fire basins or hearths, but they had no regular shape. A few small, scattered dark circles were observed, but no patterns such as would be formed by postmolds in a house could be discerned. Although the shape and time period of the mound suggest its use for burials, none could be seen during its excavation by machinery. It is likely the soil was not conducive to bone preservation, or perhaps the bones were cremated. There were no house patterns and thus no village plan to be found in the entire area during leveling. The only real features recorded were the refuse pits, and the upper portions of these had been removed by prior cultivation and land-leveling.

Although very little of the remains of occupation was recovered, this work could lead to some new insights into the subsistence activities of the inhabitants and the environment in which they lived. The presence of large amounts of mussel shells in the refuse pits and the situation of the village right on the bank of what was then a Mississippi River channel indicates a heavy reliance on water-oriented food gathering. Hunting and fishing were important, as evidenced by the large numbers of bones to be found on the site. Although little is known of the village structure or social organization of these people, they evidently occupied the site for a long period of time, probably as a direct result of the abundance of food in the local riverine environment. No evidence of any agricultural activities has been found. Some aspects of religious customs might be inferred from the construction during the Baytown Period of what were possibly burial mounds, though such mounds are not generally known from that time. Unfortunately, a lot of information from which more definite conclusions could have been made was lost to the leveler, due to the lack of time to do an adequate excavation.

Without the cooperation given by Mr. Schmidt, the owner, and the help of a number of local amateurs, an even greater amount of information would have been lost. Hopefully, the cooperative effort at Acree will serve as an example of how the citizens of Mississippi can, in certain ways, help archaeologists record our prehistoric heritage. A brief report of the excavation was published in Mississippi Archaeology (Caldwell 1974).

Maddox #2 Site (22-Co-586)

In November, 1974, Survey Archaeologist John Connaway investigated a report of a skeleton uncovered by land-levelers on the Maddox Plantation near Clarksdale, Mississippi. According to Tom Davis, a local amateur, parts of a human skeleton had been exposed and left in place by the workmen in order that they might be recorded by professionals. It was found that the land-levelers had removed about two feet of soil from the area before the skeleton appeared. What remained of the burial pit was about 0.4 foot deep, with a refuse pit about one foot deep intruding into one end of it. The visible bones, which included portions of both femurs and tibias, the pelvis, and the left ulna, radius, and humerus, were extremely rotten and could not be removed for study. No trace of the skull or upper portion of the skeleton could be found since the trash pit had been dug through it and had disturbed everything at that end of the burial pit (Figure 3). This was a primary burial with the body lying in an extended, face up position. A large mass of red ochre was found just to the right of the skeleton.

The refuse pit contained a rounded and battered lump of galena which was 9.6 cm in maximum diameter and flattened on two opposite sides, similar in fashion to a chunky stone. It weighed 4 pounds, 15 ounces. The pit also contained a small projectile point and a Jaketown-like perforator (Figure 3), as well as a number of Baytown Period potsherds of Mulberry Creek Cordmarked, Larto Red Filmed, and Baytown Plain types. A large sample of earth removed from the pit for flotation yielded no floral or faunal material.

The site consists of a village midden covering approximately 10 acres on the east bank of the Little Sunflower River. It is situated on a high, sandy, natural levee which was at one time the bank of the Mississippi River. Surface collections from the site indicate that the primary occupation was during the Baytown Period, probably around 500 to 800 A.D. The vast majority of potsherds are from this time period, although a couple suggest a brief earlier Marksville Period settlement.

Very little could be determined from this limited excavation other than the style of burial used during this time. Such extended burials, placed in elongated pits, have been found at other Baytown Period sites, such as the Bonds Village site in Tunica County (Connaway and McGahey, 1970:8). By comparing such data from a number of such sites, a picture of the various aspects of social and religious life among these ancient people begins to emerge. With the help of concerned amateurs, this composite picture can be built up.

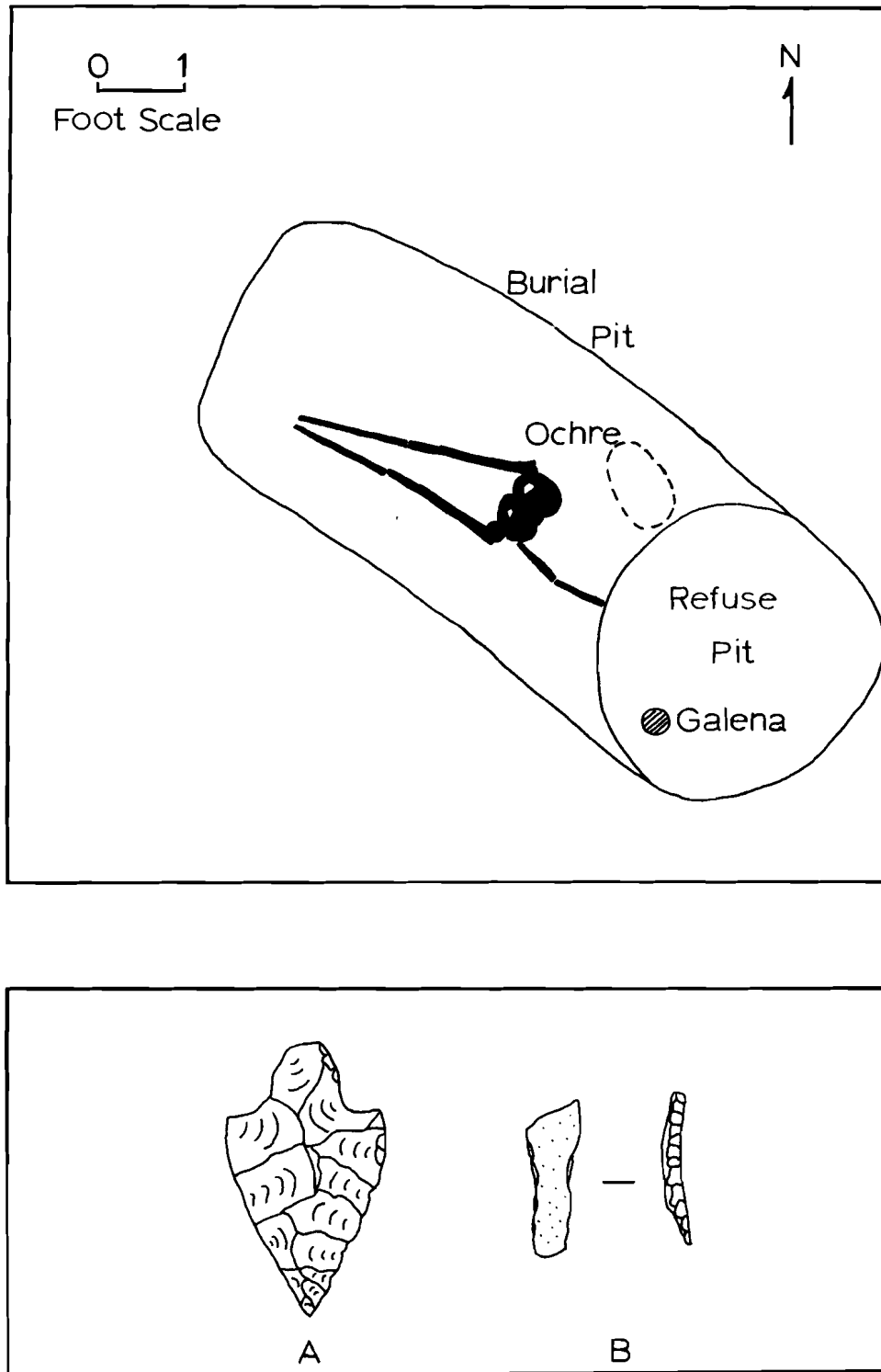


Figure 3. Maddox #2 Site: burial pit; lithic artifacts.

Shady Grove Site (22-Qu-525)

The Shady Grove site in Quitman County was originally recorded by Phillips, Ford, and Griffin in their Lower Mississippi Valley survey of the 1940s (1951). They described it essentially as it is today, a "large village site with a large rectangular platform mound and small mound" (1951:54). They classified it as a small ceremonial center, ranging in time from early Baytown to Mississippian. The site was said to have a rectangular mound 18 feet high, a 180 foot long plaza oriented to the east, and a small conical mound five feet high (1951:322). Although cultivation in the field around the large mound has taken its toll of the village area and its house remains, and the small mound has been leveled, the large mound remains intact.

In September, 1975, archaeologists with the Department of Archives and History were notified by Miss Lucy Turner, a local amateur, that the small mound had been leveled. Upon investigation, it was found that most of the mound had been leveled, leaving approximately two to three feet of undisturbed midden underneath. Permission was obtained from the owner to excavate a few test pits on the site to determine the content and cultural affiliation of the mound. After setting up a reference grid, archaeologists John Connaway and Sam Brookes, with the help of several amateurs, dug a five-foot test square near the center of the mound, another one near the north edge, and a two-foot square near the center from which a midden sample was obtained for washing (Plate 14).

The first five-foot square, dug to a depth of about three feet, yielded many hundreds of mussel shells and numerous potsherds of the types Mulberry Creek Cordmarked and Baytown Plain. The shell midden extended down to two feet, under which was a one-foot layer of dark soil, and then sterile yellow sand. Several radiocarbon samples of small charcoal fragments were collected at different levels for future dating. A profile of the square showed a downward slope from east to west, indicating a possible primary mound cresting just to the east of this square (Plate 15).

A small two-foot square was excavated nearby and all the midden within was extracted for washing. This midden also included hundreds of mussel shells, as well as the same potsherd types, and went down to slightly over two feet. A small portion of the material has been washed through window screen and large amounts of mussel shells and plant remains were recovered. Identification of these should give some indications of prehistoric subsistence patterns during the Baytown Period.

A third test pit, which measured six by six feet, was excavated near the north edge where a disturbed burial appeared on the surface. About 0.8 foot of earth was removed exposing a mass burial, consisting of at least five individuals by skull count (Plate 16). The center burial was a cremation, the skull to the north, the other bones in disarray within an area about three feet long by two feet wide, indicating



Plate 14. Shady Grove Site: excavation.

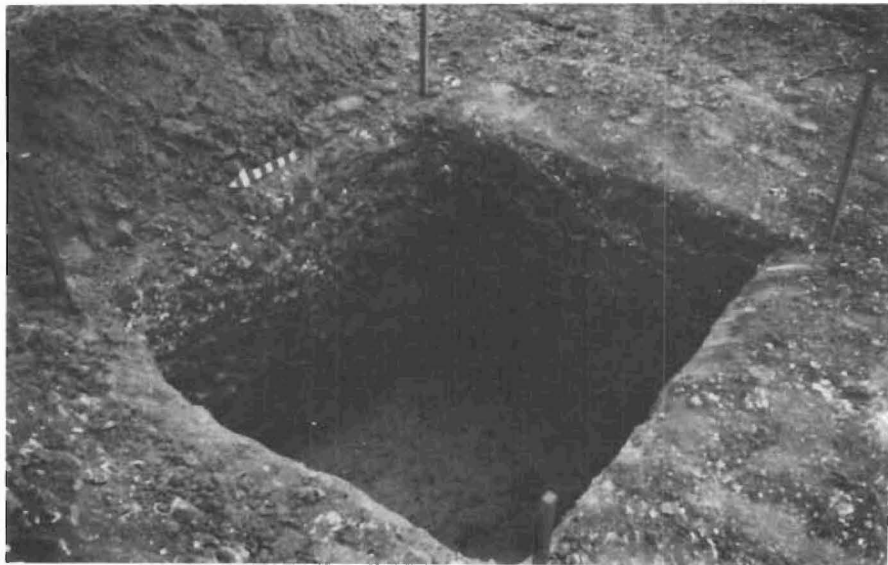


Plate 15. Shady Grove Site: test pit strata profile.

a cremation of a secondary bundle burial. With this bundle, near the skull, was a sandstone pipe with a smooth, concave grinding area on one side and abrading grooves on the other side and front. The two conical holes drilled from the top and back meet to form the pipe. The bottom is flat and smooth, possibly for use in grinding. This was evidently a multipurpose tool. Along with this was a discoidal stone, about 10.5 cm in diameter, made of soft and decomposing material, possibly clay or a soft stone. Both of these typically Mississippian artifacts were burned with the bones, causing deterioration of the discoidal stone and blackening of the pipe (Plate 17).

On either side of the cremation were masses of bones of several individuals continuing into the walls on the east and west sides of the square. Apparently these were secondary burials, the bones having been thrown into the pit haphazardly. Judging from the presence of the pipe and the discoidal, and the secondary burial style, they were probably all intrusive Mississippi Period burials. Potsherds in the midden indicate construction of the mound either by Baytown people or by later people using Baytown midden for mound fill. However, it would seem that if the latter were true, some Mississippi Period potsherds would have been included in the midden as well. A Mississippi Plain type bowl was rescued from under the leveler by a local collector, Danny Joe Barron, and since it was associated with a burial, could also be indicative of intrusive Mississippian burials. The bowl had an effigy head of some form of bird facing inward from the lip and a lug on the opposite side resembling a tail or the presence of a tail (Plate 18).

No other artifacts were found with the burials, the cremation evidently being someone of more distinction than the others. Most of the bones and all the skulls were broken or crushed. This material was taken out in mass for later washing and screening. The entire burial area was in dark soil with no shell, but it was surrounded by and resting on a thick shell layer or midden, one more indication that the burial area was a prepared pit and was intrusive into the mound. The cremation had evidently been burned on the spot since there was ash and red burned earth beneath it. The full extent of this area and the total number of burials could not be determined since there was no time to expand the excavation. A brief report of the excavation has been published in Mississippi Archaeology (Connaway 1975b).

According to local residents, the small mound was originally about 70 feet in diameter and roughly round. It had a small Historic Period cemetery on it which was also destroyed. This was the first shell midden excavated by the Department archaeologists in the Yazoo Basin and it is regrettable that there was not an opportunity to do a more extensive and meaningful investigation. The testing was limited to two days, affording only a minimum of information. Such shell middens are relatively rare in the northern part of the Basin and very little is known



Plate 16. Shady Grove Site: burials.

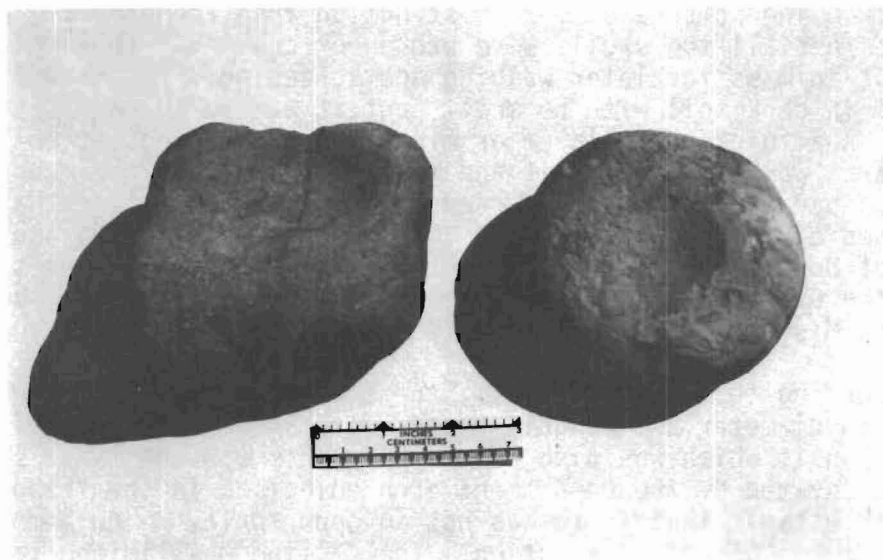


Plate 17. Shady Grove Site: sandstone pipe and discoidal.

about them. Since the test excavation, the mound site has been plowed and can be considered, for scientific purposes, forever destroyed.

Some general speculations can be made about the various occupations of the site. A number of projectile points have been found in the area which indicate the presence of people during the Poverty Point, Baytown, and Mississippi Periods. The majority of potsherds collected have indicated that the site was used briefly during the Tchula Period. Evidently the area was very productive economically, both in shellfish during the Baytown and in agriculture during the Mississippi Period.

