

C O M M O N

# Ground

ARCHEOLOGY AND ETHNOGRAPHY IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

for five centuries, the legacy of  
the lower mississippi's  
moundbuilders has  
been plowed,  
pilfered, eroded,  
and built over. how can the  
destruction be stopped?

*the*

delta

**ENDANGERED**

volume 1, number 1 / spring 1996

## Common Ground

FRANCIS P. McMANAMON

**C**OMMON GROUND" refers to space, either physical or psychological, about which a variety of individuals with diverse backgrounds hold similar feelings or views. It is a place where people who might otherwise not have much to agree about can find reasons to work together and, perhaps, even come to appreciate the perspectives of others.

Common ground encompasses places in which many of us have a stake. Ninety years ago, the people of the United States, acting through their elected representatives, resolved to set aside archeological sites on public lands as common ground. It was decided that individuals ought not to dig about haphazardly in ancient sites, removing whatever caught their fancy to keep or sell. To that end, the Antiquities Act, signed into law on June 8, 1906, by President Theodore Roosevelt, regulated excavating sites and collecting artifacts. Such activity was to be limited to those with the expertise to carry out careful, well-recorded investigations. Furthermore, in order to receive permission to do so, investigators had to commit to use what they found for public benefit. Investigations were to be conducted "... with a view to increase the knowledge of such objects," which were to be set aside "for permanent preservation in public museums."

Through the Antiquities Act, Americans accepted the notion that archeological resources are valuable mainly for the information they represent. A few sites may contain commercially valuable artifacts, but this is not the primary benefit derived from investigating them.

**I**N THE YEARS SINCE the act was passed, public support and statutory protection have expanded for all kinds of historic properties, often translating to preservation on private lands. Success in preserving these sites requires working closely with landowners as well as employing regulatory tools. This is particularly the case for the Delta earthworks, most of which are privately held, discussed in this issue of *Common Ground*.

In using these words as this publication's title, we aim to underscore that while each segment in our audience has its own perspective, there is much in common.

The world is more complicated than it was in 1906. The advocates of the Antiquity Act could not have foreseen the multitude of perspectives that now must be considered in making preservation truly a common endeavor. Increasingly, consulting with Native Americans and other ethnic groups with special relationships to archeological sites requires knowledge of ethnographic approaches sensitive to the concerns of traditional cultures. Often these approaches are the key to forging consensus on how to solve otherwise intractable problems—in short, finding common ground.

In using these words as this publication's title, we aim to underscore that while each segment in our audience has its own perspective, there is much in common. Our readers work in federal, state, tribal, and local governments, colleges and universities, and private firms; some work abroad. They are land managers, curators, Native Americans, historians, archeologists, and others. Yet the issues they face cut across the barriers. Determining the most appropriate way to preserve a site. Ascertaining the best public interpretation for it—or deciding that no interpretation is best. Making these decisions frequently calls for more than one discipline's expertise. All perspectives can contribute to the dialogue.

**B**Y SHARING OUR EXPERTISE and views, we make them clearer to others. Clarity does not ensure agreement among a diverse group, but it can show where our interests intersect. *Common Ground*, like its predecessor *Federal Archeology*, intends to foster this process.

We welcome our long-time colleagues in ethnography as formal partners in this endeavor. We renew our commitment to our other colleagues, our clients, and all our partners in the work of protecting, preserving, and interpreting our common ground.

*Francis P. McManamon is Chief, Archeology and Ethnography Program, and Departmental Consulting Archeologist, National Park Service, Department of the Interior.*



### TO ISSUE NUMBER ONE.

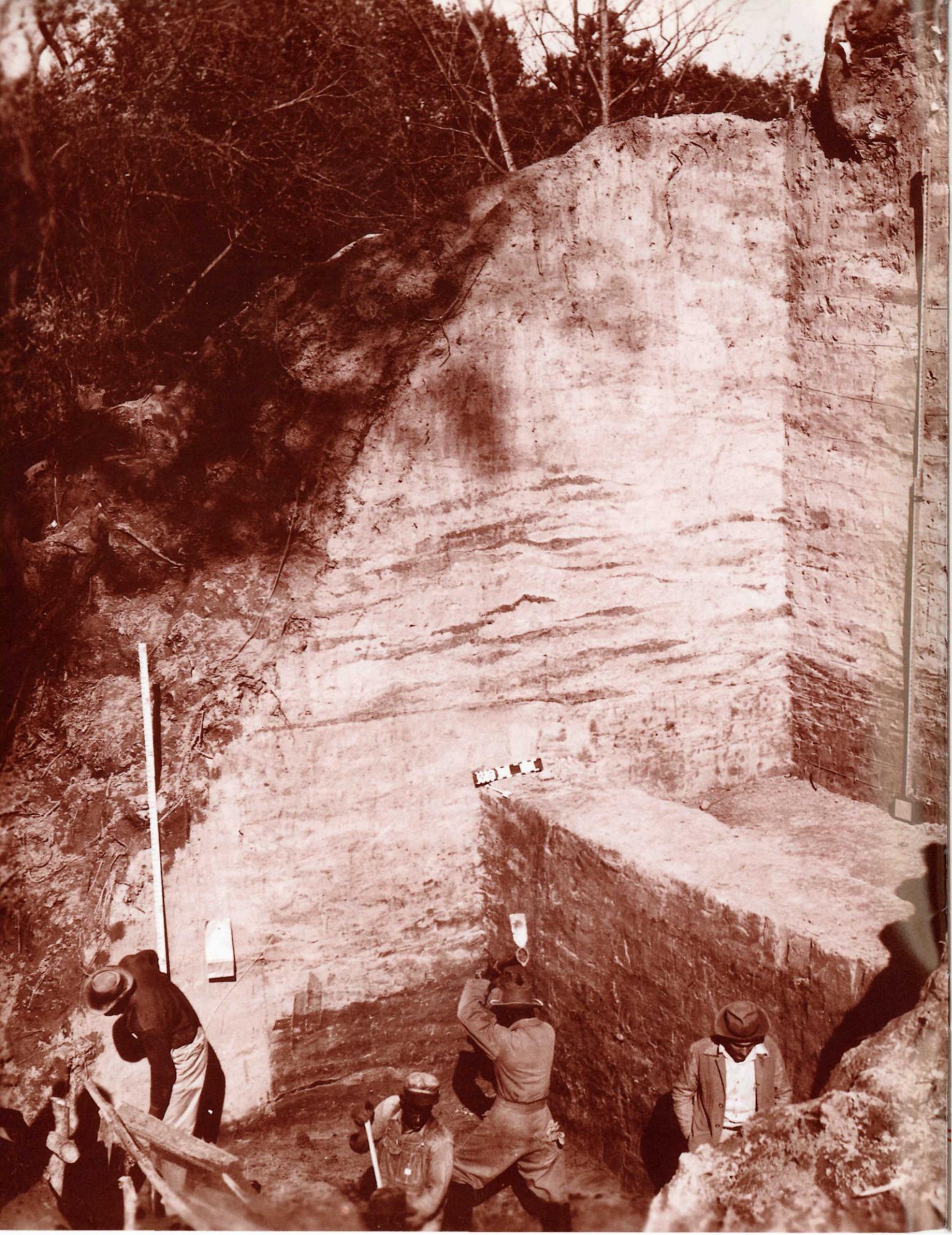
**W**elcome to volume 1, number 1, of *Common Ground: Archeology and Ethnography in the Public Interest*, formerly *Federal Archeology*. The name change arises from the formal merger of archeology and ethnography here at the National Park Service. For this new publication, the merger means even broader coverage of the cross-disciplinary partnership projects that for years have been a staple within our pages.

And starting with this issue, we'll be going beyond the confines of the printed page. Our coverage of the Delta's Native heritage extends to a World Wide Web site created to take the preservation message to the public. Visit the site at <http://www.cr.nps.gov>. Look for more such links in the future, both for the general web audience and for the professional readers of this publication.

We plan to serve our new audiences just as well as our loyal readers of old. Stay tuned for further developments in coming issues.

—DAVID ANDREWS AND JOSEPH FLANAGAN, EDITORS

ABOVE: Reconstruction of Mound B at Bynum Mounds, along the Natchez Trace Parkway in Mississippi, 1948. NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY / NPS



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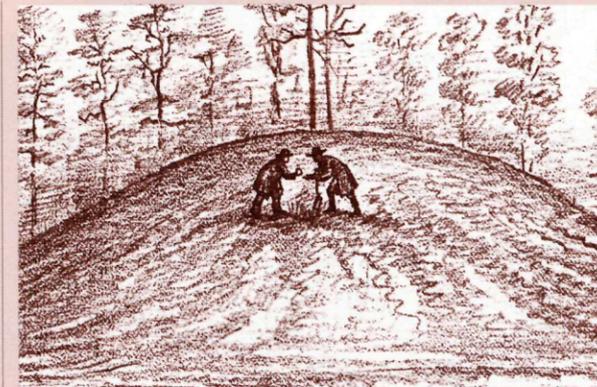
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Gardener Mound, AR, in detail of 19th century sketch by Cyrus Thomas.

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In the lower Mississippi valley, writes Roger Kennedy, "antiquity slumbered while commerce fretted and scratched overhead." And so it has been for years. In an excerpt from his book *Hidden Cities*, the director of the National Park Service says that today we have a new opportunity to appreciate the accomplishments of ancient Americans. **PAGE 22**

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The people who built the ancient mounds belong to the ages now. What's left of their legacy rapidly approaches extinction. Archeology raised its voice in the mid-'60s, but it has taken decades to be heard. Is it too late? **PAGE 46**

## News, Views, and Recently Noted

### Digital Eye on Mesa Verde

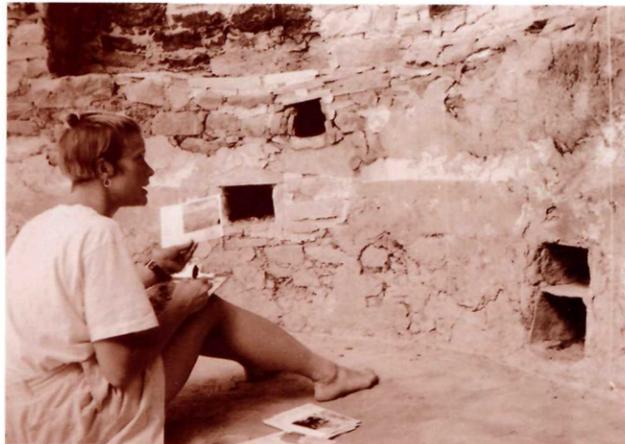
With help from the Getty Grant Program, the University of Pennsylvania and the National Park Service are developing one of the first computer-aided strategies to evaluate prehistoric architectural surfaces. The first subject: Mug House at Colorado's Mesa Verde National Park.

The U-Penn/NPS team, thanks to a \$42,350 matching grant, are developing a conservation plan for Wetherill Mesa's stone ruin, known for its painted plaster walls and floors—some of the most intact in the Southwest. The decoratively painted plaster of a kiva there is exceptional.

In addition to formulating a plan for the plaster, the project is bringing together land managers, conservators, archeologists, and architects to preserve ruins throughout the region.

The work is phase two of a project that started in the summer of 1994. Phase one had the U-Penn conservation lab and the Park Service researching past preservation and analyzing samples of wall surfaces. A third phase will see the start of a pilot conservation program that will include stabilization.

NPS and the university will also join forces for adobe and masonry preservation at



UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION LABORATORY

### Student documents mud plaster of kiva at Mesa Verde's Mug House.

a site where preservationists have learned for four decades—New Mexico's Fort Union National Monument, the largest adobe ruin in the country.

### State of the Artifacts

Faced with the daunting task of caring for millions of artifacts, the Corps of Engineers is getting some help from computer technology. The COE's Vicksburg Waterways Experiment Station has developed a way to assess the Corps' curation picture online.

A database was developed in the wake of Corps requirements that its districts report on how their collections are being curated. The system's creators developed standardized data categories and scales for

measurement based on actual responses from field tests on 162 collections at 17 curation facilities.

The database employs easy-to-use D/base IV software. Users can be as specific as they wish, assessing parts of collections or entire groups of repositories.

For more information, contact Frederick L. Briuer, Director, Center for Cultural Site Preservation Technology, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Waterways Experiment Station, 3909 Halls Ferry Road, Vicksburg, MS 39180-6199, (601) 634-4204, fax (601) 634-2835, e-mail briuerf@ex1.wes.army.mil.

### Badlands Bison Spawn Tribal Rebirth

In 1963, to help restore its grasslands ecosystem, South Dakota's Badlands National Park brought in 31 bison,

the first in its borders in 90 years. Last October, nearly 200 "excess" bison were rounded up from the Badlands' 63,000-acre Sage Creek Wilderness. The roundup has contributed to the gradual rebirth of Native Americans' traditional relationship with the animal.

The bison were turned over to tribes with the help of the Oglala Sioux and the InterTribal Bison Cooperative, formed four years ago. The purpose of the cooperative, says Executive Director Mark Hecker, is "to share the dream of buffalo restoration. To share the culture."

Bison are the dominant large herbivore of the Badland's grassy areas. Because carnivores like the grizzly are no longer there to keep the population down, the bison must be managed according to the land's capacity to sustain them. Typically, roundups take place when the herd tops 500.

The tribes use the buffalo not only for subsistence, but for religious ceremonies as well. Some use the animals to increase the herds they already have. The Taos Pueblo will breed the new buffalo into their herd to enhance its genetic pool.

From this roundup, a hundred bison went to the Oglala Sioux, whose Pine



NPS SUBMERGED CULTURAL RESOURCES UNIT

Ridge reservation abuts the park's south unit. The remainder were given to seven other tribes from South Dakota, Wisconsin, Kansas, New Mexico, and Nebraska.

For tribes such as Nebraska's Santee Sioux, it has been nearly 100 years since they've had buffalo. "It goes a lot deeper than just an economic thing," says Fred DuBray of the Cheyenne River Sioux. The bison are "a central element of who we are."

### Field Work from Afar

Designing and executing an archeological survey tests even seasoned professionals. Weather and terrain aren't the only challenges. Availability of staff, their level of training, time, funds,

and fatigue all conspire against a survey's accuracy. Now a pair of Australians may make the job a bit easier for the next generation of archeologists.