The midden from which the small mound was built contained thousands of mussel shells, along with bones of fish and mammals. Indications are that during the Baytown Period there was a relatively large settlement of people relying heavily on products from the Coldwater River. The burial mound, which is uncommon during that time, was evidently built by these earlier people and then used in turn by the later Mississippian agriculturalists. The Mississippian occupation saw the construction of the large ceremonial mound and a much larger village of wattle and daub houses. Many of these houses burned, as witnessed by the masses of burned clay which can be seen today after plowing. These people practiced corn agriculture and had a strongly structured socio-religious hierarchy. They most likely supplemented their diet with fish and game, as well as wild plant foods found along the river and in surrounding forests. Without further excavations, the details of these and other aspects of their way of life will never be known.



Plate 18. Shady Grove Site: effigy bowl.

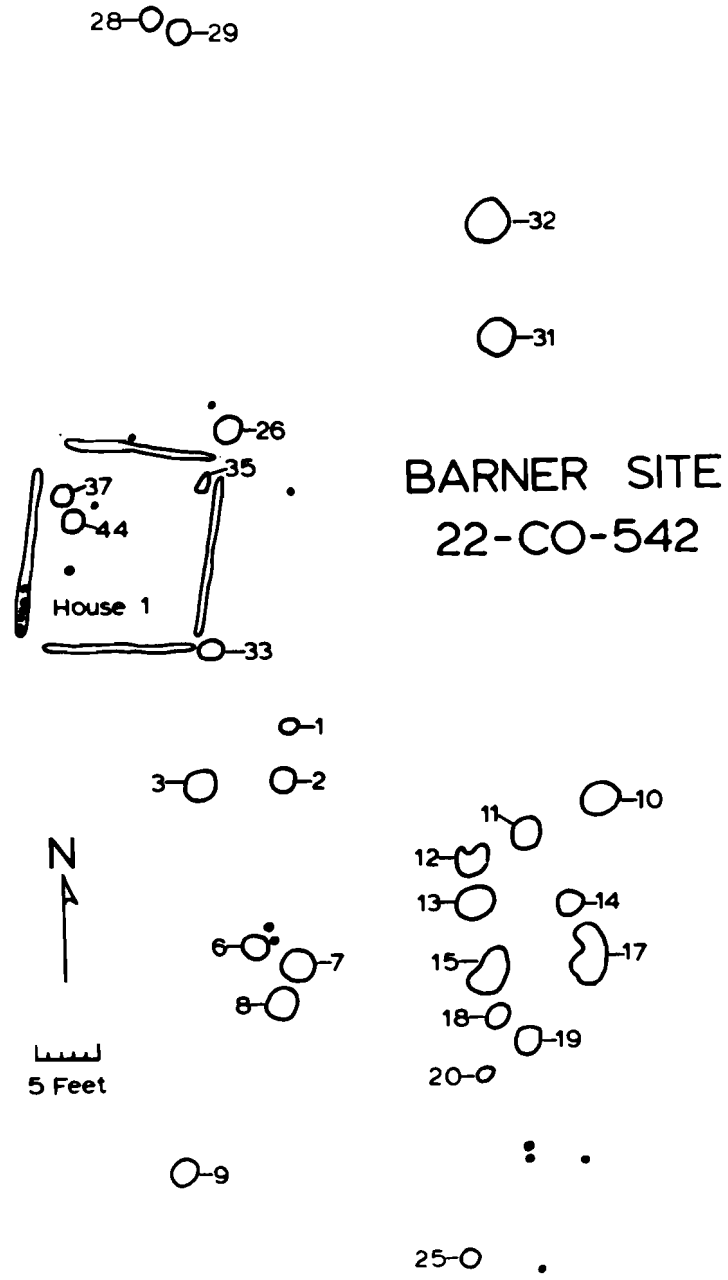


Figure 4. Barner Site: features and pattern of House 1.

Barner Site (22-Co-542)

In 1971, Department archaeologists discovered that a new bridge was being built over Big Creek in Coahoma County. This was part of a county road project and included construction of a new blacktop road connecting the bridge with existing highways. Unfortunately, this new road was to cut right across the middle of the Barner site, which was situated on an old natural river levee along the bank of Big Creek. After discussions with Coahoma County Road Department officials, it was decided that the Department of Archives and History would conduct salvage excavations in the section of the site to be affected. Sam Brookes, then at the University of Mississippi, was contracted to carry out these investigations.

A county roadgrader was used to remove the plow zone and the Road Department furnished several laborers to help with the excavation. Deep plowing and subsoiling had apparently destroyed most of the integrity of the midden, but subsurface features showed up clearly in the sterile soil just beneath the plow zone. These features (Figure 4) included a number of postmolds which formed no pattern; about 15 refuse pits (Plate 19), both hemispherical and bell-shaped; and a 15 x 16 foot house pattern (Plate 20) consisting of four wall trenches containing several well defined postmolds. Since the pits all contained essentially the same Woodland pottery types (primarily Mulberry Creek Cordmarked, with smaller amounts of Baytown Plain, Alligator Incised var. Alligator and Oxbow, and Larto Red Filmed), it is assumed that the house, which was on the same basic level as the pits, was constructed about the same time.

To help narrow down the temporal placement of the features, a radiocarbon date was obtained from charcoal in one pit (Feature 8). The result was a date of 875 A.D. \pm 85 (UGa-280). The five pottery types mentioned above were all represented in the pit, along with some fragments of burned clay and a number of small chert flakes, some of which showed the red discoloration of heat treatment. Although other cultural components exist on the site, the particular area in which the work was done appeared to be essentially Late Woodland (Baytown).

The site covers an area of between five and 10 acres and a whole range of pottery types from Tchula through Mississippi Periods is present on the surface. The majority of pottery types fall within the Baytown Period, which, along with the data recovered from the excavation, indicates a primary occupation in this time period. There were apparently smaller, perhaps short term occupations dating back as far as the Late Archaic Period on the site, as indicated by artifacts collected on the surface. Just to the east of the excavation was a burial mound, now almost obliterated by plowing. Numerous human bones have been seen there after plowing.

Judging from the massive accumulation of potsherds on the surface,



Plate 19. Barner Site: refuse pits.



Plate 20. Barner Site: house wall trenches.

the relatively deep midden, and the size of the site, it can be safely assumed that it consisted of a small village of thatched roof houses occupied over a relatively long period of time. The close proximity of Big Creek, which may have been a river channel at that time, afforded a convenient means of travel and a ready source of fresh water and food. During the later portion of occupation, villagers were buried in the nearby mound. Animal bones found on the site indicate not only fishing activities, but hunting of a large assortment of animals and birds. A long tradition of hunting is evidenced by a variety of projectile point types and a plummet. That horticulture was practiced is suggested by fragments of flint hoes found on the site.

The accumulation of data from the Barner site is attributable not only to the assistance given by the Coahoma County Road Department in the excavation, but to the cooperation of several local collectors as well. A study of their large collections of artifacts has filled in many gaps in our knowledge of the site and the past life of its inhabitants. A more detailed technical report of these studies, by Sam Brookes, is in preparation and will be based on his Master's thesis, which was completed in 1980.

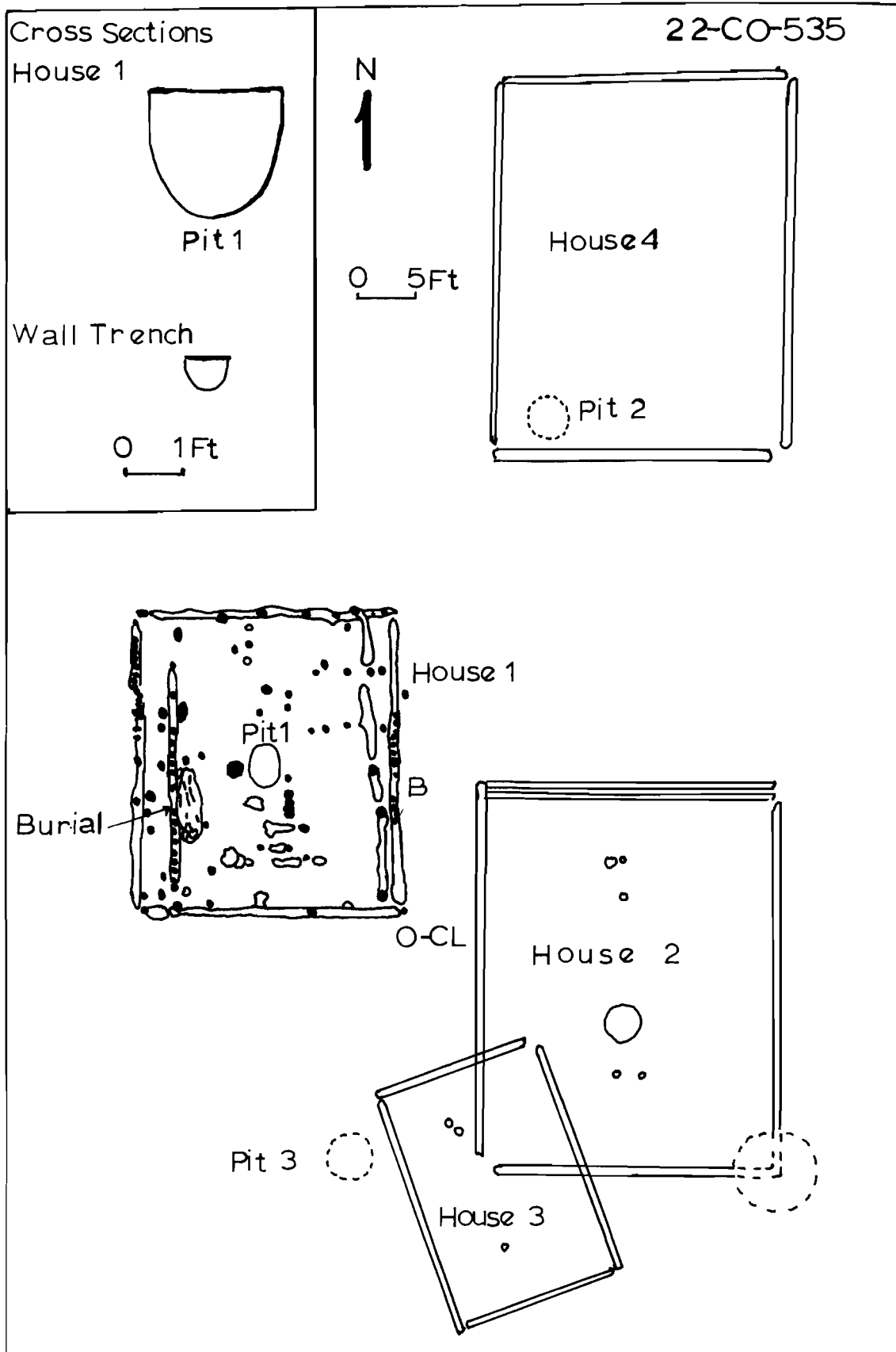


Figure 5. Bobo Site: house patterns and features.

Bobo Site (22-Co-535)

The Bobo site, located near Clarksdale, Mississippi, was originally recorded by Phillips, Ford, and Griffin (1951) during their survey of the Lower Mississippi Valley in the 1940s. The site consisted of a village area and a small mound on the west bank of the Sunflower River and was approximately six to eight acres in size. Occupation was primarily during the Coles Creek and Mississippi Periods.

In May, 1973, archaeologists with the Department of Archives and History were notified by amateurs in the Clarksdale area that the site was being destroyed. The owner had sold several feet of topsoil, including the mound, for use in construction of a nearby shopping center. The mound was being graded down and large earth-moving machines were hauling the soil away when archaeologists arrived on the scene. Under present state law, there was no way to stop the destruction other than to simply ask the owner. This was done to no avail. With this in mind, and with the cooperation of the construction workers on the scene, Department archaeologists spent three days at the site attempting to record as many features as possible. A number of local amateurs, members of the North Delta Chapter, Mississippi Archaeological Association, joined in the efforts (Plates 21 and 22). A large number of house patterns and refuse pits could be seen after machines had removed the topsoil. A reference point, 0-Centerline (Figure 5), was set up and all measurements were taken from it. Using certain time-saving techniques, the archaeologists began hastily recording house patterns until the owner suddenly decided not to allow anyone on the site. This was very unfortunate since only five house patterns were recorded out of a possible 80 or more uncovered in the field. As a result, the remaining features were destroyed forever, along with an excellent opportunity to record an entire village pattern for the first time in the Delta. Without the help of interested local citizens, most, if not all, of this work could not have been accomplished.

House 1 (Figure 5) was actually two houses superimposed. The north and south walls of both houses were placed in the same positions, giving each the appearance of a single wall trench. Separate trenches could be seen on the east and west sides. Just inside the west trenches was a double burial, two individuals placed in the same pit (Plate 23, Figure 5). The bones were not only extremely decayed, but had been partially destroyed by the earth-movers and could not be saved for analysis. No grave goods were found with them. A central fire pit, slightly over two feet deep and about two and a half feet in diameter, and numerous postmolds and other dark discolorations could be seen on the interior of the house (Figure 5). Some may have been the result of rotting tree stumps, but the small, round postmolds, shown as black in Figure 5, evidently represent the positions of roof support posts or supports for furniture, such as beds. A cross-section of the eastern-



Plate 21. Bobo Site: excavation of House 1.



Plate 22. Bobo Site: recording House 1 wall trenches.



Plate 23. Bobo Site: double burial in House 1.

most wall trench showed it to be half a foot deep (Figure 5). The upper portion of the trenches, probably about 18 inches to two feet, had been removed.

Houses 2, 3, and 4 were hastily recorded and much of the small detail was thus left out (Figure 5). House 2 had a small refuse pit inside, along with several roof support posts. There was a dark, circular area in the southeast corner which may have been a pit, but it was not excavated. House 3 also had roof support posts. House 4 contained a small refuse pit, slightly over a foot deep, in the southwest corner, but no roof support posts could be seen. The houses were all rectangular and measured as follows: House 1A (farthest west) was approximately 20 by 26 feet; House 1B (farthest east) was approximately 19 by 26 feet; House 2 was approximately 25 by 32 feet, with a double wall trench at the north end; House 3 was approximately 14.5 by 21 feet; and House 4 was approximately 25 by 32 feet. Houses 1, 2, and 4 were oriented north-south, while House 3 was oriented northwest-southeast longitudinally.

Very few artifacts were found since most of the topsoil and plow-zone had been removed. A small, crushed, shell tempered, Mississippi Plain bowl was found south of House 1, as was the stone hoe pictured in Plate 24. The projectile point in the photo was found in Pit 2 in the corner of House 4. A small clay turtle effigy, the handle off a Mississippian pot, was found on the surface by a collector. Other than Mississippi Plain, potsherds from the site included Winterville Incised and some late Baytown Period types.

Radiocarbon dates were obtained from the University of Georgia on two charcoal samples. The first, 1275 A.D. \pm 100 (UGa-559), was from Pit 3 (Figure 5) and consisted of charred corn. The second, 890 A.D. \pm 90 (UGa-560), was charred wood from a post four to five feet deep under the mound, part of a burned house built there before the mound was constructed. The first date gives an idea of the major occupation time of the village, when corn was a staple in the diet. The second date may have been closer to the initial site occupation before the later group built the mound. The outline of the sub-mound house was destroyed, but portions of the burned earthen floor, charred posts, and thatch from the collapsed roof could still be seen.

It is evident that the Bobo Site was occupied by either the same or different groups over a period of some 300 or more years. During that time a mound approximately eight feet high and 200 feet in diameter was constructed at the edge of the village near the river bank. Considering the time of this settlement, the mound was most likely of a ceremonial nature with some sort of structure on top. The sub-mound house may have been the earliest ceremonial structure there. It was not uncommon during this period for such structures to burn and be covered over as the mound was built up to a higher elevation. No evidence of burials

could be seen during the destruction of the mound.

The village, consisting of an estimated 59 to 100 houses, was situated close to the river which was the source of water, food, and means of travel for the inhabitants. Corn agriculture was practiced, supplemented by hunting, fishing, and gathering of wild plant foods. Houses appeared to have been arranged in rows and probably clustered around a plaza on the west side of the mound. However, this is mostly speculation since the site had been so mutilated and not enough time was allowed for proper recording of the village layout. The houses were rectangular and were constructed of poles placed in wall trenches rather than in postholes. These poles were bent over and tied together to form the roof, which was then thatched. The walls were covered with split cane mats and plastered with clay to form a comfortable, weather-proof dwelling.

A more detailed report on the site has been published in Mississippi Archaeology (Potts and Brookes 1981).

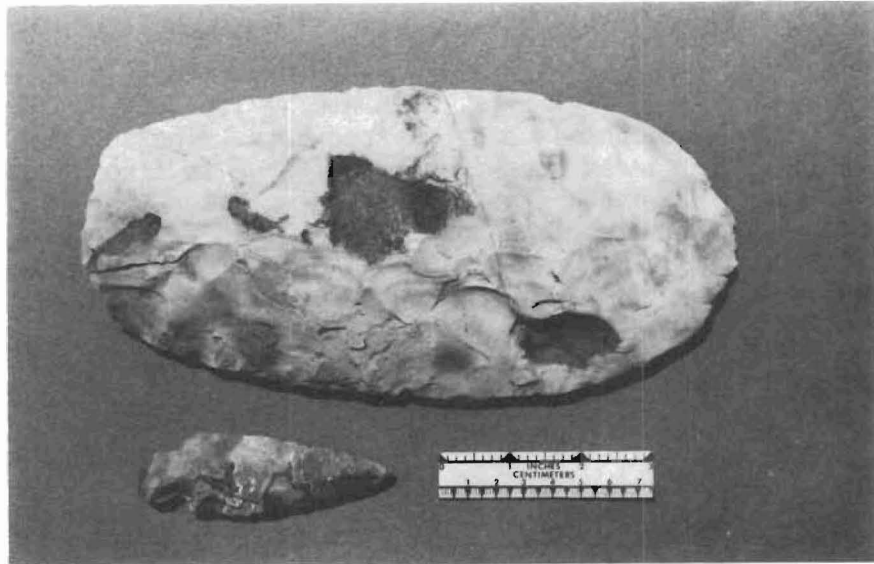


Plate 24. Bobo Site: stone hoe and projectile point.

John Jones Site (22-Ta-500)

The John Jones site is located on a small island in Arkabutla Reservoir, Tate County, Mississippi. The island was once the top of a ridge before being inundated by the lake. The site consists of a Mississippi Period house site and a scattering of sherds and lithic debris of Archaic, Woodland, and Mississippi Period origin. During variation in water level within the reservoir, wave action had exposed several features, which were rapidly deteriorating when the Department of Archives and History archaeologists were notified.

Investigations at the site were conducted in April, 1971, after the Department obtained an excavation permit from the U. S. Corps of Engineers. Such permits are required by Federal Law for any archaeological work conducted on U. S. Government property. Department archaeologists John Connaway and Sam McGahey observed several features, including the house pattern, two oval-shaped fire pits, a number of possible postmolds, and the apparent remains of a trash pit. The layout of these features is shown in Figure 6.

The house pattern consisted of four wall trenches arranged in a rectangle measuring 16.5 feet east-west by 18 feet north-south. A profile of the south trench showed it to be 1.1 feet deep from the present surface. An unknown portion of the upper levels of the trenches had eroded away, so the original depth is conjectural. A large, shell tempered potsherd excavated from one of the wall trenches confirmed the Mississippi Period origin of the house. All four corners of the house were apparently open, but the largest opening at the northwest corner suggests the presence of a doorway. Three apparent postmolds were found in the wall trenches and six inside the house. The interior ones may have been support posts for the roof, but they form no discernible pattern conforming to the orientation of the wall trenches. All these features appeared as discolorations of black, dark brown, or dark grey in a yellowish matrix. Plate 25 shows the house wall trenches and Feature 2 after surface debris had been removed.

The two fire pits, Features 1 and 2, contained mottled black, brown, and grey soil surrounded by a ring of red burned clay approximately 0.3 to 0.4 foot thick. Both pits were oval-shaped and approximately one foot deep. Feature 1 was at the water's edge. Feature 3 appeared to be a large, square postmold, while Feature 4 was a large, dark stain suggesting a shallow trash pit. However, no refuse material was recovered from it. Plate 26 shows the wall trenches, Feature 2, and Features 3 and 4 in the background.

Surface materials collected from the island included a few fiber tempered, shell tempered, and clay tempered cordmarked potsherds, along with a few clay cooking balls, indicating occupations from Poverty Point through Mississippi Periods. There were also large numbers of chert

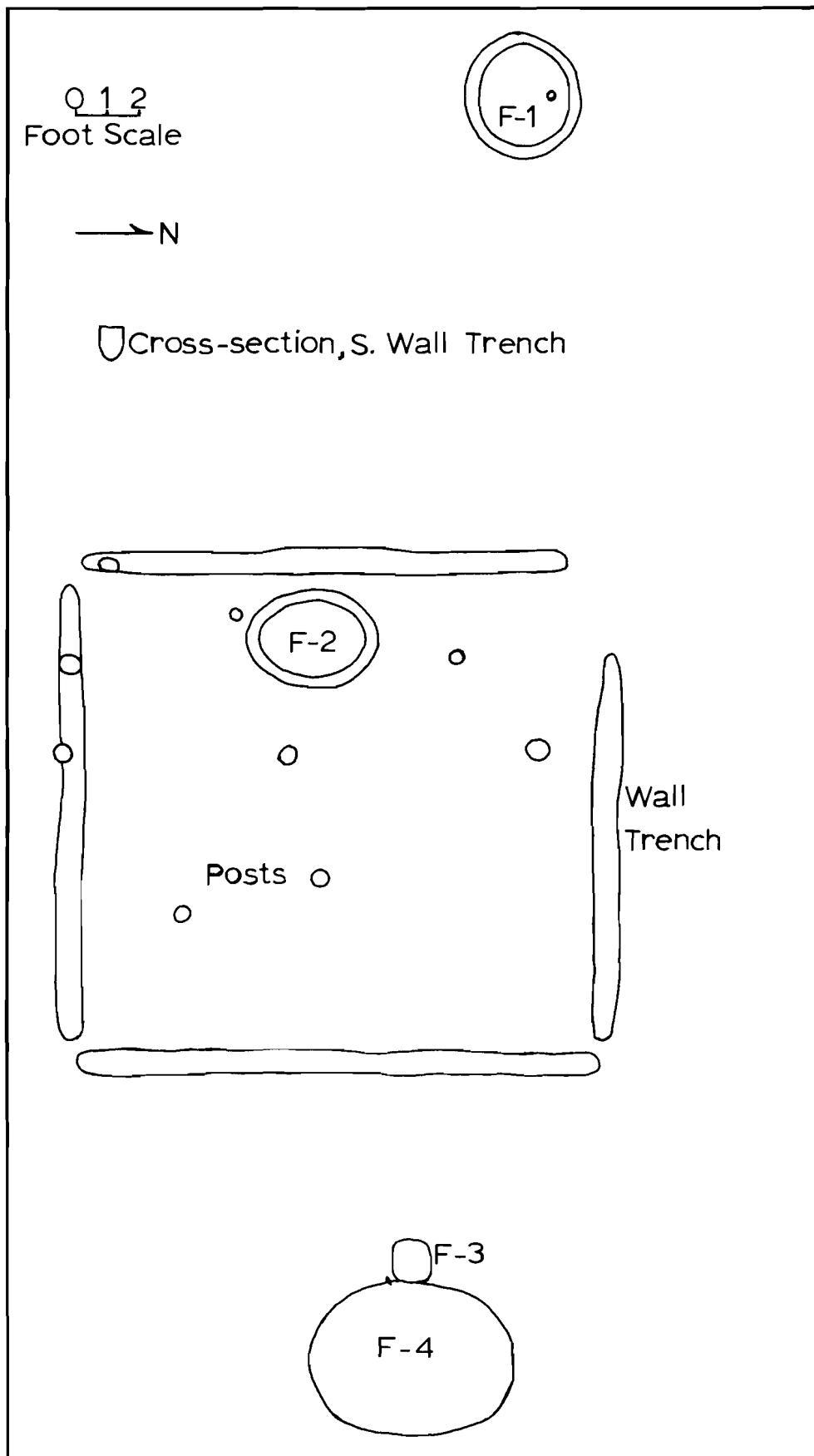


Figure 6. John Jones Site: House 1 and accompanying features.

flakes, cores, bifaces, and other worked stone. One large, crudely chipped projectile point suggests a Late Archaic occupation, while two smaller points suggest a Middle Woodland occupation. These few points were not diagnostic enough to afford type names.

Although the site was no outstanding discovery, it did present some insight into the dwelling habits of Mississippi Period peoples in the hill section of North Mississippi. The house may have represented a small farming homestead occupied by a single family or it may have been part of a larger settlement which was covered by water. It was situated on a terrace overlooking the Coldwater River, with farming probably being carried on in the lower bottomland. The house was of pole and thatch construction, probably covered with daub. However, no fired daub was present to indicate the house had ever burned.

Without the help of a local amateur, John Jones, who reported the site, and the cooperation of the Corps of Engineers and W. F. Patton, Reservoir Manager, this work could not have been done and the site would never have been recorded. Since that time the features have been completely obliterated by wave action.



Plate 25. John Jones Site: house wall trenches and features.



Plate 26. John Jones Site: wall trenches and Feature 2.

Clover Hill Site (22-Co-625)

The Clover Hill site was recorded in 1969 by Department archaeologists during a survey of Coahoma County. It consists of a small village area situated on the east bank of an old Mississippi River channel, a few miles north of Clarksdale. A portion of the site appears to be either a remnant of a large mound or a high natural levee covered by several feet of midden. On this rise, which is about 200 feet in diameter and four feet high, were found concentrations of plowed daub, indicating the presence of several houses. Plate 27 shows one of the house areas, outlined with daub fragments, which was subsequently chosen for excavation. The village area covers approximately four acres and is bisected by a paved road and deep roadside ditches.

In 1973, Dr. Van Burnham, a local amateur, reported that the site was scheduled for leveling. The owner and lessee were persuaded to postpone this action until investigations could be made regarding the houses. The largest house area at the eastern edge of the "mound" was selected and the plow zone was removed (Plate 28). Unfortunately, the subsoiling had destroyed all the daub walls which apparently had fallen intact when the house burned. However, underneath this rubble was an almost intact burned floor surface with only a few traces of subsoiler disturbance. Limited time and funds, along with bad weather conditions, prevented completion of the entire house excavation, but most of the floor area was uncovered.

Several interesting aspects of the house were investigated. Only portions of the wall trenches could be delineated, but there was enough to show that the house was constructed of poles placed in trenches at close intervals. These pole walls were covered with split cane mats and thick clay daub. At some time the house burned and fired the daub brick hard, turning it orange or light red. The walls fell in, leaving the floor covered by this layer of daub until it was torn up by plowing. Portions of the floor were also orange, or shades of gray and black, indicating the intensity of heat of the fire. The smooth side of the daub lying on the floor was facing downward, indicating the possibility that the walls were plastered on the interior. Supporting this idea was the absence of burned wall poles sandwiched between the floor and the daub.

Features in the house, outlined in Figure 7, included a shallow refuse pit which contained very little significant data other than charred corn grains, beans, and persimmon seeds. In the center of the floor was a large circular fire pit of unusual construction (Plate 29). The rim and sides were prepared of clay fired to a brick hardness. Filling the interior, which was about 1.5 feet in diameter, were fragments of what appeared to be a smoothed clay dome, possibly some type of covering for the pit. This might indicate an oven-like structure. The pit was about two feet deep. Artifacts were scarce on the floor,

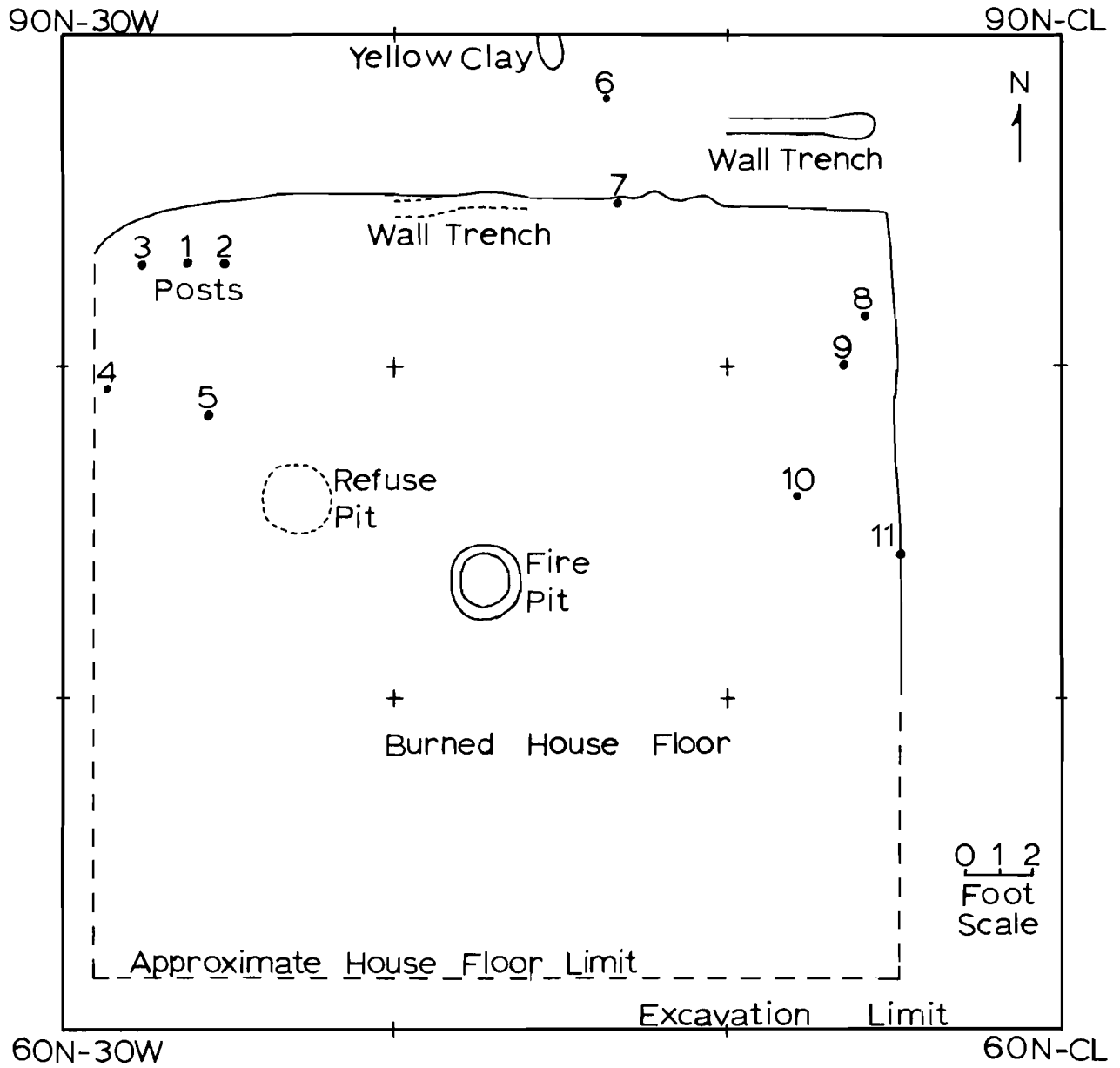


Figure 7. Clover Hill Site: House 1 and accompanying features.