Charles Sturt University archeologist Dirk Spennemann and World Wide Web programmer Anthony P. Steinke have developed an electronic course to help students hone

their skills without leaving their desks. The two stress that CICRIT (computerised interactive cultural resources inventory training tool) is not meant to replace required field work. Still, the simulation program takes students to some of Australia's most rugged and archeologically rich terrain, Victoria's Mt. Wills. The tin and gold boom of the late

19th century brought mining to the area, with extensive logging and milling from the 1920s onwards.

Students face all the obstacles to an accurate survey. Defining too big an area can wear out the staff. Fielding a large team can complicate logistics. Students are also penalized for days missed due to weather and sites unseen in the rush to finish.

For more information, contact Dirk H.R. Spennemann, Johnstone Centre of Parks, Recreation and Heritage, Charles Sturt University, P.O. Box 789, Albury NSW 2640, Australia, e-mail dspennemann@csu.edu.au. CICRIT's internet address is <http://life.csu.edu.au/~dspennemann/MTWILLS/CICRIT.HTM>.

The Park Service submerged cultural resources unit received an award of merit from the Society for Historical Archaeology at its annual conference in Cincinnati on January 4.

The unit—a team of trained archeologists and research divers formed in 1980 as a spinoff of the NPS-run National Reservoir Inundation Study—has set a standard for excellence in non-destructive archeology and the preservation of submerged sites. The SCR's evaluation of the USS *Arizona* led to a series of World War II documentation projects carried out with the U.S. Navy. The unit has also been featured in *National Geographic* and on ABC, CBS, and the Discovery Channel.

Above, an archeologist approaches the paddlewheel of the 19th century steamer *Cumberland*, off Isle Royale National Park in Lake Superior.

For more information, contact Dirk H.R. Spennemann, Johnstone Centre of Parks, Recreation and Heritage, Charles Sturt University, P.O. Box 789, Albury NSW 2640, Australia, e-mail dspennemann@csu.edu.au. CICRIT's internet address is <http://life.csu.edu.au/~dspennemann/MTWILLS/CICRIT.HTM>.

## Protecting the Nation's Archeological Heritage

### Looter Gets Jail Time for Not Returning Artifacts

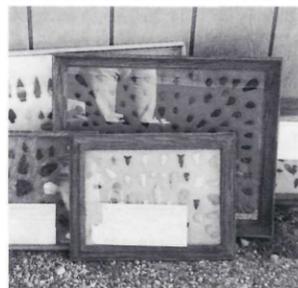
On November 15, Frederick J. Lindauer of Manton, California, was sentenced to a two-year term in federal prison for violating a court order to turn over to authorities Native American artifacts that he illegally removed from U.S. Forest Service land. Lindauer, 61, pled guilty in 1989 to excavating a 1,400 year-old Yana village site in Lassen National Forest near the Ishi Wilderness. It was one of the first felony convictions under the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA; 16 U.S.C. 470ee). He was sentenced to serve 60 days in jail and a one-year term of supervised release and, as part of a plea agreement, was ordered to return to the Forest Service any Native American artifacts in his possession.

Lindauer was an ardent collector of artifacts, and authorities believe his hobby may have taken him to northern California, northwestern Nevada, and eastern Oregon. When Lassen National Forest archeologist James Johnston showed up at Lindauer's home in May 1990, he was given some 2,200 projectile points as

well as some ground stone artifacts.

But Johnston became suspicious because the items Lindauer had given him were common, and would be of little interest to either archeologists or collectors. Two years later, his suspicions would be confirmed. In December 1992, while being interviewed by the FBI on an unrelated matter, Lindauer's estranged wife volunteered that her husband had temporarily hidden the major part of his collection at a friend's house.

What Lindauer had hidden from authorities turned out to be what one witness would later describe as "the most impressive collection of Indian artifacts in northern California," including spear points, beads, stone bowls, drills, mortars, pestles, charm stones, and arrow shaft straighteners. Police officers searching Lindauer's home as part of a narcotics investigation photographed the items. A local sheriff's deputy who had spent 14 years as an archeologist saw the photos, and another warrant was served on the Lindauer residence. In addition to the artifacts, authorities seized maps and photographs of excavation sites.



Above: Looter's signature in Lassen National Forest; below: some of Lindauer's spoils.

Dates written on boxes and photos indicated that Lindauer had been looting archeological sites since the 1980s.

A federal grand jury returned an indictment charging him with felony contempt of court for failing to comply fully with the terms of his supervised release. Lindauer's 1989

conviction galvanized Native American groups, who were unhappy with what they considered a lenient punishment. Native Americans were on hand last November when Senior U.S. District Judge Milton L. Schwartz sentenced Lindauer to the two-year term.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Tom Hopkins prosecuted the case. Charles J. Stevens, U.S. Attorney for the eastern district of California, praised the cooperative efforts of the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Shasta County sheriff's department.

### Luck Runs Out for Battlefield Thieves

As Civil War battles go, the battle of Olustee was no Gettysburg or Shiloh. But the fight between the 5,000-odd Union and Confederate soldiers that met here in 1864 was short and fierce. When it was over, 2,000 were dead and a Union invasion of Florida was thwarted.

Today, Olustee is a forlorn landscape of palmetto and scrub trees, a minor chapter in the Civil War epic. And yet, like Gettysburg or Shiloh, its value to our her-

itage is immeasurable. That is how Florida State Park Ranger Frank Loughran viewed it. Sole custodian of Olustee Battlefield since 1982, Loughran knew the park inside out, had studied every document on the battle. There was special satisfaction in knowing that, for 130 years, the battlefield had remained untouched, that the testimony of its archeological remains still had volumes to speak about history.

That was until Loughran began finding the empty Marlboro packs. Someone was visiting the battlefield by night and systematically dismantling the archeological record of the battle. A cat-and-mouse game ensued between Loughran and the person he had named "the Marlboro Man." Night after night, Loughran waited in the woods, enduring hungry mosquitoes, hoping to catch the man in the act. One morning, there were 176 holes, each six to eight inches deep.

There were a couple of close encounters. On one occasion, Loughran surprised the thieves (Marlboro Man was not alone), and they drove their vehicle through a massive wall of vegetation and broke through to the highway. On another, there was a brief scuffle, but the looters escaped again.

Someone even began calling Loughran on the telephone, taunting him, even threatening his life. Loughran pleaded with him to stop the looting. "You're destroying history," he told him, but it made no difference. Loughran enlisted the

help of Jim Ellis, a U.S. Forest Service officer. Now, Ellis lay in wait during the night as well.

The waiting paid off. In January 1995, Ellis and Officer Don Pettijohn of the state Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission surprised a pair of men, one of whom fired a shot at the officers. Both quickly surrendered. Randall Edwards, 27, was charged with aggravated assault on a law enforcement officer. His companion, Donald Heiden, 25, was arrested as well. Investigation led to the arrest of Edwards' brother-in-law, Ronald Allan Pearson, 23.

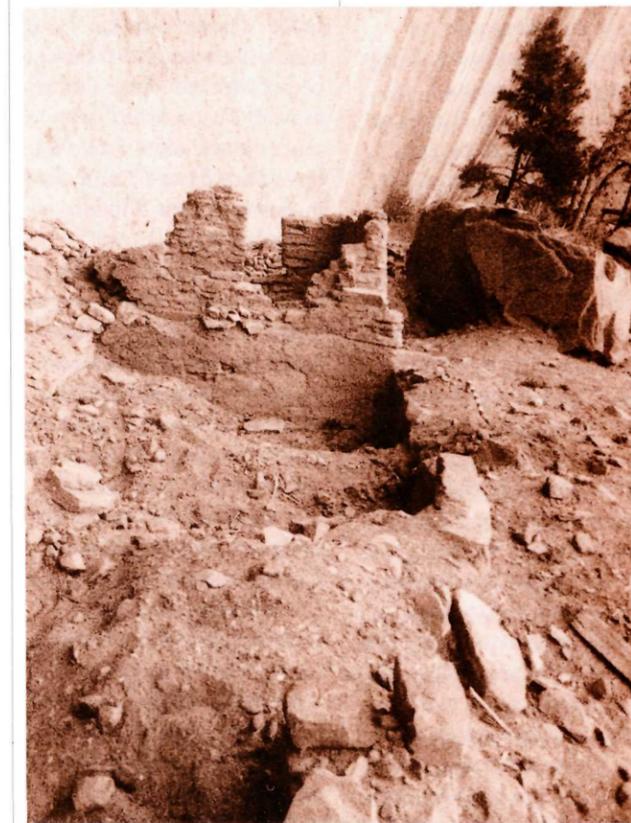
The trio were part of a ring that sold stolen artifacts on the black market. It is believed that many of the artifacts from Olustee had been sold before authorities caught up with the group. In Pearson's bedroom, stored in handmade cases, were scores of bullets, buttons, cannon ball fragments, and belt buckles. The resale value of the recovered artifacts is put at \$3,100, but their all-important context is probably lost forever. The friction primers (used to ignite cannons) that were excavated could have yielded information about the positions of artillery batteries during the battle.

The group raided Olustee numerous times, creeping through the pine forests in camouflage fatigues, using night-vision goggles and metal detectors.

According to Lt. David Lee of the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, Pearson

recently declined a plea agreement and was scheduled for a February trial. Lee's agency has taken the lead in Florida in arrests for archeological resource violations. In the past six months, they have made six felony arrests.

archeological sites in Canyonlands National Park and the Manti-LaSal National Forest. Digging for artifacts to sell or trade, Shumway destroyed the burial site of an Anasazi infant. In September, he pled guilty to charges in another case:



MANTI-LA SAL NATIONAL FOREST

### Landmark Sentence in Shumway Case

Convicted looter Earl Shumway has received the largest sentence ever imposed in an archeological violation case. Described by United States Attorney Scott M. Matheson as someone who "has come to symbolize the repeat looter of prehistoric sites," Shumway was sentenced to six and a half years in federal prison.

In August, a Utah jury found Shumway guilty of the 1991 looting of two remote

### One of looter Shumway's many stops: Horse Rock Ruin, Manti-LaSal National Forest, Utah.

illegally excavating two alcoves in the BLM's Cedar Mesa Special Management Area in southeastern Utah in 1991. Prehistoric human remains were desecrated in that incident as well.

In all, Shumway was convicted of seven felonies: four counts of violating ARPA, two counts of damaging U.S. property, and one count of being a felon in possession of

a firearm. The Shumway case has received national attention. Reporters were present at the sentencing, and local affiliates of ABC, CBS, and NBC all attended a press conference afterwards.

Shumway, who by his own admission has dug at "thousands and thousands" of sites, was convicted in 1986 for an ARPA violation in which he took 35 American Indian baskets along with ceramic pots, also from Manti-LaSal National Forest. Already serving time for an unrelated burglary, Shumway received a two-year suspended sentence and five years probation. The artifacts he looted from Manti-LaSal were estimated to have a commercial value of between \$500,000 and \$1 million.

Lead prosecutor Assistant U.S. Attorney Wayne Dance—citing the desecration of Native American culture and heritage and the fact that Shumway showed no remorse for the many graves and archeological sites he has desecrated—argued for the harshest sentence possible. Also taken into consideration was Shumway's prior criminal record, and a series of letters that were read, in part, to Judge David K. Winder. The Hopi tribe, the Utah State Division of Indian Affairs, Utah state archeologist Kevin Jones, and DOI Departmental Consulting Archeologist Francis P. McManamon all sent letters urging Judge Winder to consider the magnitude of the loss caused by Shumway.

"Before you," McManamon wrote, "are nationally signifi-

cant examples of the destruction of our shared, non-renewable cultural heritage . . . [Shumway] is the prime example of a commercial looter who systematically has assaulted some of the nation's most important cultural places."

In sentencing Shumway, Judge Winder said the humans whose graves had been disturbed were victims as well. The standard sentence for the offenses would have been 51 to 63 months in prison, which Winder increased to 78.

A partner of Shumway's, Peter Verchick, was sentenced February 1 to four months home confinement and ordered to pay \$3,700 restitution. Verchick pled guilty to two misdemeanor ARPA counts last summer. A transmitter on Verchick's ankle will signal authorities if he ventures more than 150 feet from his home. Violation results in immediate return to custody.

Verchick's sentence is considered strict, given that it is a first offense and a misdemeanor. According to Scott M. Matheson, Jr., U.S. Attorney for the district of Utah, the authorities used the Shumway-Verchick case to send a clear signal that those who rob archeological sites will be vigorously prosecuted. Matheson encourages the public to use the 24-hour ARPA hotline (1-800-722-3998) to report archeological resource crimes in Utah or elsewhere.

### **President Backs Chaco Protection**

President Clinton signed an act enhancing the protec-

tion of archeological sites surrounding Chaco Culture National Historical Park in May. The Chacoan Outlier Protection Act of 1995 adds six sites and over 5,000 acres to the extensive complex of related sites around Chaco Culture NHP that are under interagency stewardship. Known as the Chaco Archaeological Site Protection System, the sites are scattered across lands under the jurisdiction of the Park Service, the BLM, the Forest Service, and the Navajo Nation. The act also formalized a cooperative stewardship program with the Navajo Nation and the National Park Service. Two-thirds of Chaco's outlying archeological sites are on Navajo land.

The National Parks and Conservation Association and the Archaeological Conservancy honored Representative Bill Richardson (D, New Mexico) for his work in getting the act voted into law. Both Richardson and Senator Pete Domenici (R, New Mexico) worked for years to get amendments passed that would augment the original outlier bill passed in 1980. According to Dave Simon, Southwest Regional Director of the NPCA, the beefed-up legislation also gives agencies clear direction to avert the destruction of the sites that remain on private land.

### **Heritage at Risk Brings Action in Arizona**

Arizona's Loma del Rio site, a classic period seven-room Hohokam structure in Tempe, was recently the

focus of a stabilization project that brought together the resources of the Arizona Heritage Fund, the City of Tempe, and Arizona State University. The building, which dates to about 1250 A.D., was under assault from erosion, pothunters, pedestrian traffic, horseback riders, and mountain bikes.

The city of Tempe decided to act to prevent further damage until an effective method for preserving adobe is developed. Under the direction of Arizona State University's Alfred Dittert, Loma del Rio was excavated from 1984 to 1986. In the recent stabilization effort, the plastic sheeting and backfill from that excavation were left in place. A filter fabric was then placed over the backfill, providing a moisture-resistant layer while allowing air to circulate through the soil. The site was then restored as closely as possible to its pre-excavation state.

Members of the Hemenway expedition of 1887 were the first to encounter Loma del Rio. Situated on the crest of a hill, the structure was built of adobe with a masonry core. The Hohokam grew agave on a series of terraces built into the hillside. The site was surveyed several times during the 1960s and '70s.

The project was completed with a grant from the Arizona Heritage Fund, which was matched by the city of Tempe. Arizona State University's cultural resource management office conducted the project under the direction of Glen

Rice. A dedication ceremony was held October 14. A ramada and interpretive trail surround the site, providing public access while minimizing the effect of foot traffic.

### **Toll Continues in Custer Relic Saga**

Charles Snyder, of Bowie, Maryland, was sentenced last August by a U.S. magistrate in Kentucky for his part in attempting to sell artifacts removed from Custer Battlefield National Monument in Montana. Snyder received one year's probation, a \$5,000 fine, and was ordered to return the artifacts to the U.S. government. The lead prosecutor was David Bunning, an Assistant U.S. Attorney in Kentucky.

Snyder, who obtained the artifacts from Richard P. Maniscalco in exchange for Nazi memorabilia, tried to sell them on consignment through a Kentucky auction house. He was caught when he made a deal to sell them for \$15,000 to an NPS agent posing as a buyer.

The U.S. Cavalry button, bullets, casings, belt buckle, arrowhead, and other items have a curious history, one that has seen three people wind up in trouble with the law. In 1995, Maniscalco was sentenced to one year's probation and a \$500 fine for trafficking in Native American remains.

Maniscalco got the artifacts from George Scott, a former NPS seasonal park ranger, who excavated them from the Custer battlefield (see spring 1995 issue of *Federal Archeology*).

### **Klamath Tribes Get Day in Court**

The 1990 looting of Wilson Cemetery, a Klamath tribal burial ground in Chiloquin, Oregon, has ended in the conviction of three men in Klamath County District Court. The trio planned to sell Native American human remains and associated funerary objects—cremation and burial beads—to finance a methamphetamine laboratory. The case of State v. Baker is a prime example of a Native American group playing an active role in the prosecution process and working effectively with law enforcement agencies.

Gordon David Baker, Jr. was convicted by a jury on eight counts of mutilation and injury to Native American graves, one count of theft in the second degree, and one count of criminal mischief in the second degree. His son, Shawn Baker, pled guilty to four counts of grave mutilation, and Terry Lee Schoonmaker, an accomplice, pled guilty to one count each of grave mutilation and criminal mischief in the first degree.

Instrumental in bringing the case to a close was the cooperation among the Klamath tribes, Klamath cultural specialist Gordon Bettles, the Wilson Cemetery committee, the Lane County sheriff's office, the University of Oregon's Museum of Anthropology, the Oregon attorney general's office, the Klamath County sheriff's office, the Native American program/Oregon legal service, and the Oregon state police.

On an October night in

1990, the Bakers and Schoonmaker scaled the fence that surrounds the Wilson cemetery and dug into approximately 18 graves. The Klamath tribes, their culture and heritage committee, and the Wilson Cemetery committee launched an aggressive effort to gather information. The news media were notified and a \$1,000 reward was offered for information.

Weeks later, a woman called the Lane County sheriff with information implicating Schoonmaker. By mid-1991, he had turned state's evidence against the Bakers. In return for cooperating with authorities, Schoonmaker received two months in the Lane County jail and two years probation.

Shawn Baker entered a guilty plea in November 1991, and was sentenced to six months imprisonment, five years probation, a \$3,500 fine, and \$1,280 in restitution to the tribes. Gordon Baker was found guilty by a jury and sentenced in January 1992. In addition to his two-year sentence, he was ordered to pay the tribes a \$3,500 fine.

In 1995, Schoonmaker again tried to sell burial and cremation beads. A Klamath tribal member notified the tribes, who teamed with Oregon state police in a sting operation. Schoonmaker was arrested, along with Ella Louise Peden and Lori Kay Cvitanovich.

Schoonmaker and Peden both pled guilty. Schoonmaker was sentenced to 30 days in jail and was ordered to pay \$1,200 to the Klamath tribes. He was fur-

ther ordered to have no more contact with the tribes and to stay out of Klamath County. Peden received 20 days in jail and a \$700 fine. Cvitanovich is set for an April trial.

### **Oregon Gets Tough in BLM Looting Case**

Jack Lee Harrelson, who looted a 5,000-year-old site on BLM land, has received the maximum sentence under Oregon law for an archeological resource violation. On February 6, Josephine County Circuit Court Judge Lloyd O'Neal sentenced Harrelson to 90 days in jail and a \$15,000 fine.

For what investigators believe was a period of about three years, Harrelson visited the site in the Black Rock Desert north of Winnemucca, Nevada. He removed the remains of two young Native Americans, their burial baskets, and associated funerary objects. The items were subsequently discovered at Harrelson's residence in Oregon when a search warrant was served by the Nevada BLM, the special investigations unit of the Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife Division, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs under the direction of the Josephine County district attorney's office.

Judge O'Neal also sentenced Harrelson to seven years probation, ordered him to pay \$900 to the Paiute tribe for reburial, and \$3,600 to the district attorney's office for prosecution costs.

BLM's Winnemucca district has assessed a civil penalty of \$2.1 million for site remediation, which Harrelson plans to appeal.

## Legacy of the Lower Mississippi Moundbuilders

# Preserving the Past for the Future

Often indiscernible in the underbrush, they appear unexpectedly along the lower Mississippi, jutting out of cotton fields, rising from swamps and tributary banks. The Delta's enigmatic earthworks—vestiges of civilizations that thrived when Rome was a village—are nearly all that's left of an ancient story that is all the more fascinating for the pieces that are missing. The mound sites loomed large when Congress enacted the "Delta initiatives," a package of legislative actions intended to preserve the region's rich heritage.

Ever since Europeans first saw them, the mounds have held an allure for relic-hunters, scholars, and the merely curious. Over the centuries, they have been the subject of speculation and controversy, studied by amateur and professional archeologists alike. Now, spurred by the initiatives, the National Park Service is conducting a first-of-its-kind study of the earthworks and their associated villages.

"Ancient Indian Architecture of the Lower Mississippi Delta" intends to evaluate and synthesize existing information about the sites, to encourage their preservation, promote research, and identify candidates for an antiquities trail designed to encourage tourism. The study also aims to foster a program of public education and interpretation. This issue of *Common Ground*—along with a sister site on the World Wide Web—arose from this intent (visit the site at <http://www.cr.nps.gov>).

Last June, representatives from government agencies, universities, tribes, and the private sector convened in Vicksburg, Mississippi, to determine the shape of the study. This issue takes a look behind the scenes at that meeting—exploring a host of issues—as the preservation of the Delta's past moves quickly into the future.



For tribes such as the Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Poarch Creek, the earthworks evoke a sense of heritage and spirituality. The mounds are both their origin and the place where their ancestors rest—the journey's end and its beginning.

POARCH BAND OF CREEK INDIANS

# ARCHITECTS OF

# THE MISSISSIPPI

>>PRESERVING A LEGACY<<

## THE CHALLENGES

### Mound Destruction

For generations, these ancient sites have been plowed, pilfered, eroded, and built over. According to one estimate, nearly 90 percent have been destroyed since the Europeans arrived.

### Site Invisibility

Concealed in overgrowth, worn down to unassuming shapes along remote fields and tributaries, they are the Delta's hidden treasure. Few know they are there, let alone what they mean.

### Poor Documentation

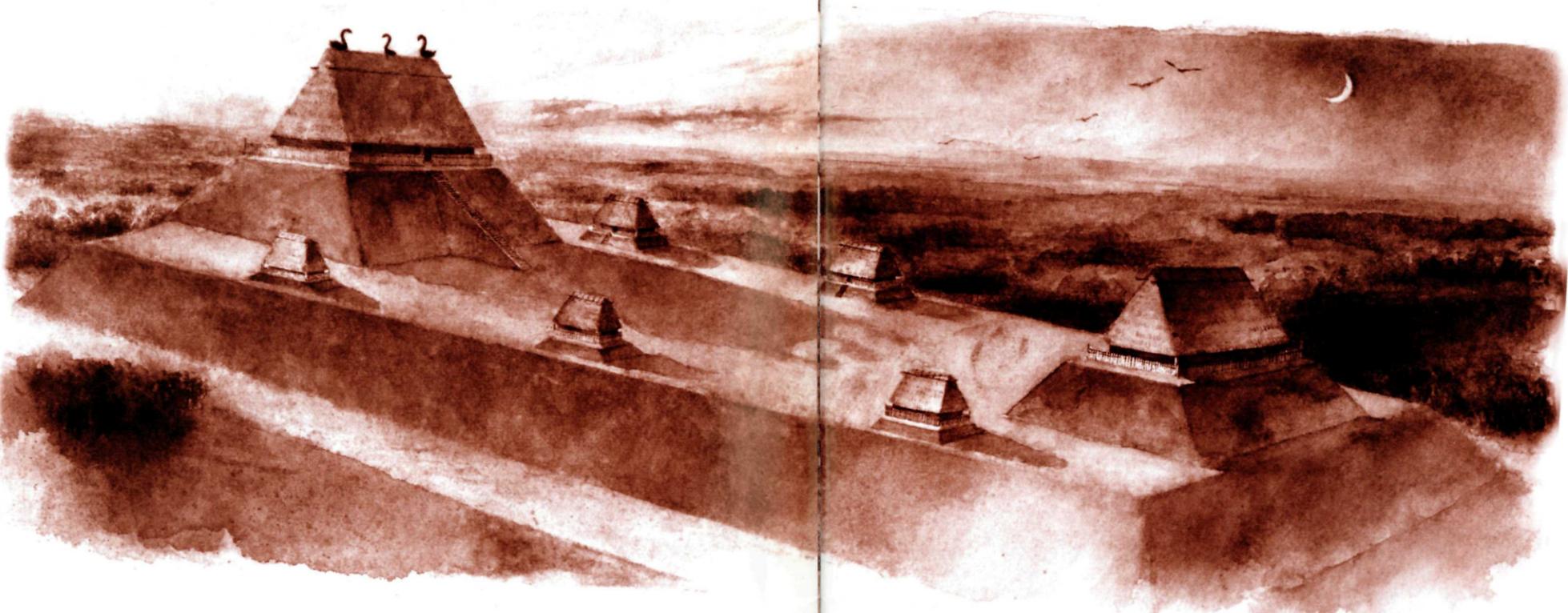
Information is uneven at best. Maps are often wrong, sometimes with hills labeled as earthworks and earthworks not labeled at all.

### Lack of Awareness

The mounds lack the visual impact of the Southwest's cliff houses or the Shenandoah's battlefields. To a public unaware of what they are—much less why they are important—they appear to be a collection of nondescript hillocks.

### Shrinking Budgets

Less money means less of everything. Squeezed dollars translate to incomplete documentation, insufficient analysis, shoe-string curation, and outdated exhibits.



## THE PLAYERS

### Landowners

To many landowners, a mound is nothing more than high ground. Some have been known to destroy them simply to keep pothunters away. With most of the earthworks on private land, owner cooperation is crucial.

### Avocationalists

Avocationalists have long been active in the area—and they've got leverage. According to one Arkansas archeologist, "We wouldn't have [parks at] Toltec or Parkin mounds if it weren't for the avocationalists."

### Universities

Delta archeology has been a staple at the region's universities for decades. Their research and expertise are essential to the future of the mounds.

### Tribes

For many Native Americans, the sites are sacred, figuring prominently in their origin stories. Though tribes want the earthworks preserved, many believe that calling attention to them invites their destruction.

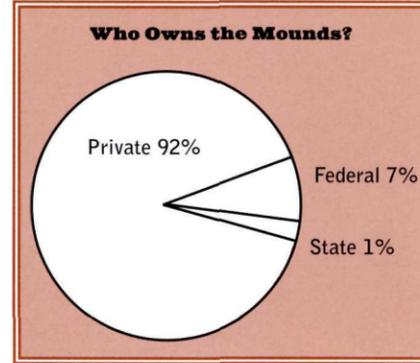
### Government Officials

Federal, state, and local agencies must be at the forefront in preserving the Delta. If they all work together, the potential is enormous. But so is the challenge.

Artist's rendition of an earthwork in the lower Mississippi valley as it might have looked in the 1600s. Illustration: Marlene McLoughlin. Design: Interactive Bureau.

>>PICTURE OF A CRISIS<<

The charts below, drawn from Arkansas, typify the lower Delta. Statistics are "best guesses."



MOST EARTHWORKS ARE IN PRIVATE HANDS, WHICH MAKES THEIR PRESERVATION A CHALLENGE. IN ARKANSAS, THERE ARE NO TRIBAL OWNERS.

## THE PLAN

### Fully Document the Sites

Adding to the age-old questions about the mounds are the modern ones: Where and how many? The task facing "Ancient Indian Architecture"—the Park Service study of the mounds—is to draw a picture from fragments.

### Identify the Threats

The only way to save these sites is to single out the threats and plan accordingly.

### Pool Resources

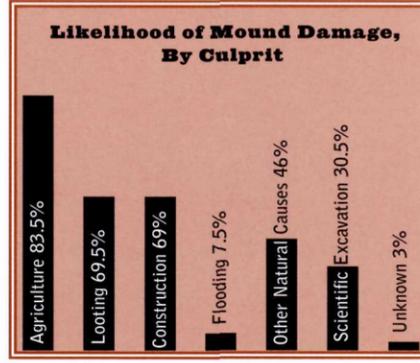
No group can do it alone. The power to halt the destruction, to preserve this vital chapter in the continent's history, lies in sharing the tools. In short, cooperation.

### Enhance Education, Preservation

The public won't act if it doesn't care. When people know what they stand to lose, preservation will follow.