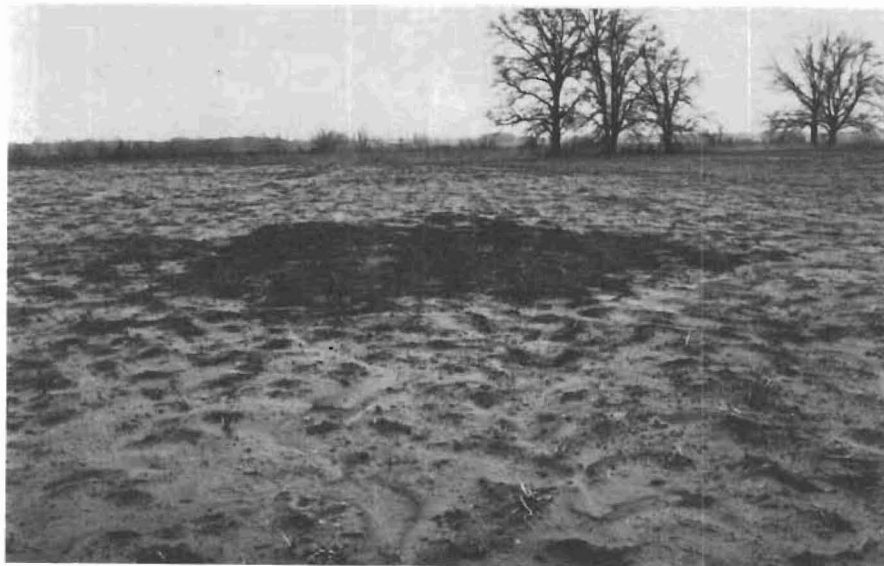


Plate 27. Clover Hill Site: plowed daub showing house location.



Plate 28. Clover Hill Site: excavation of House 1.

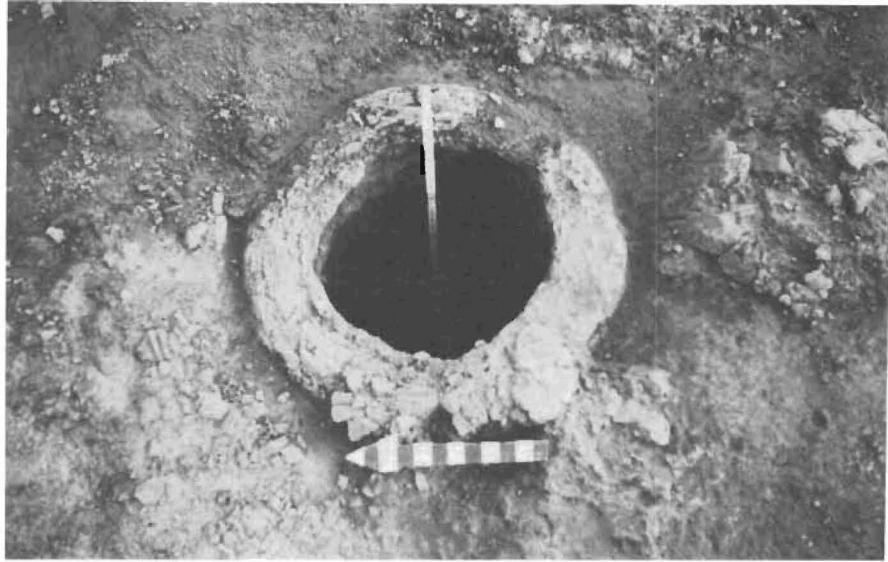


Plate 29. Clover Hill Site: fire pit in House 1.

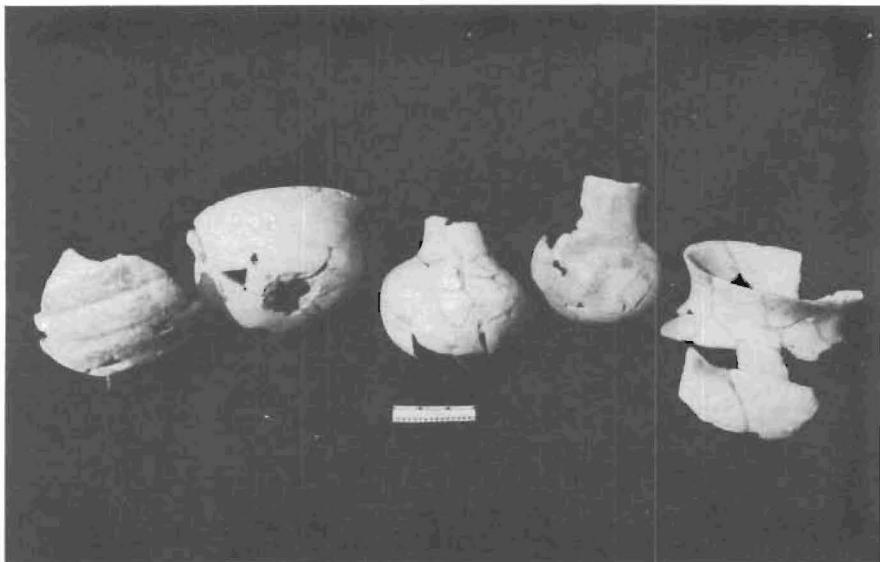


Plate 30. Clover Hill Site: ceramic vessels from surface.

although a few potsherds and vessel fragments of shell-tempered Mississippian Period types were recovered, along with a small, polished celt.

One other aspect of interest was the presence of a few scattered burned posts inside the house confines. Three of these, numbers 1-3 in the upper left corner of Figure 7, were used for obtaining radiocarbon dates of 1510, 1360, and 1525 A.D. respectively (see Appendix II). The first and last of these appear to be quite close to the estimated time of site occupation as indicated by some of the ceramic types found on the surface in the immediate area of this house (Plate 30). The date of 1360 A.D. seems somewhat early for the series of posts, assuming they are all part of the same house. At any rate, the 1360 date was directly associated with charred beans and persimmon seeds. All three posts have been identified as Green Ash, which is known to grow as long, flexible poles and is thus an excellent material for such house construction.

Figure 7 shows an approximate outline for the south and west floor limits because time ran out before these could be definitely recorded. However, most of the floor area in that portion of the house had been uncovered and there were no discernible features other than those shown in Figure 7. The most intensely fired area appeared to be approximately the northwest two thirds of the house, indicating the possibility of a southeasterly wind at the time of the blaze. Only traces of wall trenches could be seen at floor level. More time and deeper excavation could have turned up more distinct evidence of trench locations and possibly house rebuildings.

As it is, the opportunity to study just this portion of the site to a limited extent has afforded much interesting and valuable information on house construction and other aspects of Indian life. The data recovered will be useful in comparative studies of other similar sites in the area.

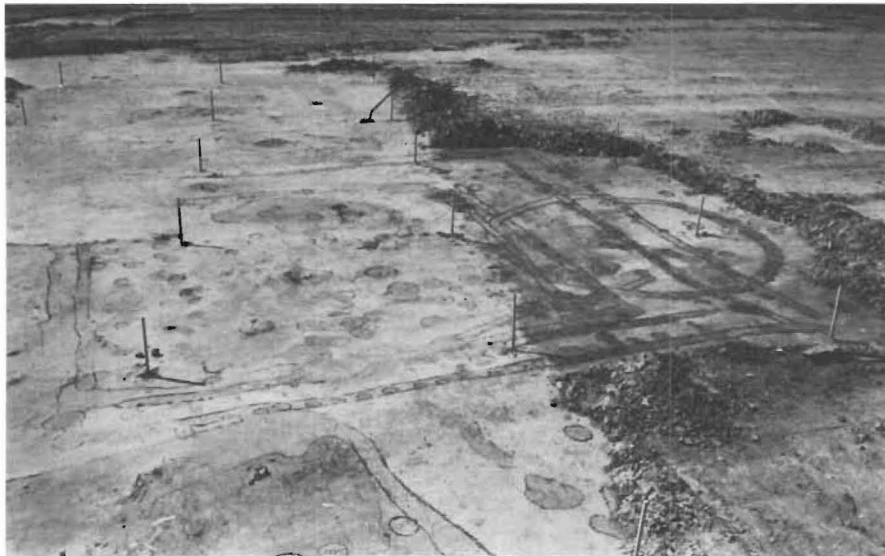


Plate 31. Flowers #3 Site: house patterns and features.



Plate 32. Flowers #3 Site: burial 9.

Flowers #3 Site (22-Tu-518)

In August, 1974, Department archaeologists were notified by R. B. Flowers, of Tunica, that human skeletal material had been uncovered on his property as a result of landleveling. John Connaway investigated and discovered not only a small burial ground, but a large adjacent village site with numerous exposed house patterns (Plate 31), all of Mississippi Period origin. Over a foot of topsoil (plow zone) had been removed and, since the site would soon be completely destroyed, the owner was persuaded to allow excavations on the exposed cultural area while leveling proceeded elsewhere.

After establishing datum points for reference and staking off several 10-foot squares, John Connaway, assisted part of the time by Carolyn Caldwell, proceeded to work first on the burial area. This cemetery was entirely separate from the village, where no burials were found at all. A total of 10 burial pits, within a 10 by 20 foot work area, were uncovered. These contained the remains of 14 individuals (possibly more than the levelers had destroyed or removed), many of which had intact ceramic vessels in association. Plates 32-35 show examples of these burials, some with vessels in place. All were bundle burials. That is, the custom of these and many other Mississippian Indian groups was to allow the body to decay above ground, then to gather the bones in a bundle, perhaps wrapped in animal hides, and bury them in a pit, sometimes along with a bowl filled with food. Plates 36-38 show some of the shell tempered pottery vessels found in association.

The bones were in very poor condition and most could not be saved intact for future study. Some age and sex determinations may be possible on a few of the better preserved specimens. The excavation was not expanded here for lack of time and because adjacent areas showed little evidence of other burial pits. Those recorded afforded a satisfactory sample of local burial customs and ceramic types utilized.

Following this, the excavation project was moved some 300 yards to the west where the large concentration of house patterns was located. The village, which was approximately 400 yards long and 100 yards wide, appeared to be situated along a low natural levee created by the Mississippi River. The river channel was probably flowing along the south edge of this ridge when the village was occupied. After removal of the topsoil and most all of the midden by the levelers, numerous house wall trench patterns appeared in the light yellow sandy subsoil (Plate 31). A large area was staked off in 10-foot squares and scraped clean with a shovel. The house patterns and features were then recorded to scale on graph paper. Features were not numerous, but included a number of refuse pits and hearths.

All or portions of 24 different houses were recorded and all but



Plate 33. Flowers #3 Site: burial 2.

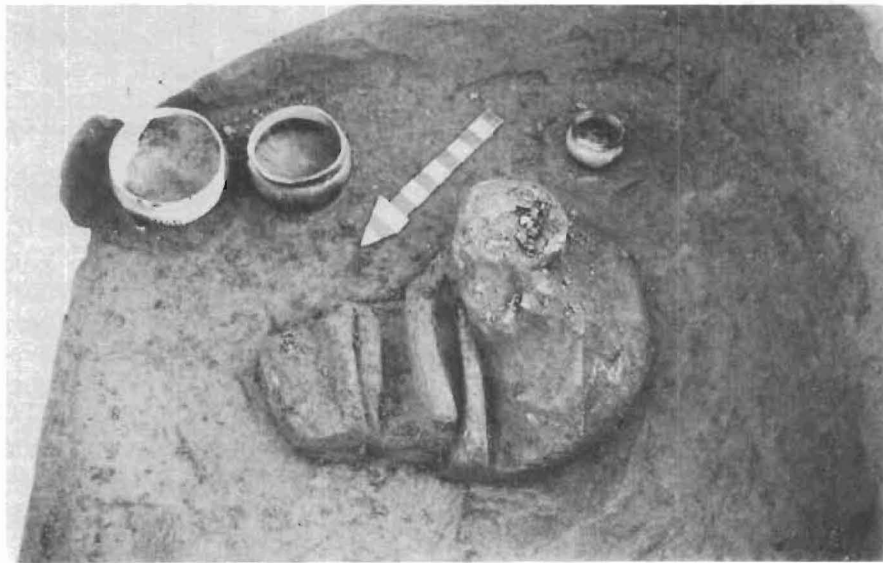


Plate 34. Flowers #3 Site: burial 10.



Plate 35. Flowers #3 Site: burial 13.



Plate 36. Flowers #3 Site: ceramic vessels associated with burials.

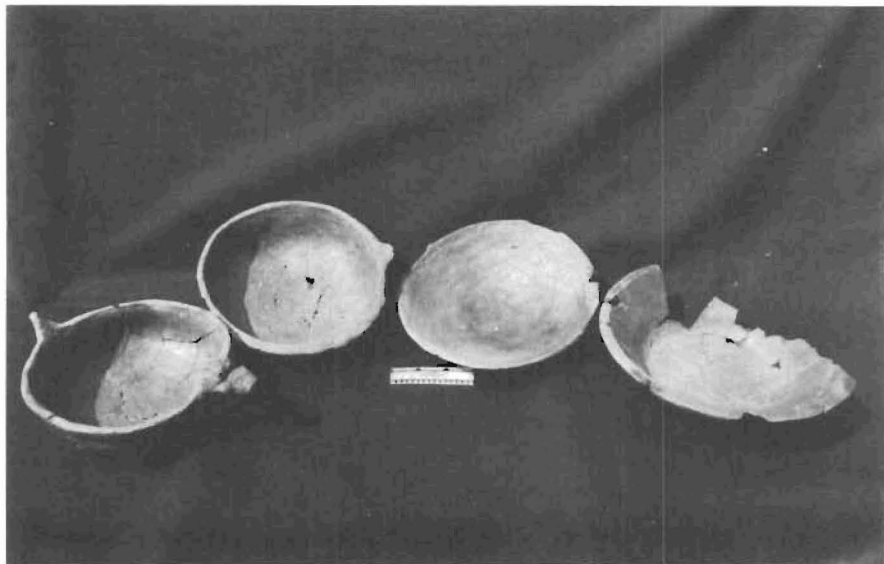


Plate 37. Flowers #3 Site: ceramic vessels associated with burials.



Plate 38. Flowers #3 Site: ceramic vessels associated with burials.

one were square to rectangular in shape, with small corner openings left for doorways typical for Mississippian settlements. The lone circular house, which was about 11 eleven feet in diameter, can be seen clearly in Plate 31. Many houses overlapped, indicating several rebuilding phases. All were constructed by placing poles upright and closely spaced in the wall trenches to form the house walls. Dark postmolds, where these poles rotted in the ground, were easily seen in the light soil.

Scattered throughout this village area and in shallow refuse pits were numbers of charred food remains. These included corn cobs and kernels; persimmon, wild bean, wild grape, sedge, and knotweed seeds; and hickory nut and pecan shells. Four radiocarbon dates were obtained from charred wood on the site (see Appendix II). From the burial ground, associated with two burials, came a date of 1705 A.D. From the village area came three dates. The first, 1345 A.D., was on cane from a small pit associated with House 1 or 2 and with corn and other seeds. The second, 1640 A.D., was on burned corn found just inside a House 13 wall trench. The third, 1380 A.D., was from charred wood and cane in a fire pit in the corner of House 10. The vast differences between some of these dates, along with the obvious rebuilding of many of the houses, could well indicate a long period of occupation of the site.

Unfortunately time did not allow further expansion and investigation of the village area. Slightly over 3300 square feet of this portion of the site was uncovered and recorded, revealing at least a sample of the village pattern and house construction styles. Much more remained to be investigated when the excavation ceased, an unfortunate reminder of how many other such sites have been completely destroyed with no archaeological work having been done at all. The landowner is to be commended for his interest and cooperation, without which all the information gleaned from the site would have been lost forever.



Plate 39. Sturdivant Fishweir: view of fishweir on river bank.



Plate 40. Sturdivant Fishweir: closeup of fishweir.

The Sturdivant Fishweir (22-Am-500)

Subsistence has always been of primary concern to mankind and, through the centuries, many aspects of the cultural lifeways of people have been centered around it. When a group is dependent upon a certain type of natural food resource, the very nature of this resource, its location in the environment, and the manner in which it is to be harvested are all contributing factors in the daily habits of the people, the distribution and placement of their settlements, and even their spiritual outlook. In attempting to understand the relationships between subsistence patterns, other cultural phenomena, and the natural environment, it is important for archaeologists to study the various methods of food procurement practiced by prehistoric people.

One of the major sources of protein recognized in archaeological sites throughout Mississippi is fish. In certain riverine environments, such as the Yazoo Basin or "Delta," an abundance of fish remains have been found in refuse pits on Indian village sites. It is apparent that such villages were regularly located near streams or rivers which provided not only fresh water, but a variety of aquatic plant and animal life.

In studying the partial dependence of food gatherers upon fish resources in Mississippi, archaeologists have encountered a major hindrance, the lack of tangible remains of fish-catching devices. Occasionally a bone fishhook turns up; theories have been formulated about the use of various stone and clay objects as net sinkers; and netting is known to have been made as witnessed by its impressions on the surface of Yates Net-Imprinted pottery; but to find the preserved remains of actual nets, wooden spears, basketry traps, or other devices of perishable material is almost unheard of in this area. Most of these artifacts have long since rotted away, unless they have been sealed off in some way to prevent decay.