### Foster Tourism, Economic Development

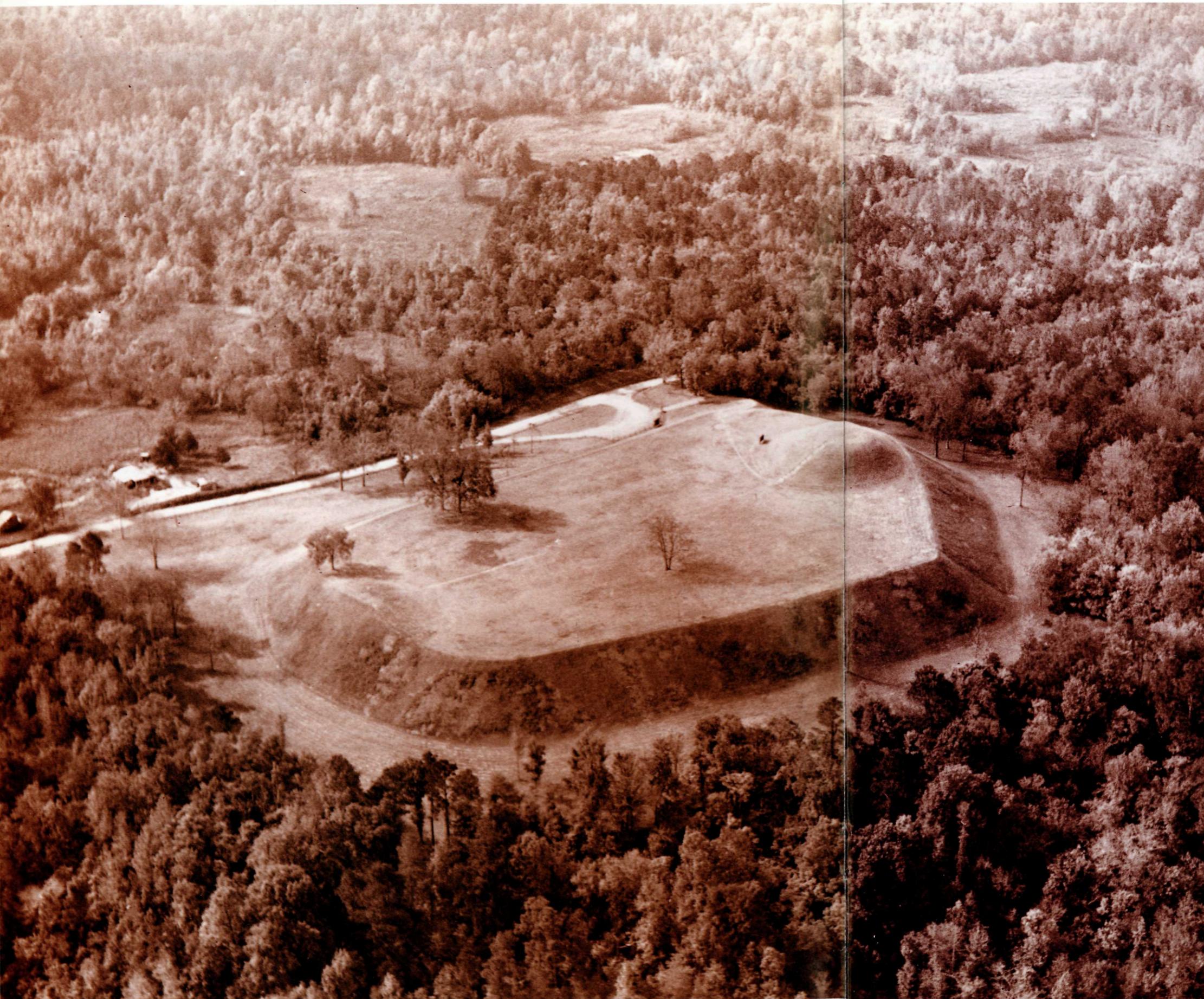
Research and interpretation could come together in an antiquities trail—a network of engaging, well-interpreted sites across the Delta. The potential result: heightened public awareness, healthier local economies.



EARTHWORKS ARE SELDOM DESTROYED BY ONE AGENT ACTING ALONE. IN ARKANSAS, AS THE GRAPHIC SHOWS, MOST HAVE BEEN DAMAGED BY AGRICULTURE AND LOOTING AS WELL AS CONSTRUCTION. DAMAGE HAS BEEN SEVERE AT 20 PERCENT OF THE STATE'S 1,084 SITES, WITH ONLY 2 REMAINING RELATIVELY INTACT.

EXCAVATION, DESPITE THE INFORMATION IT YIELDS, ULTIMATELY DESTROYS SITES. ARCHEOLOGISTS INCREASINGLY EMPLOY NON-DESTRUCTIVE TOOLS LIKE GROUND-PENETRATING RADAR.

DATA COURTESY ARKANSAS ARCHEOLOGICAL SURVEY.

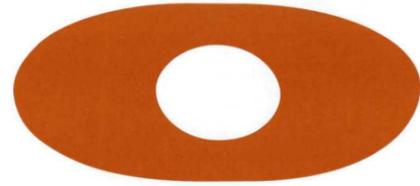


# M *onumental* Endeavor

the daunting task of assessing the ancient earthworks of the lower mississippi delta *By Guy Prentice*

MOST OF THE MYSTERIES THAT PERPLEXED EARLY ANTIQUARIANS HAVE BEEN SOLVED. TODAY THE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MOUNDS ARE DIFFERENT. WE KNOW THEY'RE OUT THERE, BUT WHERE? AND HOW MANY? A FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND STUDY—INVOLVING FOUR STATES, A LONG LIST OF AGENCIES, AND PRE-EXISTING RESEARCH THAT'S ALL OVER THE MAP—ATTEMPTS TO PULL TOGETHER THE FRAGMENTS OF THE DELTA'S PREHISTORY.

Aerial view of Emerald Mound, November 8, 1958. DON BLACK/NPS NACHEZ TRACE PARKWAY



**In the afternoon of June 26th, 1995, the Southeast Archeological Center of the National Park Service formally initiated "Ancient Indian Architecture of the Lower Mississippi Delta: A Study of Earthworks" with a two-day workshop attended by representatives of government agencies, tribes, academia, and the private sector. The study, part of the National Park Service effort to investigate Native American earthworks in the lower Delta, arose out of the California Desert Lands Protection Act of 1994, now generally referred to as simply "the Delta initiatives." The purpose of the study is to identify**

earthwork sites and evaluate their significance. The objective is to foster their preservation and research potential, while encouraging their inclusion in a heritage corridor called for by the act. The study also aims to aid in future research projects, provide land managers with information to confer with Native Americans on protecting ceremonial sites, and initiate educational programs. Increased tourism and economic development—along with heightened public appreciation of the region's archeology—are also envisioned as potential benefits.

The center had been instructed to submit a final report this June. Consequently, we are using existing data primarily; no field research is planned other than site visits.

The study is focusing on the period from ca. 4500 B.C. through ca. A.D. 1700 in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and western Tennessee. The study team is identifying sites through archival research including but not limited to state master site files and the published and "gray" literature, and by canvassing the professional and lay archeological communities and tribes. The study is being done in coordination with the state historic preservation offices, state archeological surveys, archeological research centers in institutions of higher education inside and outside the Delta, and other federal agencies with land managing responsibilities in the region.

The study plans to produce: (1) a technical report, including a synthesis and overview on earthwork sites; (2) an inventory of the sites identified in both a hard copy format and as an electronic database; (3) an atlas of the sites, also in hard copy and electronic format; and (4) publication and outreach products.

### Launching the Study

The Vicksburg workshop was planned with very specific goals in mind. These were to: 1) establish criteria to rank earthwork sites with regard to their significance, interpretability, preservation, etc.; 2) identify the kinds of data needed to do the ranking; 3) establish the types of maps and illustrations needed; and 4) determine the best way to exchange information among the interested parties.

The attendees (see sidebar, page 20) divided into three groups. One established the criteria. Another identified the data needed. A third determined the nature of the atlas.

The groups deliberated for three hours, presenting their findings the next morning to the reassembled attendees, who made additional comments. The final recommendations are summarized below.

### Determining a Site's Significance

The evaluative criteria were divided into six major categories, each with numerous secondary elements. At the broadest level, the evaluation was to consider each site's: 1) eligibility to join the National Register of Historic Places or become a National Historic Landmark, 2) research potential, 3) importance to current-day Native Americans, 4) interpretive value, 5) condition and threats to its preservation, and 6) "other benefits" from preservation.

### National Register and National Historic Landmark Eligibility

Eligibility is to an extent moot since the four states consider all ancient mounds to be candidates for the National Register. Therefore, a site's ability to address other aspects of the cultural milieu—past and present—needs to be ascertained to rank it.

### Research Potential

It was fairly obvious to all parties that each state's archeological plan was key to determining a site's research potential. It was also clear that input should be sought from, among others, the at-large archeological community, tribes, federal and state land managers, and avocationalists. The workshop did not address how to exchange information among them, but a symposium was held in November at the Southeastern Archaeological Conference in Knoxville and this issue of *Common Ground* was planned.

### Native American Values

In some ways, the Delta initiatives are at odds with the traditional values of Native American peoples, who prefer that the sites be left alone, undisturbed by any investigation or interpretive program. Nonetheless, tribes want to protect these sites from destruction, a goal they share with other workshop participants. The need to continually consult with Native Americans, and to consider their values, was a theme throughout the workshop in regard to all aspects of the study.

It was pointed out that the idea of ranking earthworks by their sacred value is a non sequitur since all are equally sacred to Native Americans. Clearly, many other factors have to be considered in ongoing consultations with tribes regarding alternatives for preserving endangered sites or interpreting them to the public.

The National Park Service has sought and welcomed the input of the tribal community in this study. Tribes were sent letters and information packets soliciting their involvement in planning and review. Sadly, only representatives of the



NPS / NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY

### Excavation at Emerald Mound, October 1948.

Mississippi band of Choctaw, the Chitimacha tribe of Louisiana, and the Tunica-Biloxi tribes of Louisiana have responded so far. As of this writing, we still have not received replies from the Quachita Indians of Arkansas, the Coushatta tribe of Louisiana, or the Caddo, Osage, Quapaw, Choctaw, and Chickasaw tribes of Oklahoma.

### Interpretation

Judging a site's interpretive potential means examining many factors. The phenomenon of earthwork construction has to be looked at across the region, so that interpretive plans represent different time periods, socio-cultural contexts, and functions. Existing presentations have to be reviewed for information gaps and sites appraised in terms of accessibility, visibility, state of preservation, and so on.

### Preservation

The Delta legislation clearly intends to promote protection of endangered sites. This requires assessing a site's current condition as well as any impending threats to it. Decisions about preservation strategies have to weigh this information along with the other variables discussed here.

### Other Benefits

Lastly, the work group agreed that "other benefits" from a course of action (e.g., preservation or interpretation of a site) have to be included in the evaluation process. These benefits could include preserving scenic vistas or enhancing local economies.

Partnerships should be struck among all who might benefit, to share the costs as well as the rewards. Although not addressed during the workshop, clearly the evaluations must consider possible negative results, like the loss of endangered species owing to increased tourist traffic.

### Evaluating Site Inventories and Databases

In preparing for the workshop, a prototype database was designed in anticipation of the evaluation criteria, as a starting point in discussions of data structures and fields. The group started by discussing the inadequacies of state databases, the problems of acquiring and integrating data from different sources, and the fact that the database developed for the study would have a limited purpose.

It was obvious that the databases maintained by Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee did not contain much of the needed information. Clearly, developing a database for the study would help address the many inadequacies in archeological databases currently available to the scientific community and state agencies. It was stressed, however, that the study database would not correct all the problems. Limited resources and a relatively short timetable precluded collecting information not readily available in extant databases, the published literature, or easily accessed unpublished records.

The discussions underscored that information better obtained and evaluated with GIS analysis (such as local poverty levels and road accessibility) would not be incorporated into the database. A separate effort is being carried out to develop GIS datasets and maps using ArcInfo and ArcView software.

The role of GIS was discussed only briefly. It was mentioned, however, that appropriate GIS datasets would be assembled. Primarily this means seeking out existing datasets rather than compiling new ones. Toward these ends, DEM, DLG, and Tiger data files have been purchased. For map production, the commercial First St. and ArcUSA datasets have also been acquired, although copyright restrictions bar distributing them.

There is a high likelihood that many of the sets already exist in one fashion or another at the state and federal agencies that use such data, without copyright restrictions. The Bureau of Land Management and the Corps of Engineers have datasets that may

## Workshop Attendees

Letters of invitation to the workshop were sent to over 90 federal, state, and tribal representatives, along with several other interested persons. Of these, 30 attended, representing the private sector as well as the following:

Arkansas Archeological Survey  
The Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana  
Louisiana Division of Archaeology  
The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians  
Mississippi Department of Archives and History  
Mississippi State University  
Northeastern Louisiana University  
Tennessee Division of Archaeology  
University of Memphis  
University of Southern Mississippi  
University of Southwestern Louisiana  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
U.S. Bureau of Land Management  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
U.S. Forest Service

### National Park Service

John Ehrenhard (Chief, Southeast Archeological Center)  
Guy Prentice (Principal Investigator, Southeast Archeological Center)  
Bob Belous (Superintendent, North Cascades National Park)  
Veletta Canouts (Deputy Chief, Archeology and Ethnography Program)  
Bob Dodson (Superintendent, Natchez Trace Parkway)  
Paul Hartwig (Desk Officer, Gulf Coast Cluster)  
Bennie Keel (Regional Archeologist, Southeast Archeological Center)  
Bill Nichols (Superintendent, Vicksburg National Military Park)  
George Smith (Chief of I&E, Southeast Archeological Center)

fill the study's needs. Once it becomes widely known what the Park Service is doing, it is hoped that other agencies will provide, or perhaps share in preparing, GIS datasets of common interest. These could then be distributed to other state and federal agencies without restrictions.

The greatest concern among workshop participants appeared to be with ensuring the quality of data, which remains an issue. One difficulty is that different information can be suspect for different reasons. A mound location can be suspect because the mound may not be cultural in origin. Or the map recorder may not have been able to locate his or her position accurately, or may have entered coordinates incorrectly in the database.

Evaluating these possibilities requires asking different questions of the data, and having done so, judging their quality as high, medium, or poor. In many cases, this is still subjective. If only the problem were limited to site location alone, but it also extends to cultural and time period affiliations assigned on the basis of artifact types (or lack thereof), radiocarbon dates (or lack thereof), lack of up-to-date information on the site and pending threats to it, etc.

How does one formulate indices to evaluate an individual's ability to locate sites on a map, identify ceramic types, assign cultural affiliations, etc.? How does one rank a site when the accuracy of its location is considered "high" but the cultural affiliation is suspect because the researcher has questionable abilities and

pending threats have not been evaluated in 10 years?

In trying to come to grips with this issue, a quality table has been incorporated in the database to accommodate very coarse evaluations of accuracy. At a future date and subject to prior review, concise criteria will be adopted by which sites will be assigned to "high," "medium," "low," and "none" confidence levels. This process will no doubt identify some of the more suspect information, but confidence with quality will continue to be a problem.

## Nature of the Atlas

The atlas work group came to several conclusions that, by and large, left few issues to be resolved. Because of the sensitive nature of the archeological resources, it was concluded that maps in the final report should be scaled so that the public cannot ascertain a site's exact location. Specific locational information should be kept in an electronic format available on a need to know basis only. Thematic maps prepared for the final report should reflect the classification schemes developed to evaluate site significance, which can be anticipated to include different cultural periods, earthwork types, and internal spatial organizations (presumably as a result of different ideological and environmental factors).

With regard to this latter group, it was suggested representative site plans and environmental settings be included in the report. The work group also recommended including maps showing surveyed and unsurveyed portions of each state, the former distribution of destroyed earthworks versus those that remain, site distributions relative to public transportation routes, publicly owned earthwork sites, and currently interpreted sites. It was suggested that illustrative examples of Native American material culture be included in the report, but it was also recommended that permission be sought from tribes before doing so.

The largest issue regarding cartographic materials concerns sites on private lands. Several landowners were upset with the Park Service brochure "Lower Mississippi River Valley: Nile of the New World." They had not been consulted about having mound sites on their lands identified, and were concerned that readers might assume that all sites shown were open to the public. The workshop participants also noted several errors in the brochure.

The question was, should private lands be illustrated in the report? If so, how to avoid confusion with public lands open to visitation? It was initially suggested that owner permission be obtained before including specific site information. But this would be an immense task given the report's due date, and withholding such information would cause unwanted consequences such as misinterpretation of site distributions.

Given the problem's sensitive nature, it has been decided to include all known sites in the study universe, but to portray the information in a way that will minimize the negative consequences. Again, one method is to map at a large scale so that locations are too imprecise for the public to ascertain their whereabouts. Omitting site names from maps is another. Distinguishing private sites with symbols keyed to a legend is another means of reducing the problem. Making governmental decision-makers and planners aware of these potential problems is, of course, another route to be pursued.



1948 excavation of Bynum Mounds, along the Natchez Trace Parkway in Mississippi, thought to have been occupied between 100 B.C. and 200 A.D.

On a side note, the concerns with the brochure prompted John Ehrenhard, chief of the NPS Southeast Archeological Center, to ask workshop participants to record the errors for correction if it is reproduced. To avoid similar missteps, the illustrations for this report will be reviewed for such problems prior to publication. This will also permit archeologists familiar with specific landowner concerns to possibly include them in the final report.

## Current Developments and Future Plans

The author, as the study's principal investigator, is focusing primarily on the site inventory database. Information in the master site file databases of Louisiana, Mississippi, and western Tennessee have been converted to Microsoft Access data tables and a true relational database.

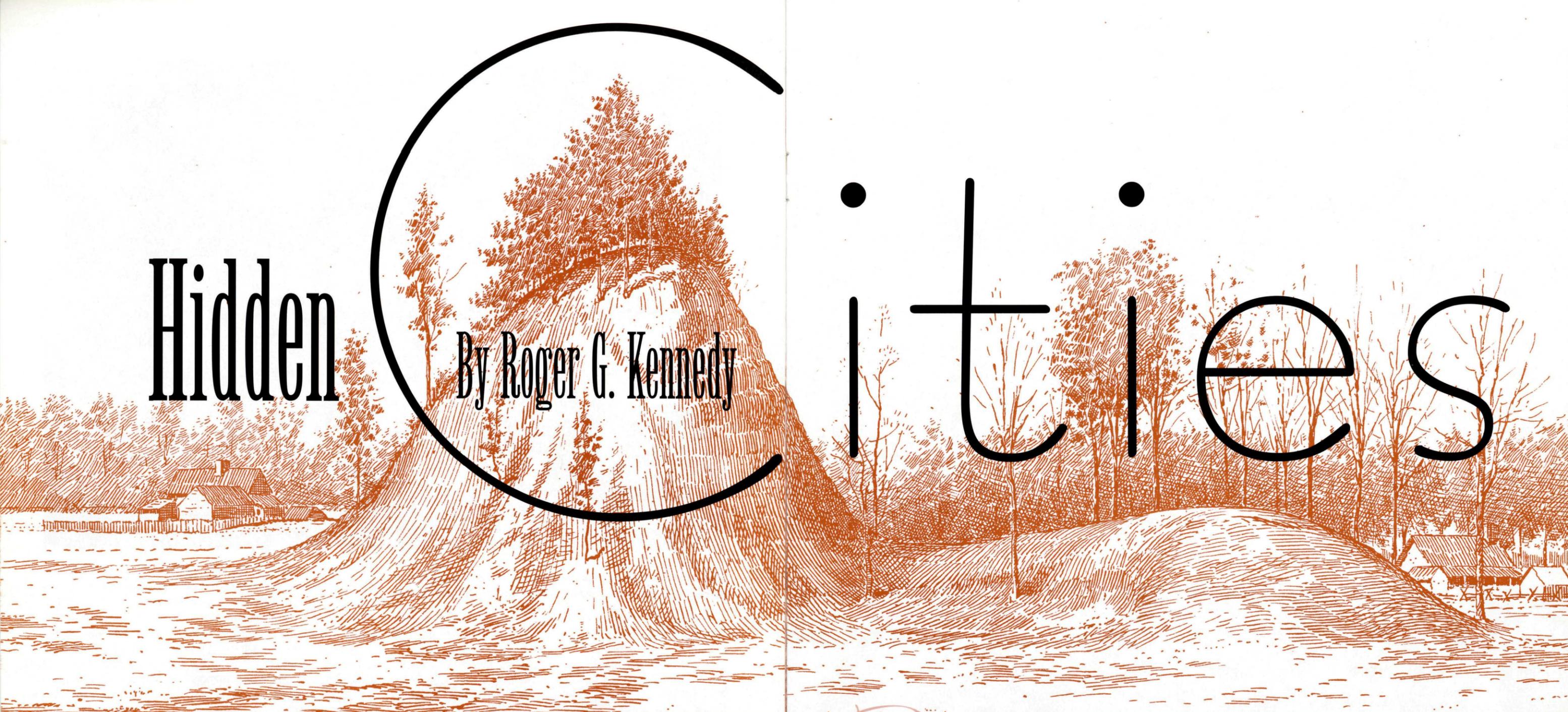
Robert Thorne and Michael Wild at the University of Mississippi are compiling and correcting mound site information in that state's master file. They are finding that much of the data is missing or erroneous. Thorne is also preparing an overview of earthwork sites in Mississippi as one means for understanding mound building and developing the criteria to evaluate the significance of sites. Jon Gibson at the University of Southwestern

Louisiana is similarly evaluating approximately 30 mound sites in Louisiana's Ouachita River Valley. Gibson's efforts include an overview of archeological investigations there.

Compiling the study inventory is by itself a daunting task, with in the neighborhood of 3,130 known earthwork/mound sites—encompassing roughly 5,200 mounds—currently identified in the combined master files of Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and western Tennessee. Obviously, collecting and organizing data for the study will require many months, and to be comprehensive, the contributions of many people.

Fortunately, various workshop participants and others have already volunteered time and effort. These examples of generosity and professionalism will need to be repeated if the study is to meet everyone's highest expectations. It is hoped that the publication of this article will also result in additional persons volunteering their knowledge, time, and resources toward the study and the preservation of these all too rapidly vanishing memorials of America's past and present cultural heritage.

Guy Prentice, principal investigator for the study, can be reached at the Southeast Archeological Center, 2035 East Paul Dirac Drive, Box 7, Johnson Building, Suite 120, Tallahassee, FL, 32310, (904) 580-3011, ext. 129, fax (904) 580-2884.



# Hidden

By Roger G. Kennedy

# ities

**R**oger G. Kennedy, Director of the National Park Service, recently authored the book *Hidden Cities* about the struggle during the first hundred years of the republic to understand the monumental architectural and archeological record of prehistoric America. Despite the efforts of the finest intellects in the nation, the achievements of American Indians were ignored in the face of westward expansion. Kennedy's thesis is that we have a new opportunity to recognize and appreciate the achievements of ancient Americans, expanding our understanding of the diverse cultures that have contributed to this nation. The following excerpt from *Hidden Cities* suggests the future possibilities. —F.P. McManamon, Chief, National Park Service Archeology and Ethnography Program

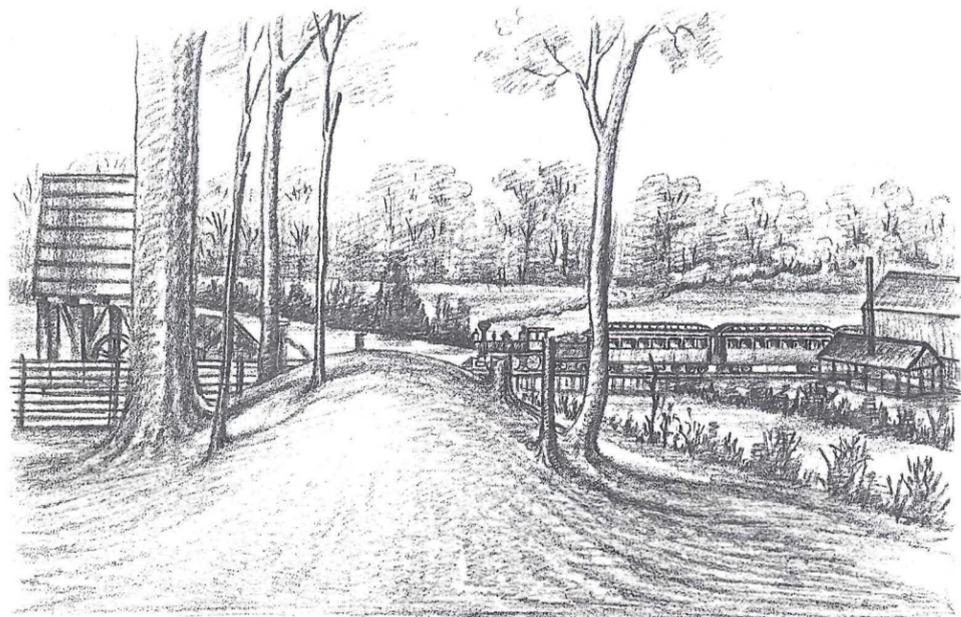
NATIONAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL ARCHIVES, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

**T**HE FIRST GENERATION of westering colonizers had little to prepare them for the possibility of ancient cultures . . . The traders had come out of the southern Carolinas, and reached the Mississippi by routes which happened to bypass all the major mound centers. Though the French had been installed around Nashville for decades, in terrain full of ancient ruins, they did not provide forewarning of massive archaeology to their competitors from Carolina or Kentucky. They were mercantile folk; neither by training, inclination, nor the beguilements of leisure were they to be diverted from their goods and ledgers. None of these early merchants was leisured and none seems to have had time for wonder; so, from

the 1680s until the 1770s, antiquity slumbered as commerce fretted and scratched overhead.

Antiquity, it is true, had only recently gone to slumber, as time was counted in the Valley. It had been wide awake when in 1539 a Spanish expeditionary force led by Hernando De Soto hacked and burnt its way through active mound-building cultures from the Georgia piedmont to the plains of Texas. But antiquity was silenced soon enough. The would-be conquistadors who emerged

**Above:** Late 19th century sketch of the Phenard Mounds, Arkansas, by Cyrus Thomas. The head of the Smithsonian's Bureau of American Ethnology, Thomas could not reconcile the geometric precision of the mounds with the notion that they were built by Indians. He later changed his mind.



NATIONAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL ARCHIVES, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

**Cyrus Thomas illustration of mound site with rural train station beyond, from the late 19th century.**

into the Appalachian province from Florida left a legacy, though they did not establish colonies. Their legacy was disease. After their microbes thronged to accelerate the destruction already underway by those already loosed by sailors and slavers along the coast upon the Indians, who did not have the appropriate antibodies, an unbroken Indian tradition of many centuries was removed from the scene. It had been destroyed not by force of arms—De Soto's entrada was a failure—but by the silent insidious action of European plagues.

De Soto's was the first force of Europeans to enter . . . a region the British later called "the Western waters." . . . The Spanish interest in its culture was limited to what pillage might be gotten from its temples and palaces. Desoto's study of its architecture did not go beyond determining the best means to storm its fortifications. So his chroniclers lavished little language upon accounts which might have forewarned the English or the French . . . about the ancient buildings of the West. Not until the end of the eighteenth century did some Euramericans begin to show real curiosity in the history of their land and its peoples.

Some of the seekers and invaders who entered under the flags of Spain and Great Britain were pinkish in skin tone, others brownish or blackish. Some were free, some slaves, some indentured servants or slaves for a term. The pinkish ones, masters or servants, discerned themselves as distinguished by skin color from the darker people among them, whether slave or free, and from the people already present in the valley. The races were then said to be White, Black, and Red, though of course not a single person so described was or is, in fact, white, black, or red. The color scheme was artificial, but within it were categorized people of an infinite variety of colors. Rewards and penalties were meted out for no better reason than occupancy of one or another of those

artificial categories. One of our primary themes will be how, in the valley, these people, newcomers and those who had been there for thousands of years, played out their prejudices about each other.

It is true that among the Founding Fathers, the word "African" was virtually a synonym for slave, and "Indian" or "Red Indian" nearly synonymous with "savage." But not all of them thought this way, and none of them thought so all the time. Many were better and more broadly educated, less prejudiced and more conscious of their opportunities, than they have been said to be by most of their biographers. Especially during the Jim Crow period of American history, from the 1880s through the 1940s, it was conventional to present the

views of the Founders on racial matters shriveled to the crabbed understanding of those who were then writing about them. Probably this was because it was embarrassing to acknowledge that the Founders might have felt obligations and opportunities upon which they failed fully to act. Besides, if, during that unhappy phase in American life, their foiled aspirations were too strongly presented, there was the uncomfortable possibility that the historians' own contemporaries might be induced to be as bold in their thinking as the Founders actually were.

But that acknowledgement is required of us: the Founders had set out to create a "New Order in the Universe"—so they proclaimed on their Great Seal. They had hoped that their new nation might have been freed of the prejudices and superstitions of Europe. But the revolutionary generation was disappointed; the power of old vices was not broken.

By the end of the patriarchy of George Washington (1789-1797), the Founders, most ruefully President Washington himself, acknowledged that those vices were so ingrained that they were not purged merely by a change of government. Human slavery, for instance, seemed fixed ineradicably within the American system. And though the West offered a second chance, the Founders were not so young as they had been in 1776 when things seemed simpler.