The Sturdivant Fishweir is an example of one of these unusual and rare circumstances where perishable wood has been sealed for hundreds of years, then uncovered mostly intact, and discovered in time for archaeological investigation. A fishweir is defined by Webster's Dictionary (1971) as "a fence or enclosure (as of stakes, brushweed, or netting) set in a stream, tideway, or inlet of the sea for taking fish." There are a number of historic accounts of a variety of fishweirs and similar devices, as well as many recorded rock dams designed for similar purposes throughout the eastern United States. However, as far as is presently known, the only other weirs made of wood that have been recorded archaeologically were found on a construction site in the Back Bay District of Boston, Massachusetts, and in the Atherley Narrows, a channel between two lakes in southern Ontario, Canada. The former is called the Boylston Street Fishweir and was discovered in 1913 (Johnson 1942). Evidence of the weir was scattered over an area of about 65,000 square feet in a building excavation and approximately 65,000 stakes

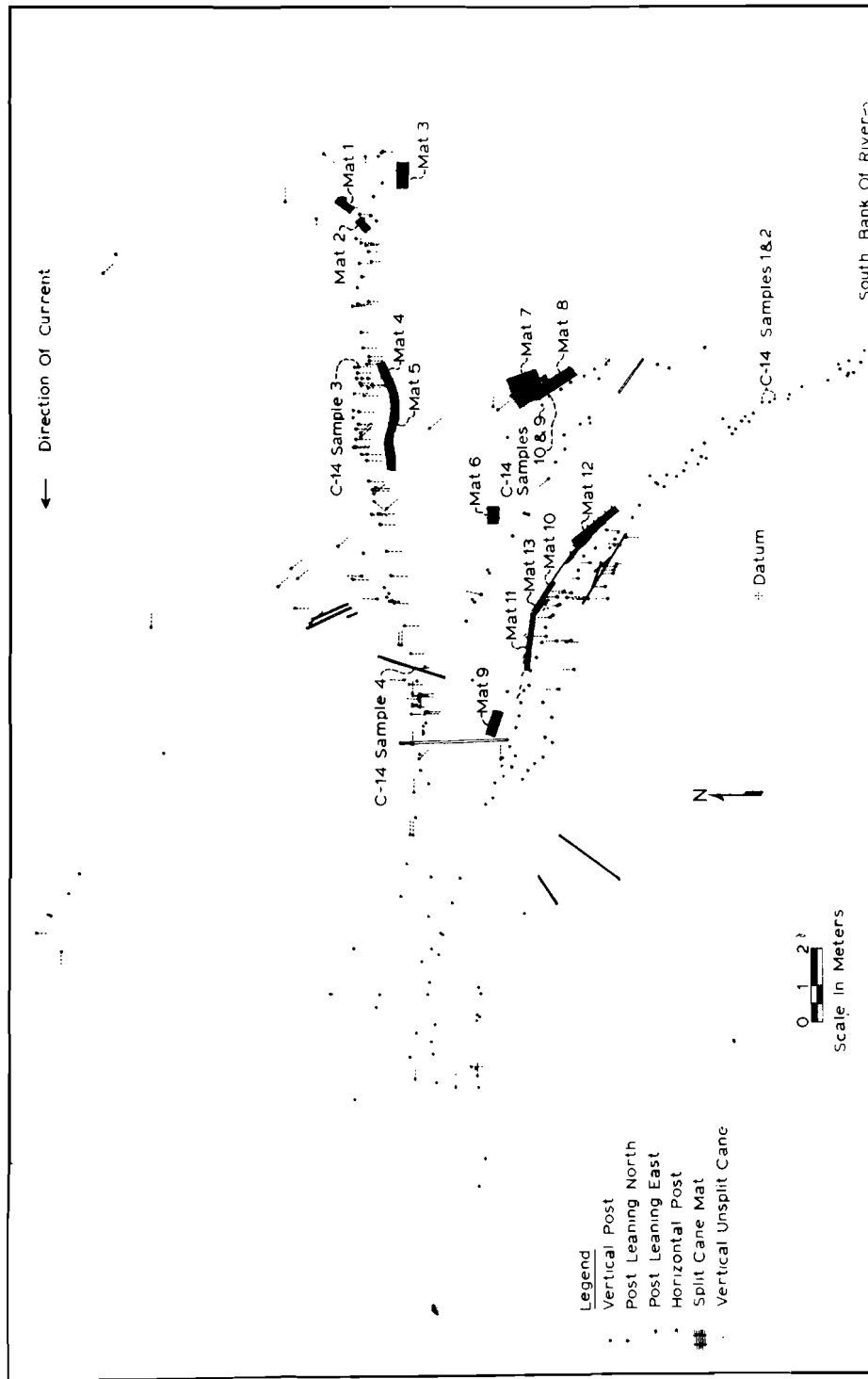


Figure 8. Sturdivant Fishweir: diagram of fishweir.

were observed driven into the ground. These were interlaced with masses of branches and have been radiocarbon dated at around 2500 B.C. (Byers 1959:242). The weirs in Ontario were constructed of poles arranged in linear patterns diagonally across the channel. Over 500 such stakes were recorded in an area relatively undisturbed by dredging. Radiocarbon dates averaged around 2500 B.C. (Johnston and Cassavoy 1978).

The Sturdivant Fishweir, which was discovered in the Homochitto River in 1975 by T. G. Sturdivant, differs somewhat in its construction. The Boylston Street weir was apparently designed to entrap fish as the tide receded from the bay. The Sturdivant weir, on the other hand, was designed to funnel fish into a trap in the current of a river. It consisted of nearly 300 posts, each about 2.5 to 3.5 inches in diameter, arranged in a V-shape, with the small end facing downstream (Plates 39 and 40). The entire structure was approximately 80 feet in length and had a narrow opening only a few feet wide. Presumably this was a funnel through which fish swam into some form of trap. Unfortunately a deep hole had been gouged out at this end by the river and any evidence of a trap had been washed away. Figure 8 shows the general plan of the weir.

The walls of the weir consisted of posts, which were sharpened and then driven into the river bottom in shallow water near the bank. One row of stakes apparently began at the bank, while the one opposite was out in the current. The inside of these rows was lined with woven split cane mats (Plate 41), placed there to prevent the fish from swimming between the posts. The mats were fragmented in places and the cane was soft and fragile, but portions were found intact (Plate 42), were recorded, and removed for preservation. These mat samples and samples of some of the posts were preserved in Polyethylene Glycol.

The posts were sharpened by splintering one end (Plate 43). The vast majority were pine, but also included were pecan or hickory, sweetgum, and possibly wild plum or cherry. Samples of the pine were saved for possible dating by dendrochronology (tree rings), but attempts at this were unsuccessful. The following radiocarbon dates were obtained from the University of Georgia: 1480 A.D. \pm 65; 1460 A.D. \pm 65; 1630 A.D. \pm 60; 1615 (average of four dates) A.D.; 1580 A.D. \pm 55; and 1595 A.D. \pm 80. These dates seem to confirm the theory that there were several rebuildings of the weir over a period of time. This is suggested by the several apparently separate rows of stakes seen in the diagram (Figure 8).

The Sturdivant Fishweir is indeed a rare find. It was uncovered under about 10 feet of sand when the bank of the river was eroded away by flooding. Mr. Sturdivant, not being an archaeologist nor having any previous experience with fishweirs, is to be commended for recognizing the structure as something of importance and reporting it to the Department of Archives and History. Archaeologists were dispatched quickly to

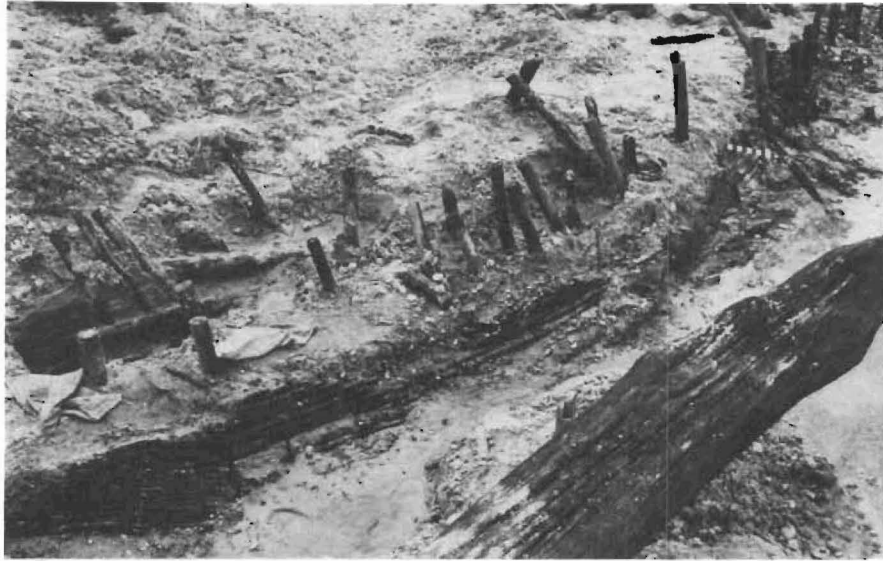


Plate 41. Sturdivant Fishweir: cane mats inside post line.

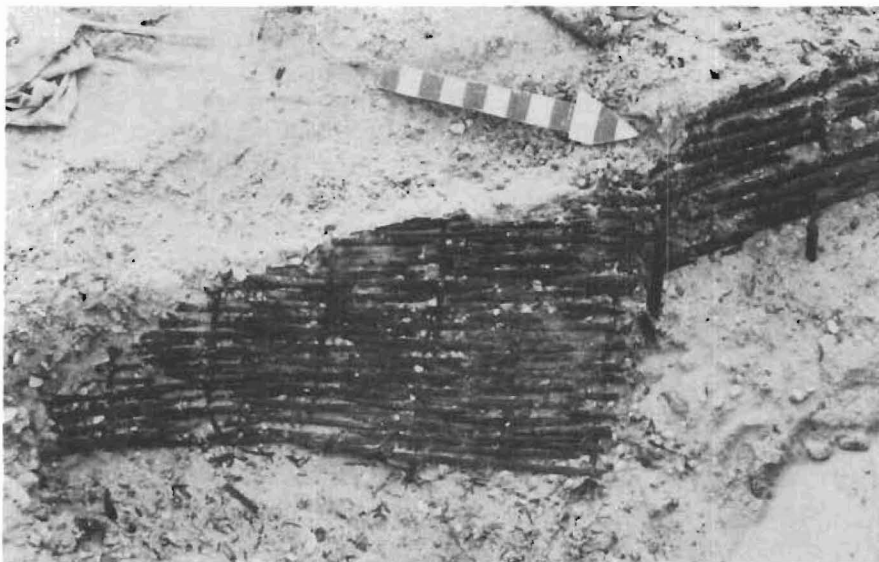


Plate 42. Sturdivant Fishweir: woven cane mats.

the area to record it before high water could destroy the remains. Other than those in Massachusetts and Ontario mentioned previously, this is the only recorded prehistoric weir of its type that we know of and certainly one of the few structures of perishable material recorded in the Southeast. Thanks to Mr. Sturdivant, it was not left to the fate of so many of our prehistoric resources. Unfortunately, it could not be protected from the river and has since been completely washed away.

In finding and studying the weir, we have learned much about the construction and use of one type of prehistoric food gathering device not commonly referred to in the literature. In fast-moving, shallow streams, such as the Homochitto, such devices may have been the most successful method of fishing and may have been commonplace. As far as pinning down the relationships between this example and the way of life of the people who built it, very little is known. No survey of the area has been made to locate associated villages or camps and very few sites are recorded in the general area. One possible ceremonial mound is located a short distance away on the opposite side of the river, but the site has not been investigated. The discovery of several dugout canoes, one of which has a radiocarbon date of 1465 A.D. \pm 60 (McGahey 1974:4), lends support to the theory of a river oriented lifestyle in the area. Who the weir builders were and where they lived remains for future studies to discover. A detailed report on the Sturdivant Fishweir is in preparation by John Connaway.



Plate 43. Sturdivant Fishweir: split-sharpened posts.

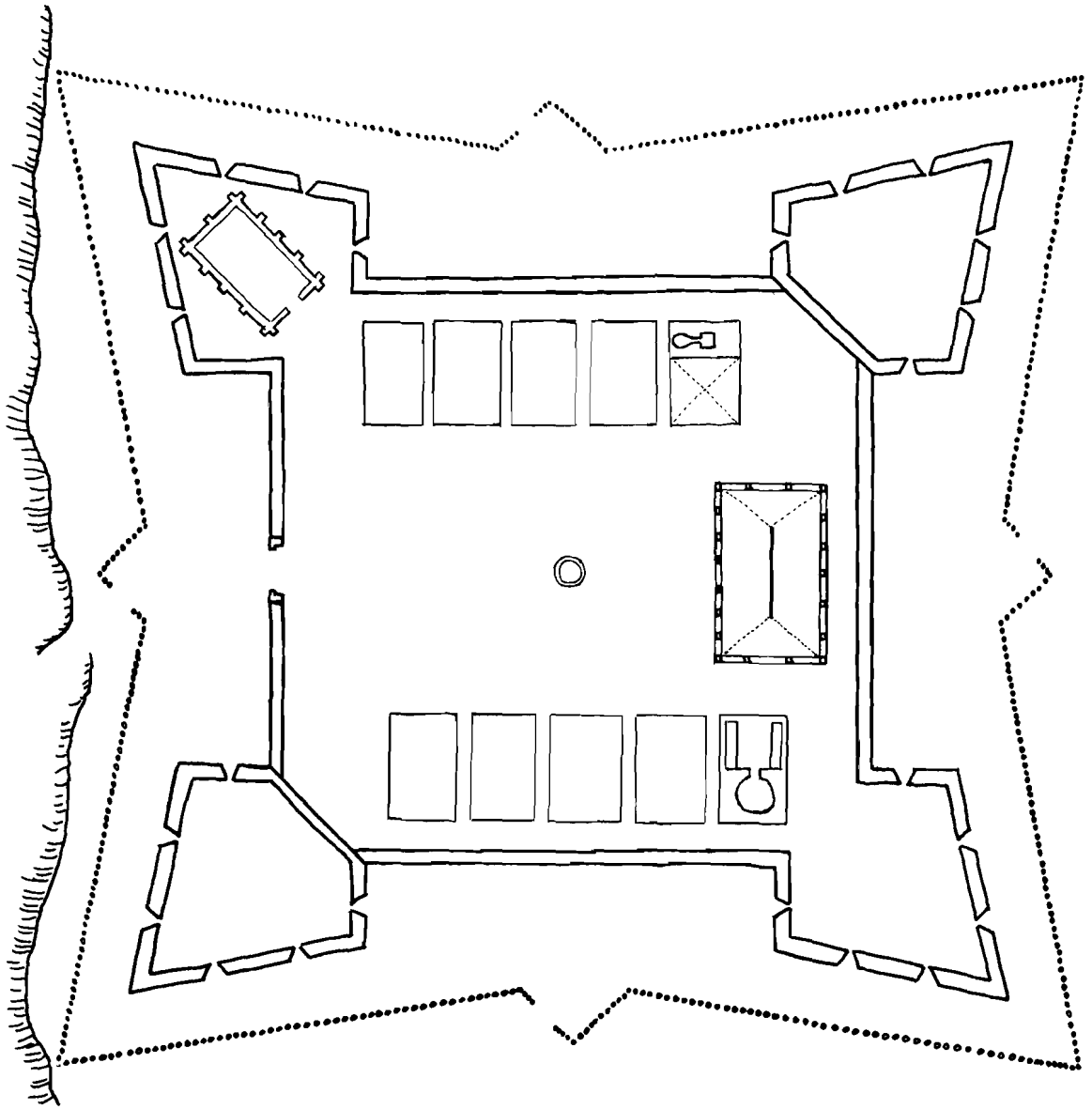


Figure 9. Plan of Fort Maurepas. After Le Blond de la Tour, Plan du fort de Maurepas a la coste meridionale de la floride.