A second theme of this work, extending from the first, is that in the West the Founding Fathers missed a great opportunity. A third is that they knew it. This book has been written because I believe that we, too, have an opportunity and that we must not fail in it. We are likely to do better if we know what some of them attempted, and why they failed. The time has come for another mighty effort to fulfill the highest aspirations of the Founders in the central valley of North America, where they glimpsed the possibility of a work of redemption.

They had the benefit of a shock of discovery. In few instances in human history has architecture been so important in altering



**Cyrus Thomas' view of the Gardener Mound in Arkansas.**

the impression of the nature of one people in the eyes of others. The Founders had not anticipated that they would find, in the West, large, sophisticated, and ancient work, performed by the kind of people still resident there.

That architectural evidence was too obtrusive to be ignored. The new cities of the central valley—Cincinnati, St. Louis, Marietta, Portsmouth, Lexington, Pittsburgh, Natchez, and Nashville—had to be built by clearing away evidence of older ones. In the countryside there were hundreds of thousands of earthen reminders of prior habitation; there still are tens of thousands. The shock of these discoveries forced upon the Founders the possibility that Indians were not all savages.

Since the Indians were other, and yet obviously human, it was not difficult for some of the Founders, especially George Washington and Albert Gallatin, to open their minds to the possibilities presented by the presence of Blacks, also other but human. Even Thomas Jefferson's French friends insisted that the Blacks, though enslaved, were fully human.

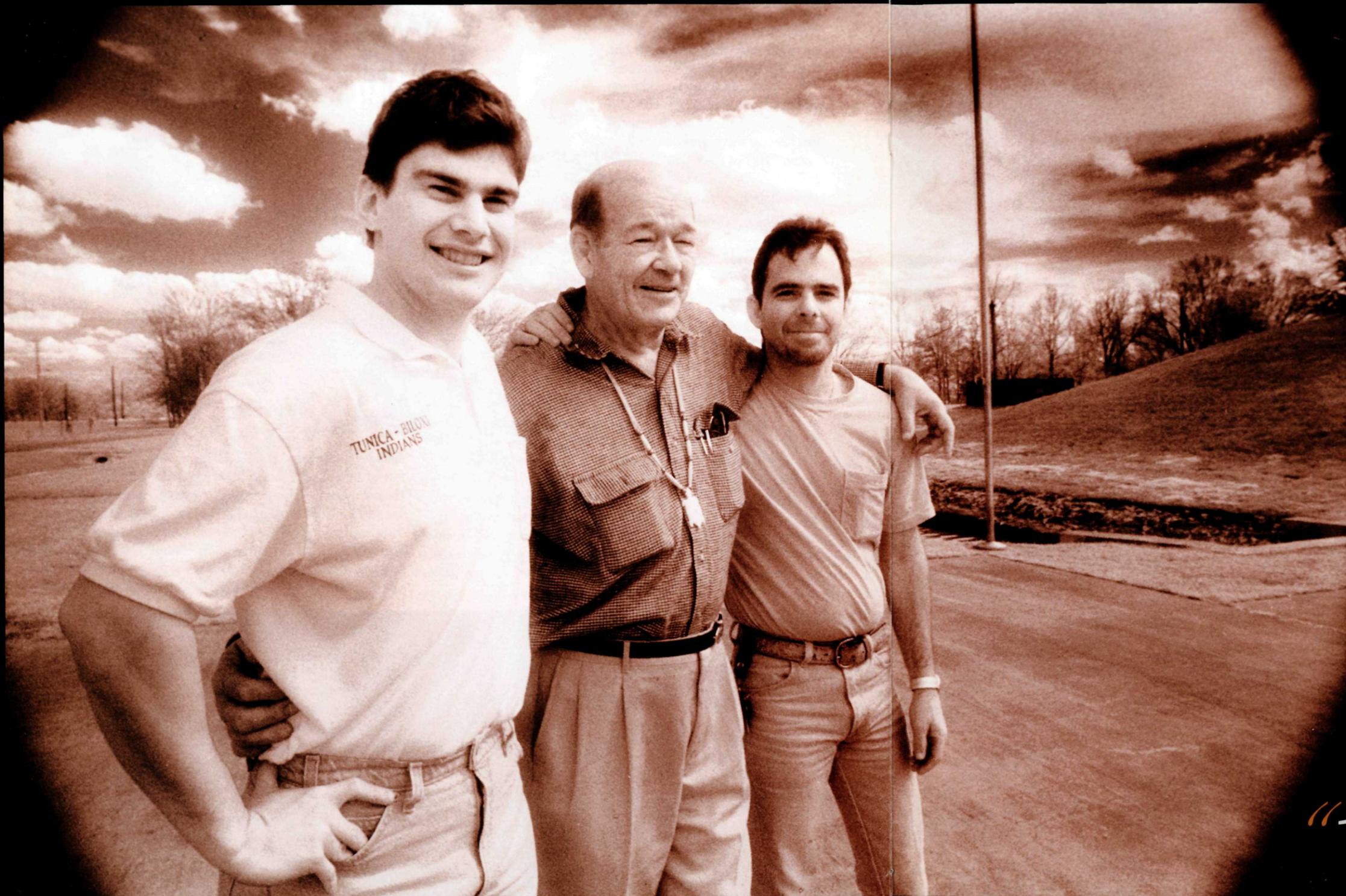
The Founders knew nothing of ancient Africa outside of a little

learning about Egypt; had they known something of it at the time they were acquainted with ancient America they might have enlarged their sense of Negro possibility considerably farther—and, by extension, their apprehension of what other darker-skinned people, such as ancient Americans, might have done. But they were neither so fortunate nor so bold. We are so fortunate, and we may be so bold. Knowledge of the past may help alter the present.

Fortunately for us, the Founders did not consume all possible salutary surprises about American antiquity. Some startling has been vouchsafed to us. Much has been learned in the late 1980s and early 1990s about our predecessors in the Great Valley, much that still imparts the thrill which encouraged the Founders to make the new beginning they promised themselves and the world.

And we may try again.

*From Hidden Cities: The Discovery and Loss of Ancient North American Civilization by Roger G. Kennedy. Copyright 1994 by Roger G. Kennedy. Reprinted with permission of The Free Press, a division of Simon & Schuster.*



Bill Day (center), director of Tunica-Biloxi Cultural and Historic Preservation, with conservators Earl Barbry, Jr. (left), and Brent Barbry (right).

WITH  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
MICHEL VARISCO

by  
Penny  
Jessel

# Native VOICES

*"We have carried on the Green Corn Ceremony," says the 84-year-old tribal elder. "We kept all the sacred ceremonies going . . . Sometimes we feel like we're just hanging on, but always the new generation came through." Hers is just one voice that Penny Jessel, a Cherokee of Shawnee descent, heard in speaking to tribes across the Delta. What she found is that the mound cultures are still very much alive among Native Americans with roots in the lower Mississippi.*

PHOTOGRAPHS © 1996 MICHEL VARISCO



**THE WHITE RACCOON IS A RARE ANIMAL.**

He doesn't look like the other. If you ever run into a white raccoon, you will return to where you come from." Addie George, an 84-year-old Yuchi woman, is telling a parable of hope and reclamation. It is a Yuchi parable, but it speaks of something that is common to those Native Americans who still feel the ancient spiritual pull of the Mississippi Delta, their place of origin.

There is an Indian movement in progress, and its focus is reclaiming all that is Indian. Who are the descendants of the people who built the mounds on the rich alluvial soil that lines the Mississippi River? The answer is a journey across time, place, and memory.

In Louisiana, the Chitimacha are surrounded by reminders of their legacy. Roslynn McCoy, the tribe's director of cultural and historical research, says about the mounds, "There are thousands of them. Everywhere. They're everywhere around here. You can see them in the canefields. You can tell by the shells on the ground, too. Chip [Louisiana state archeologist Charles McGimsey] has taught us what to look for . . . about 25 miles from here there's this mound that's higher than our ceiling. Beautiful."

Working with the state of Louisiana and private firms, the Chitimacha are rediscovering their past. The tribe has applied for a historic preservation grant to identify all the archeological sites in its traditional homeland—part of south-central and all of southeastern Louisiana. Both cultural tradition and research indicate that the Chitimacha buried their dead on the mounds into the 1920s, and possibly as late as 1940.

McCoy says that traditional Chitimacha ways "are starting to come back. Prayers, burning tobacco and sage. It's acknowledging the ancestors. When [they] visit the mounds [they] make sure [they] do that."

The desire to reaffirm tribal identity is evident among many tribes with connections to the mounds. Says Bill Day, director of Tunica-Biloxi cultural and historic preservation, "The Tunica-Biloxi . . . built a replica of a temple [ceremonial] mound and a museum in anticipation of receiving items robbed from Tunica graves in the 1950s. The so-called "Tunica Treasure," thought to be the world's largest collection of Indian and European artifacts from the 17th century, were kept at Harvard for ten years. By the time the grave goods had been returned, they were nearly destroyed due to improper storage and lack of conservation. The tribe . . . was not in a financial position to undertake the restoration. So they purchased two salvaged refrigerated semi-trailers and solicited private funding and donated equipment. Professional conservators were brought in to teach tribal members how to [restore and care for the artifacts]. Now we do all of the conservatory work ourselves."

The only human remains returned to the Tunica-Biloxi, says Day, "were in a box about the size of a

cigar box. Without the bodies and [with] no way to determine which remains went with which artifacts, the remains were buried within the mound with the museum on top of the graves. It is felt that the objects are all around those who are buried there. The museum and the artifacts that it houses are now an educational tool and a visual statement of Tunica affluence of the past."

When Glenda Galvan of the Chickasaw nation speaks to schoolchildren, she brings along a cutaway sketch of a mound. "We explain to the kids why, from the beginning of our time, in our homeland, why we had the mounds. You can feel it in the classroom. There's a sense of dignity and a sense of loss. They understand. When I'm gone, the teacher can pick up with a textbook and go on." What she tries to do, she says, is "tell what the textbook can't tell."

Addie George describes Yuchi history and the determination to preserve tradition. "The sacred fireplace and [herbs and coals] were all carried to Oklahoma when they walked the Trail of Tears . . . And they still carry on again with the thousand-year-old fireplace. Old people worshipped in it. The children grow up in it and understand it. Those who go away to college, they have lost out, they don't know songs, language, and so on. I am 84 years old and have been here all these years and have seen all these changes. I do [teach children] and the grownups too, they come to me and ask me about the language and customs. I teach my grandchildren. I want my family to know all this."

To some Native Americans in the Delta, the fact that many mounds are on public land won't stop them from worshiping on them. "We'll go on public land," says one. "We don't ask anybody. We just do it. White people have been desecrating graves for years—even when there were laws that said they couldn't. They just went out and did it."

The early antiquarians who studied American indigenous people concluded that the marvelous race that constructed the mounds had simply disappeared, possibly to Central and South America. They believed that the American Indians filled the areas that the "Great Race of Mound Builders" had vacated. The expeditions of DeSoto and La Salle, and even Andrew Jackson's army, were in fact looking at that race. It had been forced to vacate its lands—not for other Indians, but for Europeans.

By 1700, Georgia, the ancestral home of the Yuchi, was overrun by Anglo-American farmers. The Yuchi, along with many other affiliates of the Creek Confederacy, were forced to flee. The Yuchi found homes among the Creek and other southeastern tribes, but they ceased to exist as a tribal entity. The remaining Yuchi were one of the tribes that was forced to walk the Trail of Tears. This culturally distinct

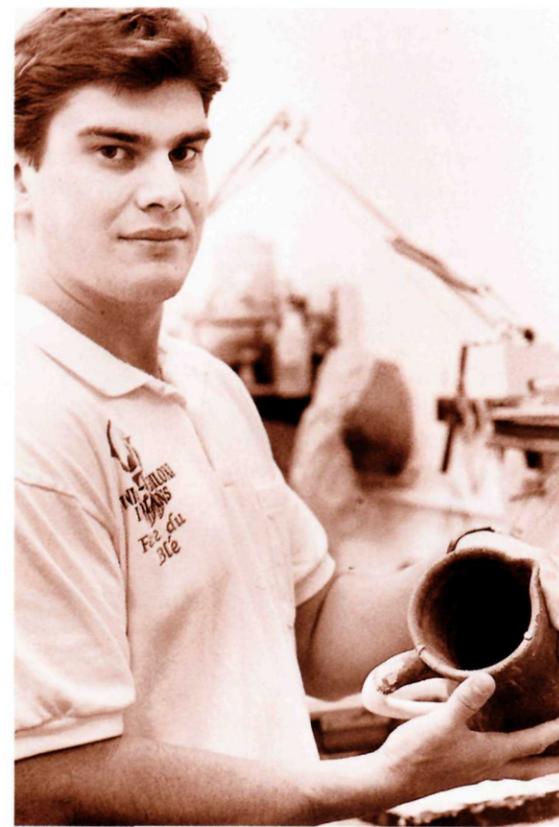
*It is said that in the beginning there were two great alligators, one red, one blue. They moved aside and allowed the Tunica to pass through into this world. There is red mud here and a blue mud, so who knows? In every myth there is an ounce of truth.* —Bill Day

**BILL DAY AT MOUND SITE PURCHASED BY THE TUNICA-BILOXI.** MICHEL VARISCO

group was forcibly incorporated into the Creek Nation of Oklahoma by the U.S. government.

"Yuchi were moundbuilders to begin with," says Addie George. "The sacred burial mounds and the mounds they lived on. I kind of figure children would be safe from animals up high like that. They would dig a grave right there where they live, bury the dead and continue living right there on top of it." With few of them left and their language fading quickly, the Yuchi display an astonishing tenacity to retain their identity. Valerie Harjo George claims, "We are under the Creek Nation and have filed a petition for federal recognition, but it was denied because we are already in a federally recognized tribe [Creek]. So we are going to file again."

"The Choctaw carried the bones of their dead with them," says E.T., a Choctaw elder, relating a creation tale. "They said the bones were the treasures of their people. They had many heavy bags of bones with them, since they had been traveling for a long time . . .



The Choctaw decided to stay and settle down and bury all those bones, and the place they buried them was a great mound, our Mother Mound, Nanih Waiya" [see next article].

"The Mississippi Band of Choctaw may actually have been made up of a remnant population of several of the Mississippi tribes who were despoiled during the 16th and 17th centuries," says tribal archeologist Ken Carleton. "There are two creation stories, one of tun-

**W**e explain to the kids why, from the beginning of our time, in our homeland, why we had the mounds. You can feel it in the classroom. There's a sense of dignity and a sense of loss."  
—Glenda Galvan

**EARL BARBRY OF THE TUNICA-BILOXI HOLDS A PIECE OF HIS TRIBE'S HERITAGE.** MICHEL VARISCO

neling through the Mother Mound to arrive in this place, and the other of arriving by a migration." The importance of Choctaw cultural preservation is made poignant as Carleton states that the Choctaw consider PanIndian Powwows and other events that suggest a generic "Indianness" "cultural pollution to [their] traditional ways. Eighty percent of the people speak Choctaw. English has always been taught as a second language in the Choctaw schools because children spoke Choctaw at home. As sharecroppers and the victims of discrimination in the community, they were segregated from the general society. This segregation acted as a preserver of the language.

"A recent problem is that the children at age five are coming to school speaking English rather than Choctaw . . . The tribe has . . . received a language preservation grant to teach reading and writing Choctaw in the high school."

The conflict between living among the dominant society and the desire to remain Indian has its costs. Asked about his tribe's connection to the mounds, one Native American says, "I don't hear anything about mounds around here. I know they had mounds, but I don't know what for or what's the meaning." And at a Poarch Creek powwow, a tobacco-chewing good old boy was overheard saying, "I ain't never seen such a big bunch of nothing in my life." For all the native cultural renaissance, there is a good share of heartache and loss. Some of the mounds in Chitimacha country are very accessible, according to Roslynn McCoy. "They're off levy roads, and they're plundered, brutalized. Kids go up on them and party." On a trip to a mound in what she describes as "a very old [part of the] Chickasaw homeland," Glenda Galvan recalls the tearful reaction of an elder woman as they prepared to reburial ancestral remains they had brought with them. "Everywhere we stepped," she says, "we found pieces of bone. We gathered as many as we could and buried them where we thought they were appropriate." Nearby were two men in a Blazer. With their shovels and buckets stored in the back, they were waiting for the Chickasaw to leave.

"Our history is not written down," says Valerie Harjo George. "[It] is not being taught to our children." Says Addie George, "Every year we lose four, five, or six people. Now there are only four elders. Two are over one hundred years old."

Richard Grounds of the University of Tulsa is working to preserve the Yuchi language before it disappears. "There are 12 speakers of the Yuchi language left. I have taken this semester to record and document as much of the language as I can. Unfortunately, I was unable to find any grant to assist, so I'm working with no salary. But you can understand why it is important that I do it now."

It is Thanksgiving Day, the annual powwow of the



Poarch Creek. The event is held in the spirit of Indianness and old ways, but the modern world crowds around, unbidden. Booths offer dream-catchers, brand-name moccasins, and war bonnets for children. There are hot-pink-and-blue-colored feathers.

Under a sign saying, "Mother Earth Herbs and Cures" is a white man in a long black wig, headband, and leather tunic. Another booth is selling colorful plastic Mardi-Gras-style plastic trinket jewelry and roach clips with feathers attached.

The Poarch Creek are descendants of some of the "Friendly Creek Indians" who were living in southwestern Alabama at the close of the Creek War of 1813-14. The majority of the Creek people were removed to Oklahoma in 1836, but some remained in Alabama as interpreters. Over the years, through separation and acculturation, these interpreters lost the ability to speak the Creek language. However, through decades of discrimination and depredation that enhanced solidarity, the remembrance of Indianness that bound them together held strong. Patiently, painstakingly, they began to develop and reclaim the heritage they had lost. They work toward that end still.

In a small square, roped off with heavy twine, is Gail Thrower, tribal historian. There, she exhibits food sources of the historic Creek Indians such as indigenous grains and herbs. She patiently explains to passers-by tribal history or uses of different plant

**W**e'll go on public land. We don't ask anybody. We just do it. White people have been desecrating graves for years—even when there were laws that said they couldn't. They just went out and did it."  
—Native American

**YOUNG POARCH CREEK GIRL AT A POWWOW.** POARCH BAND OF CREEK INDIANS

life. J.A. Paredes, professor of anthropology at Florida State University, has spent some 20 years with the Poarch Creek Indians. With pride in his voice, he states, "The Poarch Creek struggled for a long time, but finally received federal recognition in August of 1984." Their efforts are geared to reclamation of what was denied them for a very long time: their right to their Creek heritage.

The collective consciousness of American Indians is directed toward reclamation—not only of artifacts and ancestral remains, but of all things Indian. Increasingly one sees the desire to reconnect with tradition: the Yuchi seeking independence; the Poarch Creek learning-relearning their cultural traditions; the Tunica-Biloxi sheltering their ancestors and their children from non-Indians by conducting their own works; the Mississippi Choctaw insistence upon teaching their language and traditions to their children; the Chickasaw searching out their ancient grounds.

Nearing the end of his life, a 96-year-old Yuchi chief took his two daughters and went to see where the Yuchi used to live. As Addie George tells the story, "They stopped for gas in Alabama . . . The service [station] attendant said, 'You look like Indians.'

'We are Indians! We are the Yuchi, and I am the chief of the Yuchi Indians!'

"The people there treated them real good. They got them a nice hotel room, free meals, the red carpet . . . They took [the chief] to a cafe. When they entered, he spotted the white raccoon on display. It was stuffed. He was so excited because it was prophesied that if you see him, this white raccoon, you will return to where you come from."

Exploring the Mississippi in the early 18th century, the French had the rare privilege of seeing the last of the true moundbuilders. They were the Natchez in their waning days, disappearing into the darkness of time. In *Sacred Geography of the American Mound Builders*, Maureen Korp says, "These thousands of mounds dotting the landscape attesting to the powerful presence of ancient Americans are rather like a giant page of braille, now damaged by plow and progress, whose code there is not even hope of ever fully deciphering. Yet, some of the marks, some of the signs, are so potent they whisper still of ancient meanings." That whispering is in an old language, one whose sound crosses time to a new world. It is often faint, but Native Americans listen still, and hear.

*Penny Jessel is senior associate at the Gray Group of Tallahassee, Florida, which provides consulting services for the development of affordable housing for low-income families. She has also worked with Indian Housing Authorities throughout the country. Ms. Jessel is of Shawnee ancestry and is an enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma. She is currently a graduate student in anthropology at Florida State University.*

## Nanih Waiya

MOTHER MOUND OF THE CHOCTAW

By Ken Carleton

When they emerged from the mound, the first Choctaw were still damp from the Underworld. Aba iki, the Father Above, who had brought them forth, laid them out along the ramp of the mound to dry. The scene unfolded ages ago, according to one origin story, deep in a Mississippi wood. In other versions, the Choctaw and Chickasaw entered the world from a cave near the mound. Yet another variation tells of a prophet arriving from the west followed by an entire people. The mound, he divined, was meant to be their new home. They settled and later broke up into different groups. One followed a man called Chata, and became the Choctaw. Others followed Chicasa, his brother, and became the Chickasaw. Some say the Creek and Cherokee originated there as well.

Nanih Waiya, "Mother Mound" (I<sup>n</sup>holitopa iski) of the Choctaw Indians, has been

venerated for centuries. The mound—focal point of their origin stories and the figurative heart of the Choctaw homeland—is today in a state park in Winston County, Mississippi. The archeological history of the site is little known, with no substantial excavations having been conducted there. From surface artifacts it is known that the first occupation of the site was in the Middle Woodland period (ca. 0-300 A.D.), which is most likely when the mound was built. Its pyramidal shape is similar to others from that period, such as Igomar Mound in Mississippi and Pinson Mounds in Tennessee.

Occupation continued into the Late Woodland period, lasting until about 700 A.D. Though the site is often referred to as Mississippian (1000-1550 A.D.), there does not appear to have been any occupation during that time.

Variouly translated as "stooping hill" or "place of creation," Nanih Waiya measures 25 feet high, 140 feet wide, and 218 feet long. At one time, it was surrounded on three sides by a circular earthwork that was 10 feet high and encompassed about one square mile. A visitor to the site in 1854 reported the barely visible remnants of several smaller mounds nearby, which by that time had been all but obliterated by plowing. Portions of a smaller mound to the north of Nanih Waiya are still visible today.

From the 17th century on, the site was a place of homage, revered by the Choctaw as the central location of their origin stories. During the 18th and early 19th centuries, offerings were taken to the mound and placed in a large hole at the top. The small mounds that were noticed in 1854 may have been constructed by the Choctaw for their dead.

There is the possibility that the mounds were Proto-historic (1550-1700) or perhaps even Woodland, but all clues have been lost to the plow.

The Choctaw appear to have made only limited ceremonial use of Nanih Waiya. Their traditional religion is very private, and they conduct few public rituals. Unlike almost every other group in the southeast, the Choctaw apparently did not have a Green Corn ceremony, the annual "first fruits" and renewal festival. The only well-documented public religious activities have to do with the burial and veneration of the dead.

Their traditional religion is one of communion with spirit guides, human-like animals who appear in many southeastern stories and impart knowledge and abilities characteristic of particular animals. Choctaw traditional beliefs are structured by the tales elders tell to the young, and that include, among others, the

origin stories. So Nanih Waiya was probably never the center of any major religious activities. It was simply there, a fundamental part of Choctaw identity and worldview since before sustained European contact.

"It is said," recalls a Choctaw elder, "that the Choctaw would have council meetings on top of the mound a long time ago. Maybe the council met up there because the mound is sacred." In the 1840s, the Choctaw Claims Commission investigated U.S. non-compliance with the provisions of the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek (the 1830 Removal Treaty). Many of the older Choctaw, when asked where they were born, responded that they had come from the Mother Mound, Nanih Waiya. Writing years later of the incident, J.F.H. Claiborne said, "Many of the Choctaws examined . . . regard this mound as the mother, or birthplace of the tribe, and more than one claimant declared that he would not quit the country as long as [Nanih Waiya] remained."

Pressure from the U.S. government eventually caused the Choctaw nation to relinquish much of its ancestral land. Today, elders regard Nanih Waiya with a mixture of nostalgia and resignation. According to one, modern Choctaw see the mound more as a historical site than something sacred. Its incorporation into a Mississippi state park, she says, has a lot to do with it. "It is not ours," she says. "Our Mother Mound is not even ours. It has been given away. I would encourage the state of Mississippi to give it back to the Choctaws. The mound was sacred. The mound was Mother Earth . . . Maybe one day we will go back to the old ways for Choctaws and we'll have Nanih Waiya again."

Ken Carleton is Tribal Archeologist with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. He can be reached at P.O. Box 6257, Philadelphia, MS 39350, (601) 656-5251, fax 656-0218. PHOTO COURTESY KEN CARLETON / MISSISSIPPI BAND OF CHOCTAW

Inscription on back: "View of Nanih Waiya, the sacred mound of the Choctaws, situated in Southeast Winston County. Made by B.N.

Powell, photographer, Columbus, Mississippi, November 28,

1914. From the south side and across the public road."





from **Ancient**  
**Site**

Archeological  
Parks in the  
Delta

to tourist attraction  
and beyond by Mary L. Kwas and  
Robert C. Mainfort, Jr.

A third-grader has just spent the morning at a Native American festival sponsored by an archeological park. He got to reconstruct a pot, watch a flint-knapper, and dance with Native Americans in traditional dress. As his teacher rounds up the class for the bus ride back to school, he runs up to her, his eyes sparkling.  
"My mom was wrong!" he says.

Parkin Mounds, Arkansas, 1934. UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS MUSEUM

"What's that?"

"Well, my mom said that I wouldn't have any fun. That this would just be boring. But she was wrong. It's the best field trip I've ever had!"

This is a true story, reported to the staff of an archeological park by a teacher. And it is a telling example of how these parks can reach the public, guiding popular ideas about archeology and Native Americans while delivering the message in a way that is fun, exciting, and memorable.

The exhibits and interpretive programs at the archeological parks in the lower Delta (mainly preserved mound sites) constitute what is arguably the public's single most important source of information about archeology. That, along with preservation of the sites themselves, is undoubtedly the most important benefit from the development of archeological parks.

### Dilemmas in Park Development

The public has long been fascinated by ancient earthworks. In the 1800s, mound sites were the focus of early antiquarian musings. Later, public interest prompted the preservation of some as parks or privately run tourist attractions. Although many archeological parks preserve unique or significant sites, the development of most was largely determined by quirks of fate, such as their location or the interest of a landowner or community. Unfortunately, fate has not been kind to most of the mounds within or adjacent to Illinois' Cahokia, a World Heritage Site. Like many mounds in the Delta, they have been destroyed.

On the surface, it may seem that public ownership and interpretation of mound sites are both inherently "desirable." But more thoughtful consideration raises a number of caveats. Many archeologists and land managers might assume that "public ownership" equates with preservation, but experience shows that this is not always the case.

The largest mound at Tennessee's Shiloh National Battlefield (see sidebar) sits precariously on the edge of an eroding bluff over 100 feet above Kentucky Lake. The erosion was first noted decades ago, but to date nothing has been done about it.

Several years ago, the mean water level of Tennessee's Reelfoot Lake was raised by a foot. Although this may not seem like much, it was enough to destroy a large mound remnant in a matter of a few years. Unchecked erosion is destroying archeological deposits at Tennessee's Chucalissa and Pinson Mounds. Public ownership can contribute to site preservation, but only with sensitive land management.

As strong proponents of archeological parks, we are nonetheless obliged to note that developing them will always have adverse impacts. Constructing interpretive centers, kiosks, and trails will affect the archeological remains. An extreme example is the unfortunate choice of a location for the museum at Pinson Mounds, which proved to contain important prehistoric archeological deposits. Construction of playground and picnic areas cannot only damage archeological deposits, but also detract from the visual impact of nearby earthworks.

While thorough, sensitive planning can minimize impacts on archeological resources during construction, even simple park maintenance tasks such as mowing and grounds upkeep can have

serious consequences. For example, we have observed the effects of an overzealous tractor driver mowing an earthwork after several days of heavy rain. Something as innocuous as selecting gravel for walkways can prove deleterious. We know of one instance where chert gravel was the choice for trails that forever after will plague archeologists searching for lithic debitage.

Despite these problems, we feel that the negative impacts of developing archeological parks are more than offset by the enormous benefits gained by heightening public awareness of archeology.

### Development and Interpretation Today

In the Delta today, all mound sites open to the general public are on public lands, mostly under state management. Many have been developed for public use as archeological parks, which include museums or interpretive centers with exhibits and staffs to provide educational programming.