Fort Maurepas Investigation

Fort Maurepas (Figure 9) was constructed by the French at Vieux Biloxi (Old Biloxi) in 1699. This was the first French settlement in the vicinity of the lower Mississippi Valley and served as the capital of the French colony of Louisiana from 1699 to 1702, at which time the capital was moved to Mobile.

The historical importance of this fort has, in recent years, brought about increased interest in promoting it as a part of Mississippi's heritage. Studies of early French maps (Figures 10-12) were undertaken in an attempt to determine its location, and much of its brief history has been documented. Cartographic evidence conclusively verifies that Fort Maurepas was situated on the Ocean Springs side of Biloxi Bay and north of the present Bay bridge.

The 1699 Historical Committee was formed for the purpose of reconstructing the fort, based on the original French plans (Figure 9), and developing it as a historic site and tourist attraction in Ocean Springs. Funds were appropriated by the State Legislature in 1973 for purchase of the property, provided it was located exactly and placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Thus, in 1973, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History initiated a program of archaeological research in an attempt to document the fort's location.

After a non-productive study of infrared aerial photographs, it was decided that test excavation in the area in question was the logical alternative. A study of several old French maps (Figures 10-12) narrowed the search down to the series of residential properties north of the bridge (Figure 13), along the east bank of Biloxi Bay. Three hypotheses were formulated regarding the fort's location. These were based on historical material, maps, and information supplied by local residents.

The first hypothesis involved a report by a local resident that a partially buried corner of large timbers had been observed on the Poitevent property around the year 1900. This was situated in such a way as to suggest the northeast bastion of the fort, which was of squared, horizontally laid timbers about two feet thick. Unfortunately, permission to do test trenching on the Poitevent lawn was denied, so the search was moved to the Conner property just to the south. A test trench was dug as close to and parallel with the Poitevent land as possible in hopes of encountering some portion of the fort.

Although a French brick and some faience ceramic sherds were found in the trench close to the bluff along the shoreline of the bay, no features indicative of a fort were encountered, ruling out an overlap on the two properties. Another trench paralleling the first and in the central part of the Conner property revealed part of a large feature

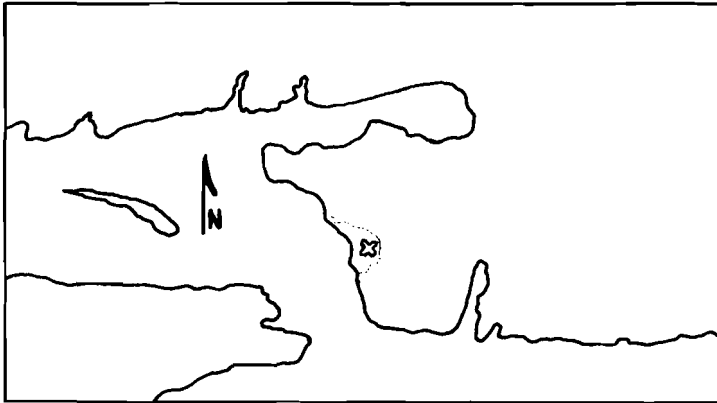


Figure 10. Fort Maurepas area, 1699. After Anon., Carte Particuliere Des Environs du fort de Monrepas Et de La baye des Biloxi.

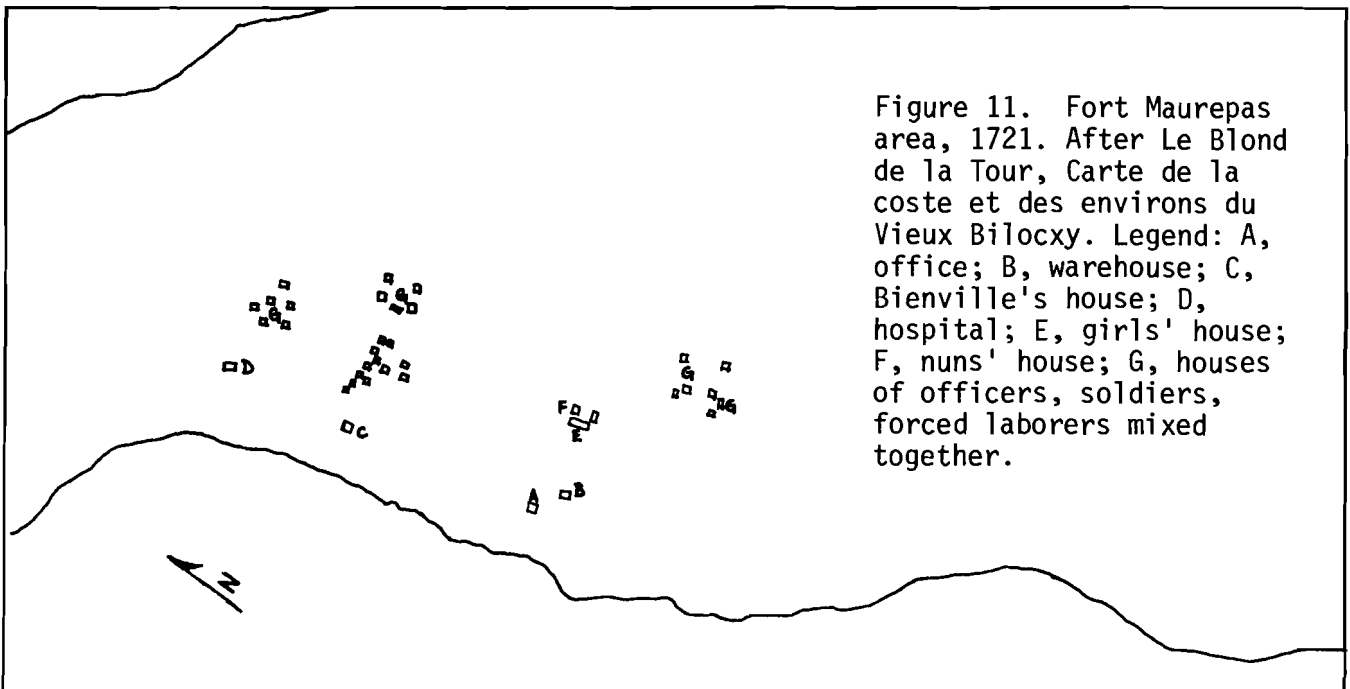


Figure 11. Fort Maurepas area, 1721. After Le Blond de la Tour, Carte de la coste et des environs du Vieux Biloxy. Legend: A, office; B, warehouse; C, Bienville's house; D, hospital; E, girls' house; F, nuns' house; G, houses of officers, soldiers, forced laborers mixed together.

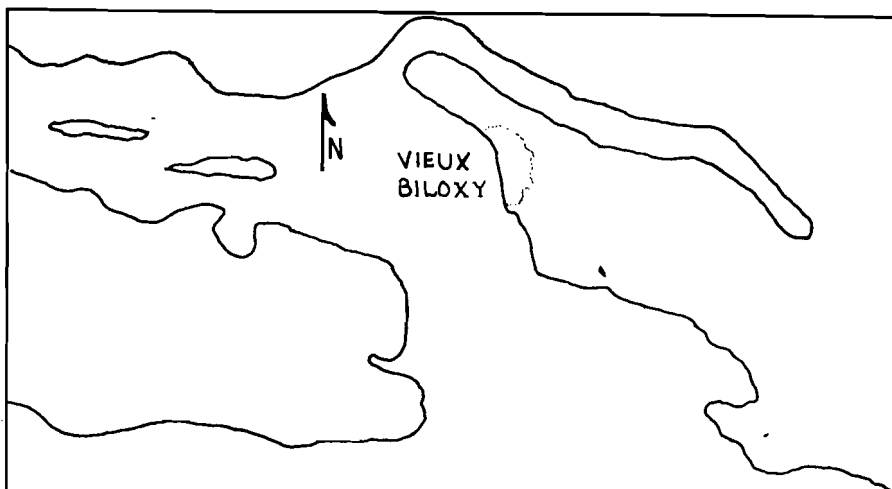


Figure 12. Fort Maurepas area, 1722. After Le Blond de la Tour, Carte de Partie de la Coste du Nouveau Biloxy Avec les Isles des Environs.

(Figure 14 and Plate 44), but decidedly not the fort. This feature included many large rectangular postmolds and a large circular trench about 50 feet in diameter. Although only a portion of this was excavated and its function thus remains unexplained, it is suggestive of a tar kiln. A similar example was an 18th Century tar kiln excavated at Charles Towne, South Carolina, in 1969 by the University of South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology (Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology 1969). It consisted of a circular trench about 70 feet in diameter, a catch basin in the center, and a ditch running from the center to a collection basin near the perimeter.

A radiocarbon date of 1755 A.D. \pm 55 (UGa-585) was obtained from one of the charred posts in the feature on the Conner property. A colonial brick, two French gun flints, and several faience sherds were recovered from this area, all indicating a French Colonial time period. The extension of this trench to the bluff overlooking the bay turned up another brick and a few more sherds, but no features. It is interesting to note that most of the French artifacts were found near the bluff. Based on the test trenches, the Conner property was ruled out as the locus of the fort.

The second hypothesis concerning the fort's location was based on a report from another local source that during the construction of the Guice home in the 1920s, an oyster shell wall and several large pieces of unidentified iron were discovered while excavating the basement. The Guice property is just south of Conner. That the material found there could have been related to the fort led to investigations on the property. Although no excavations were allowed, the use of a resistivity meter in the area suggested the presence of many subsurface features. The resistivity meter, or anomaly detector, measures the resistance of the ground to the passage of an electric current between two metal stakes. Disturbed soil, such as a grave, pit, ditch, or the like, gives a different reading on the instrument and the size of the disturbed area can then be measured. The Guice property features will remain uninterpreted until excavations can reveal their nature.

The third hypothesis evolved from the study of the old maps and examination of present topography. The earliest map, made in 1699, not only shows the location of the fort, but also shows a protrusion of land about half way up the peninsula from Plummers Point, where the present bridge stands. The maps of 1721 and 1722 show Old Biloxi at this protrusion. On the 1699 map the fort is shown just south of this area and immediately north of two elongated features running parallel toward the bay. These features appear to be ravines on the 1721 map. Presently a large ravine which may coincide with those on the maps can be seen on the Palfrey property just north of the bridge. Assuming this to be the feature just south of the fort, it was theorized that the location might be on the Palfrey land. Permission was granted for test trenches, but these, as well as magnetometer and resistivity surveys, turned up no

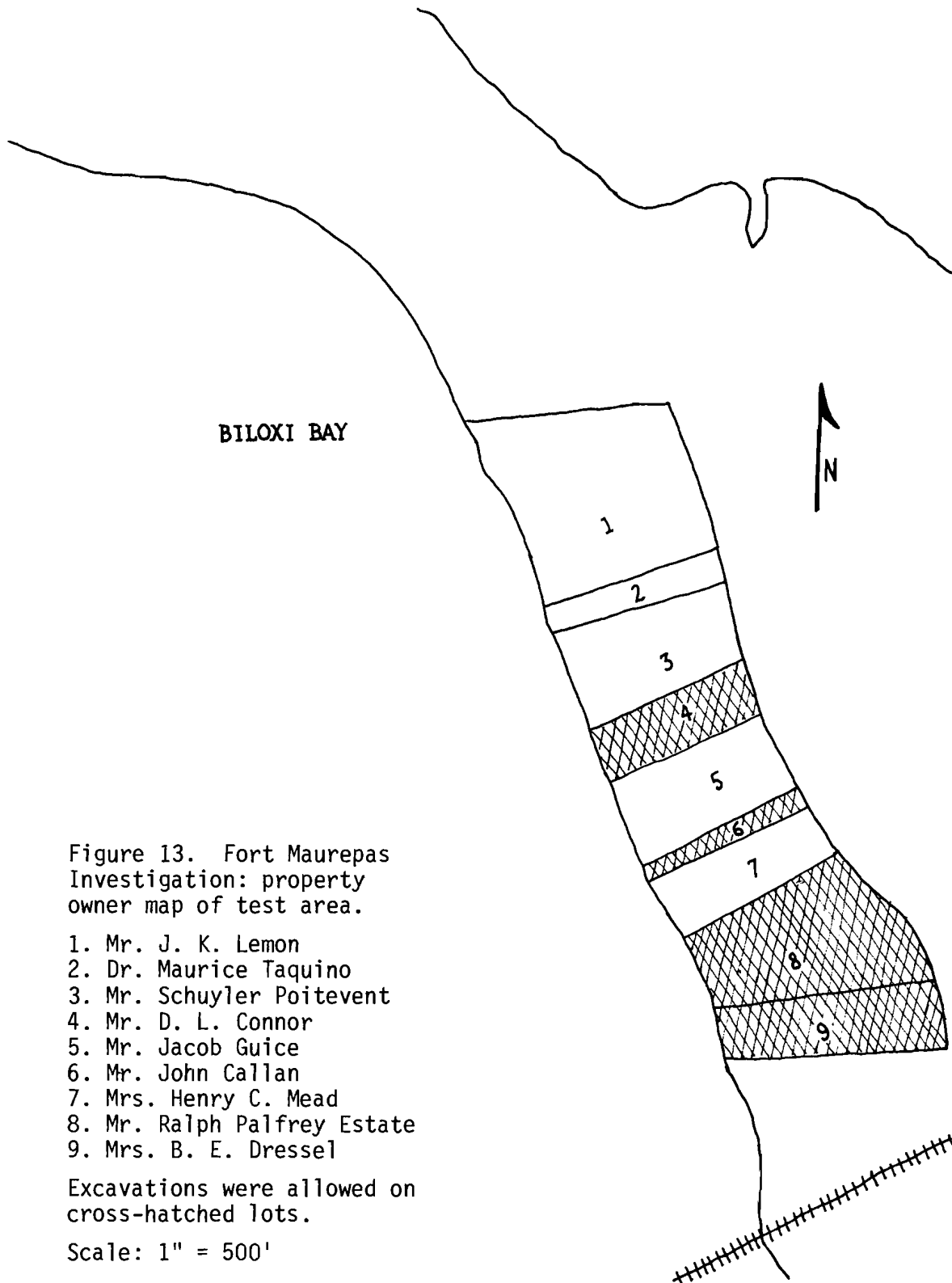


Figure 13. Fort Maurepas
Investigation: property
owner map of test area.

1. Mr. J. K. Lemon
2. Dr. Maurice Taquino
3. Mr. Schuyler Poitevent
4. Mr. D. L. Connor
5. Mr. Jacob Guice
6. Mr. John Callan
7. Mrs. Henry C. Mead
8. Mr. Ralph Palfrey Estate
9. Mrs. B. E. Dressel

Excavations were allowed on
cross-hatched lots.

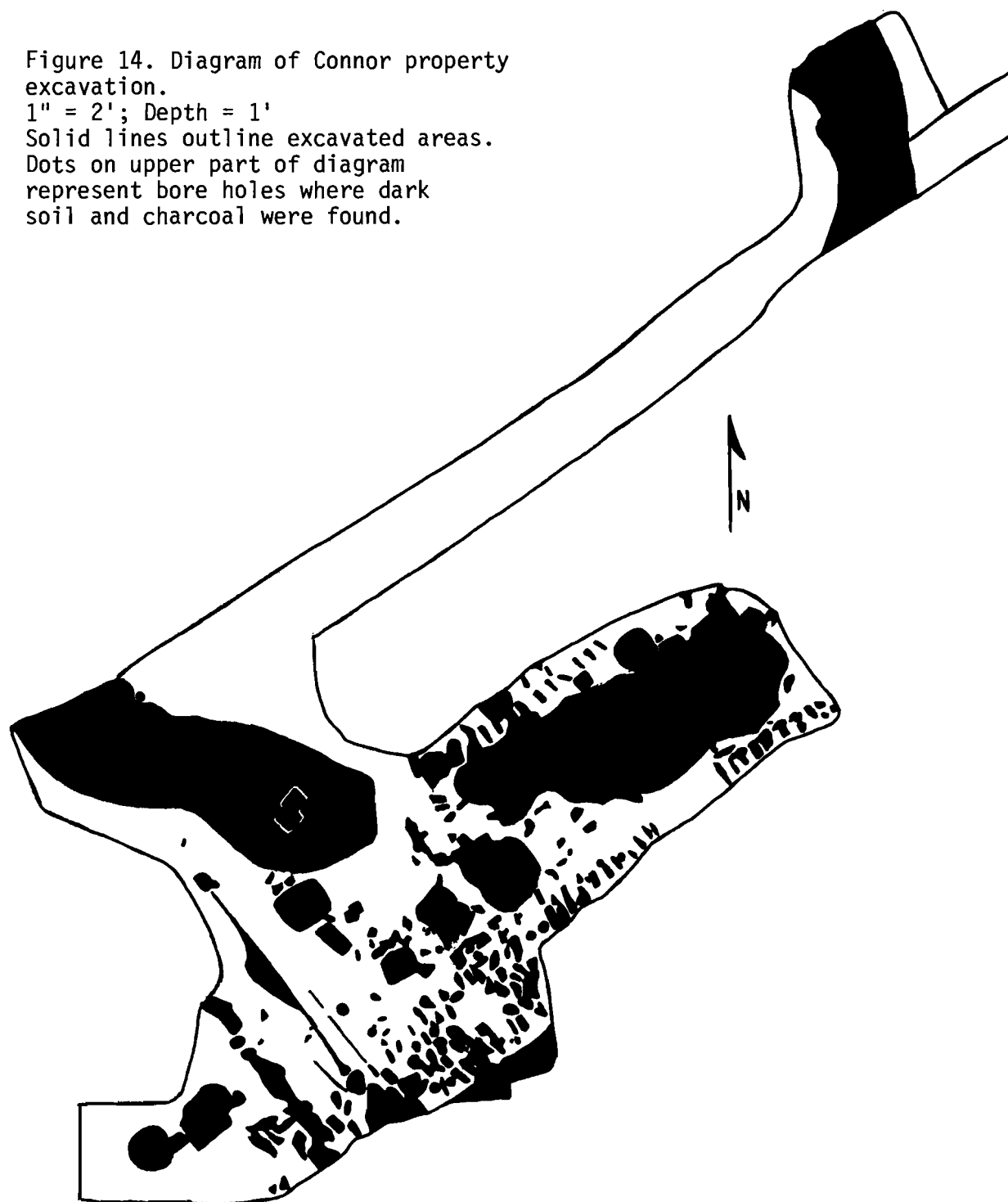
Scale: 1" = 500'

Figure 14. Diagram of Connor property excavation.

1" = 2'; Depth = 1'

Solid lines outline excavated areas.

Dots on upper part of diagram represent bore holes where dark soil and charcoal were found.



evidence of the fort or any French occupation.

Testing of the aforementioned three hypotheses resulted in no conclusive evidence for the fort's location. Based on this, two other hypotheses may be suggested. First, it seems quite possible that the fort has eroded into Biloxi Bay. Long time residents of the area report the erosion of up to 70 feet of shoreline in that many years. There was formerly an oyster shell road along the beach which disappeared long ago. Also, the prominence of land on which Old Biloxi is shown on the early maps does not appear on any maps since 1855. Likewise suggestive of the loss of the fort through erosion is the clustering of most of the French artifacts near the shore, possibly the area behind the fort. The other possibility, of course, is that the fort site is on one of the properties which remain unexcavated.

In conclusion, the excavations showed only where the fort did not stand. Only further testing of remaining properties can present conclusive evidence of either the fort's specific location or its erosion into the bay. Accurate reconstruction of the fort as it was actually built can only be done based on in-ground remains, and this means controlled excavation of subsurface features, such as those suggested by the resistivity meter.



Plate 44. Fort Maurepas Investigation: features excavated on Connor property.

Note: the foregoing information has been extracted from "An Account of the Attempted Location of Fort Maurepas, 1973" by Samuel O. McGahey in The Establishment of the Fort Maurepas Historical Site: A Report From the Board of Trustees of the Department of Archives and History.

Fort St. Pierre (22-Wr-514)
(William C. Wright)

The site of Fort St. Pierre, under private ownership, is the only surviving French fortification in Mississippi not disturbed by man or totally destroyed by nature. It is located in Warren County, 12 miles north of Vicksburg, and is situated on the second terrace of the loess bluffs overlooking the Yazoo River and a great part of the Lower Mississippi-Yazoo Valley. It was first visited by a group of Canadian missionaries in 1698, who found the small bands of Indians in the area friendly, but no permanent settlement was attempted until 20 years later.

Fort St. Pierre and the various 10 to 14 French concessions established along the Yazoo River were a product of the financial enterprise engineered by John Law in the early eighteenth century. Law's scheme to colonize the Lower Mississippi Valley would serve two purposes: to boost the sagging economy of France and to give France rather than England control of the Lower Mississippi. When the fort was erected in 1719 there were approximately 82 people in residence, and by 1720 the population had risen to over 320, a population greater than that of New Orleans at the time. In 1721 the Yazoo post was a thriving community. There were some 48 soldiers garrisoned in the fort in addition to the colonists. However, Law's endeavor failed.

As a result of the collapse of Law's colonial enterprise, the outbreak of disease in 1721, and raids by Chickasaw Indians in 1722-23, a large portion of the population soon left this region. From that point in time until the end Fort St. Pierre's importance was declining. The last four or five years of Fort St. Pierre's occupation was not too impressive. Very little is known historically about the interaction between these French colonists and the local native population. We do know that relations must have been at a low point in 1729, because in December of that year the Yazoo Indians massacred the inhabitants of the settlement and destroyed the fort.

The site of Fort St. Pierre was lost for 245 years. A search was made for the fort in 1851 by B. L. C. Wailes, Mississippi's state geologist, but his diary states he failed to locate the site. Other attempts were made by various amateur and professional archaeologists over the years. A bridge was even constructed on the south side of the fort crossing the Yazoo River in 1929, and named the St. Peter Bridge, and Warren County erected a monument in the triangle forming the approach slab stating that the fort was near this site. However, the site of Fort St. Pierre was not found until 1974, when a team from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History located it while working on a joint venture with Harvard University's Peabody Museum survey team. Harvard's team was concentrating on the site of the Yazoo Indian village while the team from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History

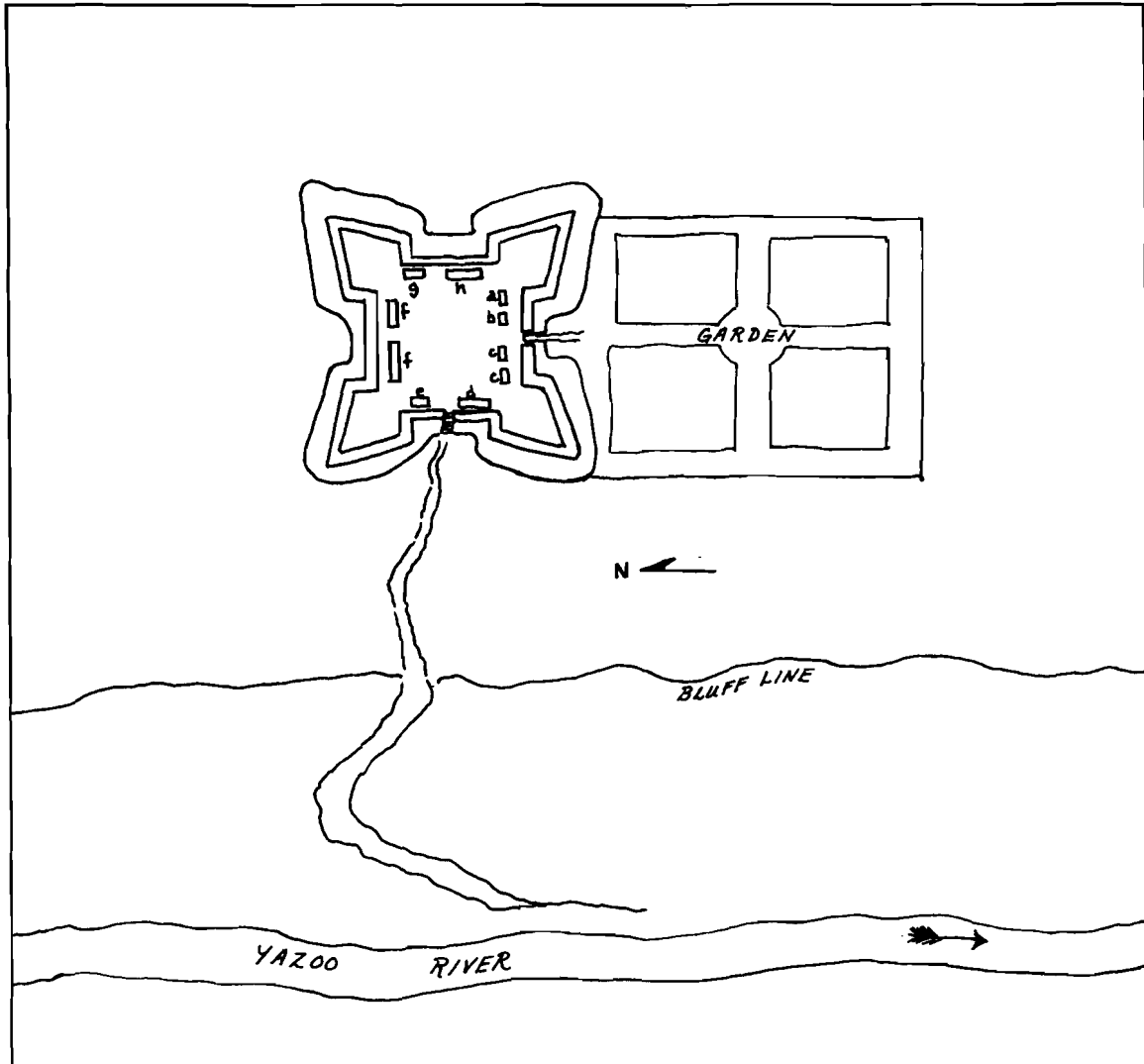


Figure 15. Plan of Fort St. Pierre, 1722. After Dumont de Montigny, Plan du Fort St. Claude des Yasous. Legend: a, commander's house; b, kitchen; c, officers' quarters; d, guardhouse; e, sergeants' quarters; f, barracks; g, warehousekeeper's house; h, warehouse.

searched for the long lost Fort St. Pierre.

The site of Fort St. Pierre is situated upon a bluff remnant sandwiched between Highway 3 and the Yazoo River. The extreme northern edge of the fort location has suffered some damage over the centuries from erosion, and the south section where the garden is shown on contemporary maps was destroyed by the 1929 bridge construction. The western side of the site has also eroded or sloughed to some extent.

Prior to excavation, an instrument survey was conducted over the entire site. First, a resistivity meter was used in a grid system oriented north to south and east to west at one-meter increments to determine if there were any linear subsurface features, such as walls or ditches. The best readings recorded were later discovered to be the moat and palisade wall trenches. Differential proton magnetometers and metal detectors were also employed, the results being extremely worthwhile. The highest concentration of indicative readings from that survey was recorded near the intersection of two linear embankments, one running north to south and the other east to west.

Excavation first began upon these embankments to determine if they were man-made or the result of natural slumping. A one-meter trench through the embankment revealed that the feature was a natural phenomenon that the French had utilized in construction of the fort. At the angle of the two embankments long stains running north to south and parallel to the embankment and river were found. A continuation of the trench to the west of the embankment located a series of small trash pits running parallel to the western embankment. It is not certain whether all of these features were indeed trash pits or merely the remains of garbage thrown over the western palisade and allowed to settle naturally in contours below. All of the remaining excavations of 1974 were centered in this area between the western palisade wall and the western embankment.

With very little time and money the Mississippi Department of Archives and History team returned to the site in the summer of 1975 to determine the extent of the fort remaining. It was feared that the construction of the bridge on the south, the highway on the east and natural erosion on the north and west had left little of the fort to excavate. A series of half-meter trenches was determined to be the best method of locating any stains of structures. This system was laid out north to south on the datum point with trenches running 90 and 45 degrees every 15 meters. This system would allow the crew to cover a very large area in the time allotted, and proved to be a very productive method. It was realized that there was much more of the fort remaining than was thought the year before. With a little time remaining after completion of the trench grid, a portion of two areas was investigated. These features later proved to be the blacksmith shop and part of the officers' quarters.

Sufficient funding allowed a crew of 18 to be fielded at Fort St. Pierre in 1976, but not all were required at the fort site. Several contiguous sites which had been surveyed during the winter were excavated to determine what type of trade goods were obtained by the Indians, or if any artifacts found might suggest material looted from the fort when it was destroyed. The only probable artifacts indicating the latter were found in a partially "potted" grave. Artifacts recovered, along with those robbed from the site, indicate this was the grave of one of the participants in the massacre.

During the work on the fort site during the summer of 1976, the entire southern moat and palisade wall, the commander's quarters, the kitchen, the remainder of the officers' quarters, and part of the guards' quarters were excavated. A great number of artifacts, mostly nails and ceramics, were found. Nearly all show the effects of the conflagration which took place after the massacre. One of the more interesting areas excavated during this season was the site of a crude shot making facility. It appears that the French were using a large water container to drop molten lead through a sieve, or screen, from a low height, which produced lead droplets the cross section of which would range from today's no. 9 up to about a no. 4 shot. Over a thousand shot were found in this area around a circular flat feature where the barrel stood. At the end of the 1976 season it was determined that there was definite need for another summer's work at the fort site. The exact size of the fort had not been determined, the eastern wall and moat had not been excavated, and the magazine area had not been investigated.

A return to the site in the summer of 1977 answered many of the questions remaining, and either proved or disproved some of the theories held as to how the fort looked at the time of the massacre. Excavations were centered around two areas, the eastern palisade and moat and the western edge of the site, in hopes of locating the palisade wall behind the guards' quarters. Fortunately, both of these objectives were accomplished when the western wall was found on the last day of excavation.

There are three surviving contemporary maps of Fort St. Pierre, and all three are quite similar (Figure 15). They place the commander's quarters, kitchen, and officers' quarters on the south side; the magazine (warehouse) and magaziner's (storekeeper's) quarters on the east; the enlisted barracks on the north; and the guards' and sergeants' quarters on each side of the main gate on the west, or river, side. The palisade formed a bastion at each corner, but what activity was carried on in the bastions is not marked on the map. There was a shallow moat around the perimeter of the palisade to provide for drainage more than defense. The major difference between the maps and the archaeological evidence was that on the maps the structures on the east side are shown spaced away from the palisade wall, as are all the other buildings, but in actuality they butted right against the palisade.

A visiting priest noted that "the fort is shrinking in size." This statement baffled the researchers for a time. Was he referring to the size of the garrison, or to the physical dimensions of the fort? The excavations told us what was meant by "shrinking." The garrison was actually depleted somewhat by 1729, and at the time of the massacre only the southwestern section of the fort was being used. The structures in this area were equipped with plank flooring. The remaining structures were not being used at the time, and it is possible that they were even dismantled for the timbers to add on to the buildings on the southwest side. We did find 90% of the artifacts in the southwest corner, therefore, we believe this is the area where the massacre took place. Certainly, this area showed greater fire destruction than the rest of the fort.

Immediately before the attack on Fort St. Pierre the commander had taken some of the troops and a few Yazoo Indians, for guides and hunters, to New Orleans. Unfortunately, these Frenchmen met the same fate as those left behind. While at Fort Rosalie, in present Natchez, they were killed in the attack on that post by the Natchez. Evidently, the Yazoo who had accompanied the troops from St. Pierre were encouraged to return home and destroy the fort on the Yazoo River.

During the 10 years of Fort St. Pierre's existence no trouble had existed between the Yazoo and the French, and even though the fort was probably poorly equipped when compared to less remote settlements, there was considerable trading with the Yazoo. By far beads were the most numerous of the trade items. Utilitarian items such as knives, axes, and cheap trade muskets were also exchanged. We have no idea of the market in soft goods, such as blankets, but assume this would have been a much sought after item by the Indians. One would expect to find religious objects being given to the Indians, but only one crucifix was found which might be associated with the Yazoo. What did the French receive in return besides purchased loyalty? Records show that one complaint of the French was that their vessels were all used up, and that they had to trade for Indian pottery to use instead of their fine faience. Archaeology certainly substantiates this fact. There were no complete faience vessels found, and few fragments for 10 years' occupation. However, there were numerous sherds and several nearly complete pieces of aboriginal pottery found within the confines of the fort. No faience vessels were found at the village of the Yazoo which might indicate that such goods were carried off during the massacre.

Unlike prehistoric archaeology where there are no written records to serve as guidelines or to govern excavations, historic archaeology has a somewhat tighter temporal control. It is similar to putting a puzzle together, and many times like a puzzle there will be pieces that are missing, or just don't fit. There were some pieces of this puzzle that went up with the flames at the destruction of St. Pierre.

The four seasons of work at Fort St. Pierre have been valuable in filling in the great Lower Mississippi Valley gap in the study of French colonial settlement from Canada to the Gulf Coast. There were extremely few surviving documents relating to Fort St. Pierre, so that only through archaeology may many of our questions be answered. The excavation of Fort St. Pierre has allowed us that opportunity to investigate what life was like at a remote settlement on the Yazoo River in the early eighteenth century.

An in-depth study of the fort excavations and the relation of the fort to other French and Indian sites in the area is the subject of the 1979 dissertation by Ian Brown, a member of the Department team.

Postscript

It can be seen throughout the preceding summaries that even though much important information has been retrieved through archaeological salvage and limited excavations, much more has been lost to the plow, the bulldozer, and man's seeming indifference to the loss of his heritage. Unfortunately, there are people who just don't care, or through some degree of ignorance, don't know the difference. As long as this holds true, we will continue to lose our heritage for all time.

It should be remembered that compared with the vast number of endangered prehistoric sites and the expanse of territory over which they are distributed, the proportionate number of professional archaeologists, as well as qualified and concerned amateurs, is extremely small. For every site that is saved, recorded, tested, or even partially excavated, many hundreds more are unintentionally destroyed simply by plowing, while many others, specifically mounds, are intentionally annihilated. In large part, such limited excavations as have been outlined here afford only glimpses into the past and probably raise more questions than they answer. However, to secure any small knowledge of life as it was in ancient times is better than to gain no knowledge at all. In this respect, each of those sites mentioned herein has contributed its minute share. Without the aid of dedicated amateurs, much of this work could not have been accomplished.

Some of these sites may serve to exemplify not only the need for a more comprehensive program of archaeological site investigation, but a stronger approach to public education. For example, Longstreet, Boyd, Acree, Maddox #2, and Flowers #3 sites, as well as the small mound at Shady Grove, have all been leveled for farming purposes; much of the Hester site has become a gravel pit; the Grand Gulf Mound was leveled to make way for a nuclear power plant; part of the Barner site was graded and paved for a country road; and the entire Bobo site was hauled off for land fill at a shopping center. Such is modern man's tribute to our prehistoric heritage in the name of progress and profit.

Without adequate funding and personnel, we are not able to adequately record even a fraction of the culture history buried in the many sites which are daily going the way of those mentioned above. We have been fortunate to have the cooperation of the majority of landowners on whose property we wish to conduct investigations, as well as the interest and support of many amateurs and collectors. Without this, the task would be impossible.

Unfortunately, this is not enough. Though landowners may often hold off destroying a site while it is being tested or excavated, they rarely can be convinced to preserve the site once they have decided on destroying it, for whatever reason. Many simply aren't aware of the importance of such sites until it is too late. This is where public

education could help, and in this respect amateurs or amateur organizations can be of tremendous help. Not only can they organize intensive site surveys, but they can initiate programs to inform landowners of the archaeological importance of the sites located and educate them in proper preservation techniques. Such a contribution would be far more important than merely vying with each other for the biggest or best collection of artifacts. Recording sites and artifacts, as well as reporting those in danger of destruction, are some of the most important functions of the true amateur archaeologist. It is to them and to the interest of informed citizens that we owe the very existence of our archaeological program. Thanks to them, we have at least salvaged a few pages out of the book of the past.

John Connaway

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Appendix I
Chronology of Yazoo Basin Prehistory

<u>Date</u>	<u>Period</u>	<u>Characteristics</u>
15,000 - 7,000 B.C.	Paleo-Indian	Small nomadic bands; hunting large mammals; fluted projectile points.
7,000 - 4,000 B.C.	Early Archaic	Semi-nomadic bands; seasonal settlements; hunting, gathering; side-notched and corner-notched points.
4,000 - 2,000 B.C.	Middle Archaic	More sedentary bands; seasonal settlements; hunting, gathering; stone beads, bannerstones; large crude stemmed points.
2,000 - 500 B.C.	Poverty Point	Larger sedentary groups; first chiefdom; socio-political hierarchy; hunting, gathering; lapidary and microlithic industries; steatite vessels; clay cooking balls; first pottery (fiber tempered); medium to large serrated stemmed points.
500 B.C. - 100 A.D.	Tchula or Tchefuncte	Small villages; small burial mounds; hunting, gathering; sand and clay tempered pottery; small to medium sized stemmed points.
100 - 500 A.D.	Marksville	Small villages; socio-religious hierarchy; large burial mounds; mortuary ceremonialism; hunting, gathering; some horticulture; decorative incised and stamped clay tempered pottery; medium sized stemmed points.
500 - 800 A.D.	Baytown	Larger villages; localized political organization; cemeteries, some mounds; hunting, gathering, fishing, some horticulture; plain and cordmarked clay tempered utilitarian pottery; medium sized stemmed points.
800 - 1,000 A.D.	Coles Creek	Transitional Baytown to Mississippi; Baytown traits, some beginning Mississippi traits; ceremonial mounds; incised clay tempered pottery; small arrow points.
1,000 - 1,700 A.D.	Mississippi	Large towns, villages; small farming homesteads; regional tribal organization; ceremonial centers; ceremonial and domiciliary mounds; cemeteries; corn and bean agriculture; some hunting, gathering, fishing; wattle and daub houses; shell tempered pottery; small arrow points.

Appendix II
Selected Radiocarbon Dates From Mississippi

<u>Site No. ; Name</u>	<u>Radiocarbon Dates* ; No.</u>	<u>Cultural Associations</u>	<u>Period**</u>	<u>References</u>
22-Mo-569; Hester	1050 A.D. + 85 (UGa-861) 1140 A.D. + 110 (UGa-968) 4290 B.C. + 400 (UGa-862) 6385 B.C. + 305 (UGa-863) 5015 B.C. + 180 (UGa-864)	unreliable date unreliable date Decatur point, midden Decatur point, midden Decatur point, midden	Early Archaic	Brookes 1980
22-Qu-522; Denton	3280 B.C. + 125 (UGa-212) 3125 B.C. + 130 (UGa-284)	village midden village midden	Middle Archaic	Brandau & Noakes 1972:493 Noakes & Brandau 1974:138 Connaway 1977:137
22-Qu-523; Longstreet	3050 B.C. + 120 (UGa-337) 2925 B.C. + 145 (UGa-336)	midden stratum in mound midden stratum in mound	Middle Archaic	Noakes & Brandau 1974:138 Connaway 1975a:2
22-Cr-504; Teoc Creek	1450 B.C. + 160 (M-2393) 1070 B.C. + 150 (M-2394) 1130 B.C. + 150 (M-2415) 1520 B.C. + 160 (M-2416) 1650 B.C. + 160 (M-2412) 1430 B.C. + 160 (M-2417) 1260 B.C. + 250 (M-2413) 1320 B.C. + 200 (M-2414) 1700 B.C. + 160 (M-2395)	village midden, features, artifacts, level 2 village midden, level 2 village midden, level 3 village midden, level 4 village midden, level 4 village midden, level 5 village midden, level 5 village midden, level 6 deep midden, 7.3 ft. level	Poverty Point	Crane & Griffin 1972a:176-177 Connaway, McGahey, & Webb 1977:108
22-Ha-515; Jackson Landing-Mulatto Bayou Earthwork	400 B.C. + 100 (UGa-402) 290 A.D. + 80 (UGa-458) 215 A.D. + 315 (UGa-459)	earliest construction phase of earthwork top of second construction phase of earthwork top of first construction phase of earthwork	Tchefuncte Marksville Marksville	Williams 1974:6

*Uncorrected dates.

**Period listed is general cultural manifestation at the site and may not correspond to all listed radiocarbon dates.

<u>Site No.; Name</u>	<u>Radiocarbon Dates; No. *</u>	<u>Cultural Associations</u>	<u>Period</u>	<u>References</u>
22-Ha-515; Jackson Landing-Mulatto Bayou Earthwork	400 B.C. ± 100 (UGa-402) 290 A.D. ± 80 (UGa-458) 215 A.D. ± 315 (UGa-459)	earliest construction phase of earthwork top of second construction phase of earthwork top of first construction phase of earthwork	Tchefuncte Marksville Marksville	Williams 1974:6
22-Tu-531; Boyd	220 B.C. ± 90 (UGa-166) 85 A.D. ± 100 (UGa-164) 250 A.D. ± 80 (UGa-158) 450 A.D. ± 75 (UGa-163) 540 A.D. ± 70 (UGa-159)	refuse pit, ceramics refuse pit, ceramics refuse pit, ceramics refuse pit, ceramics refuse pit, ceramics	Tchula Tchula Marksville- Early Baytown Marksville- Early Baytown Marksville- Early Baytown	Connaway & McGahey 1971:59-61 Brandau & Noakes 1972:493
22-Tu-533; Martin #1	80 B.C. ± 185 (UGa-804)	refuse pit, ceramics	Early Marksville	Toth & Brookes 1977:8
22-Co-502; Dickerson	170 A.D. ± 100 (UGa-488)	refuse pit, ceramics, ceramic figurine	Marksville	Noakes & Brandau 1974:138
22-Gr-531; White Mound	230 A.D. ± 80 (ANU-314 & OX-237) 450 A.D. ± 75 (UGa-1888)	burial mound stratum cremation in mound	Marksville Marksville	
22-La-542; Clear Creek Mound	350 A.D. ± 90 (UGa-167)	burial mound stratum, ceramics	Tchula-Early Baytown	Brandau & Noakes 1972:493
22-Co-582; McKee Mound	675 A.D. ± 130 (UGa-3762) 625 A.D. ± 80 (UGa-3763)	Burial 2 Burial 1	Undetermined	
22-Pa-502; McCarter Mound	340 A.D. ± 140 (M-2256)	charcoal, mound stage 2	Marksville	Crane & Griffin 1972b:213
22-Co-542; Barner	875 A.D. ± 85 (UGa-280)	refuse pit, ceramics	Transitional Baytown- Mississippi	Noakes & Brandau 1974:138

*Radiocarbon date numbers assigned by University of Michigan (M), University of Georgia (UGa), Australian National University (ANU), and USDA Sedimentation Laboratory at Oxford (OX).

<u>Site No.; Name</u>	<u>Radiocarbon Dates; No.</u>	<u>Cultural Associations</u>	<u>Period</u>	<u>References</u>
22-Co-535; Bobo	890 A.D. ± 90 (UGa-560) 1275 A.D. ± 100 (UGa-559)	burned house remains under mound refuse pit, corn	Traditional Baytown-Mississippi	Potts & Brookes 1981
22-Tu-530; Bonds	1070 A.D. ± 110 (M-2163) 1170 A.D. ± 130 (M-2175) 1270 A.D. ± 110 (M-2177) 1040 A.D. ± 120 (M-2178) 1260 A.D. ± 100 (M-2164)	wall trench, House 2 wall trench, House 4 wall trench, House 4 wall trench, House 5 village midden stratum	Transitional Baytown-Mississippi	Crane & Griffin 1972a:175-176
22-Co-516; Wilford	1230 A.D. ± 55 (UGa-285) 1465 A.D. ± 55 (UGa-283) 1425 A.D. ± 60 (UGa-281)	centerpost, House 1 support post, House 1 wall trench post, House 2	Mississippi	Noakes & Brandau 1974:137
22-Su-516; Powe11 Bayou	1280 A.D. ± 100 (M-2257)	ceremonial mound stratum, house structures on mound	Mississippi	Crane & Griffin 1972a:174
22-Co-625; Clover Hill	1510 A.D. ± 60 (UGa-1889) 1360 A.D. ± 65 (UGa-1890) 1525 A.D. ± 55 (UGa-1891)	post, House 1 post, House 1, beans, persimmons post, House 1	Mississippi	
22-Tu-518; Flowers #3	1705 A.D. ± 65 (UGa-964) 1345 A.D. ± 90 (UGa-965) 1640 A.D. ± 70 (UGa-966) 1380 A.D. ± 125 (UGa-967)	burials, ceramic vessels refuse pit, Houses 1 & 2, corn, seeds, cane refuse pit, House 13, corn, cane fire pit, House 10, wood, cane	Mississippi	
Dugout canoe, Homochitto River	1465 A.D. ± 60 (UGa-803)	canoe	Mississippi	McGahey 1974:4
22-Am-500; Sturdivant Fishweir	1480 A.D. ± 65 (UGa-1114) 1460 A.D. ± 65 (UGa-1115) 1630 A.D. ± 60 (UGa-1141) 1615 A.D. ± * (UGa-1142) * average of four dates 1580 A.D. ± 55 (UGa-1886) 1595 A.D. ± 80 (UGa-1887)	posts from fishweir	Mississippi	

<u>Site No.; Name</u>	<u>Radiocarbon Dates; No.</u>	<u>Cultural Associations</u>	<u>Period</u>	<u>References</u>		
22-Co-612; Hays	1705 A.D. ± 60 (UGa-279)	centerpost of raised floor house	Mississippi	Noakes & Brandau 1974:137		
22-Ad-501; Grand Village of the Natchez	1585 A.D. ± 100 (M-1376)	Mound A Phase II stratum, charred wood	Mississippi-Historic	Neitzel 1965:86 Phillips 1970:956 Crane & Griffin 1966:256-285**		
	1825 A.D. ± 100 (M-1377)	Mound B Phase IV stratum, hearth, charred wood				
	1540 A.D. ± 100 (M-1378)	Mound B Phase III stratum, cane, thatch				
	1265 A.D. ± 110 (M-1379)	Mound B Phase II stratum, charred wood				
	1195 A.D. ± 110 (M-1380)	Mound B Phase I stratum, charred wood				
	1240 A.D. ± 110 (M-1381)	Mound C Phase III stratum, pit, corncobs				
	1285 A.D. ± 110 (M-1382)	Mound C Phase III stratum, wood				
	1445 A.D. ± 100 (M-1383)	Mound C subsurface, corncobs, wood				
Fort Maurepas area	1755 A.D. ± 55 (UGa-585)	post, unidentified feature (possible tar kiln)			Historic (1699-1702)	McGahey 1973:7

**Crane and Griffin, and later Phillips, list all the above Grand Village dates as 15 years earlier than given here by Neitzel.

Appendix III

Glossary

ARCHAEOLOGY is "the systematic (i.e., scientific) study of the nature and cultural behavior of human beings through the examination and analysis of the material remains of their past activities" (Redman 1973:6).

COMPONENT is the total cultural context of a site resulting from its occupation by one group of people during a particular period of time (a multicomponent site shows evidence of having been occupied by more than one group at successive times).

FEATURE is any disturbance or intrusion in or on the ground which is created by human activity and is not movable (refuse pits, fire pits, hearths, wall trenches, burial pits, etc.).

HEAT TREATING is the process of heating stone to a certain degree to improve its flaking qualities (water was never used for flaking stone; only percussion and pressure techniques were employed).

LITHIC means made of stone (projectile points and various other stone tools and ornaments).

MIDDEN is soil in which materials (artifacts, food remains, trash, etc.) have accumulated as a result of human activities.

PLOW ZONE is that portion of the soil, from the surface to varying depths, which has been disturbed or destroyed by plowing.

POSTMOLD is a circular feature, usually darker in color than surrounding soil, left in the ground by a rotted or burned post.

REFUSE PIT is a pit dug in the ground for the deposition of trash.

SHAMANISTIC means connected with the activities of a shaman or medicine man.

STERILE SOIL is soil which contains no accumulation of midden or cultural materials.

STRATIGRAPHY is the superimposition of various soil layers, both naturally and culturally created, on a site.

TOTEMISM is the belief in totems or kinship with an animal or plant spirit (often an animal or plant representing a clan, family, or individual).

ZOOMORPHIC means in the shape of an animal (animal effigy beads or figurines).