Levels of development are similar at major archeological parks. All contain an interpretive center or museum with exhibits, which usually include an overview of southeastern prehistory from paleoindian to European contact periods, often something about the methods of archeology, and an interpretation of the site. Less common interpretive treatments may include town reconstructions and preserved excavations cuts. Facilities may include an auditorium for general programs, a gift shop, and collections storage.

Interpretive programming varies widely at these parks, but most sponsor at least one annual festival highlighting contemporary Native American cultures and provide regular guided tours to school children. A number of the sites offer year-round programs that include crafts festivals and classes, scouting activities, lecture and film series, storytelling, archeology fairs, and other events focusing on Native American cultures or archeology.

### Chucalissa: An Example

Preservation of mound sites as parks undoubtedly has contributed to their survival, but location on public lands does not guarantee their safe management, nor even their continued survival. As an example, consider recent events at the Chucalissa site in Memphis.

The site has been open to the public for about 40 years, first under the management of Tennessee state parks and later the University of Memphis, which has made it available to faculty and students for research and training. The site includes two mounds and a plaza area, around which have been reconstructed a half-dozen thatched Mississippian-style houses, popular with visitors and filmmakers, and rarely seen at other sites. Facilities include a small museum, auditorium, and curation space. A variety of educational programs have been offered at Chucalissa, ranging from crafts classes to guided school tours to festivals. An annual "pow-wow" has been held for about two decades, while "Native American Days," a three-year-old event targeted to elementary school students, attracted over 3,000 visitors in its first year. Although popular with tourists and school groups, declining admissions average slightly under 30,000 per year.

Despite the site's commendable history of public service, recent

years have witnessed a decline in general support. Exhibits were last updated in the mid-1970s and are now dated and deteriorating. The reconstructed houses around the outside plaza have suffered greatly from inadequate maintenance and holes are now visible through the thatched roofs. The dioramas are suffering from the elements. Choctaw Indians have been employed as guides for many years, but unfortunately have lacked training in

facilities, lack of trained personnel, and inadequate funds all contribute to limiting the public education potential of these sites. The permanent interpretive exhibits, as well as the sites themselves, reach many people who might not be exposed to the science and contributions of archeology any other way. Add to that special events, school tours, and scout programs, and one gets an inkling of the amount of people who would discover that



**Pinson Mound 6, a pair of large, intersecting conical burial mounds. This and several other mounds at the site are on lands managed as part of the Tennessee Division of Forestry tree nursery.** MARY ISWAS

archeology or public education, making the quality of tours uneven at best. Worst of all, the university president has announced plans to close the site and museum due to budgetary constraints and what are considered to be insufficient revenues generated by this educational resource. At this writing, the future is uncertain.

### Reaching the Potential

Archeological parks such as Chucalissa and those mentioned above hold the key to public education. Outdated exhibits and

learning about archeology is fun.

Unfortunately, few archeological parks are reaching their full potential. Outdated exhibits and facilities, lack of trained personnel, and inadequate funds all contribute to limiting the education these sites are capable of. Management of archeological properties requires special considerations that few park personnel have the training to deal with and that cannot be corrected by attending a week-long seminar or weekend workshop on management style or interpretive ideas.

Without a doubt, the most pressing need at these parks is for personnel to manage them wisely, able to ensure their protection while promoting their educational potential. These managers must also have the training to develop educational programs based on sound archeological knowledge.

## MAJOR ARCHEOLOGICAL PARKS IN THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI VALLEY

**Pinson Mounds.** The largest Middle Woodland period site in the Southeast; includes the second tallest mound in North America at 72 feet and a geometric enclosure similar to Ohio Valley examples; located near Jackson, Tennessee.

**Chucalissa.** A small Late Mississippian period town; open to the public since 1955; noted for its period town reconstruction; located in Memphis, Tennessee.

**Toltec Mounds.** An Emergent Mississippian period site with astronomical alignments of mounds; located near Little Rock, Arkansas.

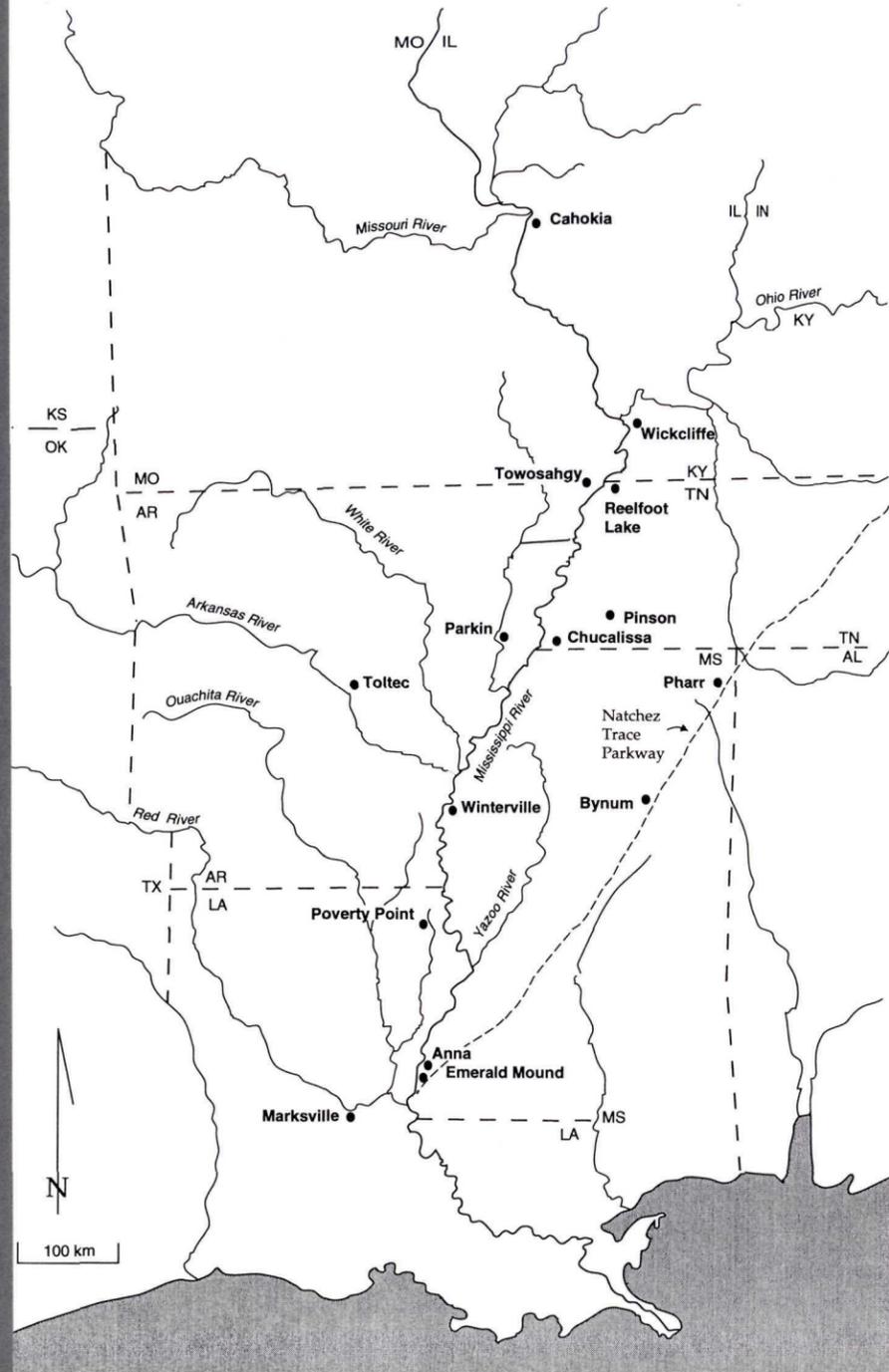
**Parkin Site.** Thought to be the town of Casqui visited by de Soto in the 16th century; the newest archeological park in the Delta, opened in 1994; located in Parkin, Arkansas, about 40 miles west of Memphis.

**Poverty Point.** Unique site dating to about 1200 B.C.; includes earthen ridges arranged as nested arcs and a large mound thought to resemble a bird; located near Epps, Louisiana.

**Marksville Site.** Preserves several earthen enclosures and a number of mounds, dating to ca. A.D. 1; located in town of same name in Louisiana.

**Grand Village of the Natchez Indians.** Contact period site with several mounds present; located in Natchez, Mississippi.

Other mounds in the study area have also been preserved on public lands, but remain uninterpreted or only minimally interpreted with a sign or marker. The Shiloh National Battlefield (a Civil War site) in west Tennessee encompasses a large mound group, as do the state's lands in the Reelfoot Lake Basin (see sidebar, page 43). A sprinkling of mound sites can be found along the Natchez Trace Parkway in Mississippi, including the second largest in the country—Emerald Mound—which is interpreted only with a marker. The Winterville site, near Greenville, Mississippi, preserves several mounds, but offers little or no interpretation.



One way to improve management is to see that each archeological park had a board of advisors. Such a group, consisting of professionals in archeology, museology, and education, as well as local supporters, would institute general policy to oversee changes in exhibits, quality of interpretive programming, physical impacts to the site, and requests for research permits. Such a board would limit capricious decisions while setting goals for the future. A board would go a long way to ensuring that archeological parks become the jewels of education they are meant to be.

Making the public aware of these sites is a first step. The objectives of the initiatives to study the Delta should do much to enhance their potential.

For more information, contact Mary L. Kwas or Robert C. Mainfort, Jr., at the Arkansas Archeological Survey, Box 1249, Fayetteville, AR 72702, (501) 575-6560, fax (501) 575-5453, e-mail [mainfort@comp.uark.edu](mailto:mainfort@comp.uark.edu).

**A**rcheotourism as envisioned in the Delta initiatives has all the right ingredients in place on the Yazoo River. Little Spanish Fort, a mound site in Mississippi's Delta National Forest, holds great promise as the prototypical archeological park. Aside from being archeologically important, the mound, with its semicircular earthen wall, is in a rare natural setting, is accessible by boat as well as car, and is near several other major sites.

Until recently, interpretations of the fort were based more on sentiment than fact. Because it was long assumed that native peoples were incapable of ambitious architectural constructions, local tradition had it that the Spaniards built the earthwork for defense. Archeologists, however, believed it was constructed in the Late Archaic period by peoples of the Poverty Point culture, since its semicircular shape echoes Louisiana's Poverty Point.

Like so many mound sites in the Delta, Little Spanish Fort is tucked away in a quiet little backwater. A forest of hardwoods stands where the Yazoo

River flows lazily around a bend. Cotton grows in nearby fields, but more than anything else, the place is the domain of the alligators, rodents, and countless birds that make Delta National Forest their home. A closer look, however, reveals that, concealed among the oaks and gums, is a promising blueprint for archeotourism.

Most of the site has been in cultivation for over 40

years. A house and barn, now many years gone, once stood atop the mound. We are still not fully certain about the site's original function, but due to recent excavations we are much better informed about its date (see sidebar).

The wooded part of the site is in Delta National Forest—the only bottomland hardwood national forest in the country. The site is also on the Mississippi Waterfowl Flyway. Flooding is common. The soil is generally heavy clay, not well suited for agriculture, but the forest is an excellent place for hunting and fishing as well as for viewing wildlife.

The Corps of Engineers Vicksburg district has purchased wetlands near the forest as part of an environmental mitigation. Forest Service archeologists and biologists hope to acquire the rest of the site as part of that project, paving the way for preserving and interpreting it.

The fort fits well within the concept of the Delta initiatives. It is located near several other major sites. It has been included on several mound tours conducted by archeologists. Further, the state historic preservation office is working with the Forest Service to nominate the site as a National Historic Landmark. With interpretive signage, the site's location would make it a prime destination for recreational activities.

For these advantages to be realized, a number of actions need to be set into motion, but Little Spanish Fort appears to be in the right place at the right time.

The first is for the Forest Service or some other agency to acquire land still in private hands. The second is a development plan. The site can be reached by automobile, but one needs a detailed map to find it. Roadwork and parking spaces are necessary to make the site accessible. As the fort is on the river, it would be an ideal spot for a public boat landing. This plus the flora and

fauna would invite picnickers and wildlife enthusiasts. Signage and perhaps a kiosk could explain the site's past as well as the archeological investigation.

Little Spanish Fort, despite its importance, should not stand alone, since it offers an opportunity to educate the public about the long history of man-land relationships in the Delta. The site's location in bottomland hardwood forest allows for interpretation on the importance of both. The site could be tied to

a nearby nature trail that passes the site of the famous Teddy Roosevelt bear hunt. The Little Sunflower boat launch is also close.

In short, Little Spanish Fort could provide a rewarding weekend for those travelling down Highway 61 in search of the Delta's mythic past.

For more information, contact Samuel O. Brookes, U.S. Forest Service, 100 West Capitol St., Suite 1141, Jackson, MS 39269-1199, (601) 965-5518, fax (601) 965-5519, Edwin Jackson, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Southern Mississippi, P.O. Box 5074, Southern Station, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-5074, (601) 266-4261, fax (601) 266-5800, or Patricia Galloway, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, P.O. Box 571, Jackson, MS 39205-0571, (601) 359-6863, fax (601) 359-6975.

**SLUTHING ALONG THE YAZOO**  
In 1993, under the Forest Service Challenge Cost Share program, the University of Southern Mississippi undertook a six-week investigation of the Yazoo site as part of its archeological field school. Seven pits were excavated in two locations, producing a small collection of pottery and stone tools and exposing the layers of earth to show the embankment construction sequence.

Test excavations were conducted in the partially plowed-down mound within the embankment and also in a mussel-shell garbage heap along the riverbank. Ceramics and stone artifacts were carefully collected from the surface around the mound and in the cultivated portion of the embankment interior.

Investigations revealed that while the initial occupation of this stretch of the river began during the Late Archaic period (ca. 1700-500 B.C.), the construction of the embankment dates to the beginning of the Middle Woodland period (ca. 200 B.C.-A.D. 450). Three radiocarbon dates on excavated material clustered between 210 B.C. and A.D. 90.

There is evidence that the place was sparsely occupied during that time. A sample from the lower stratum of the shell heap yielded a date of 180-80 B.C., while one from the base of the interior mound (probably dating the site's usage before the mound was built) produced a date of 190-90 B.C. The ceramics recovered from these contexts fall comfortably within the early Middle Woodland time range.

Artifacts from the surface and the upper stratum of the shell heap represent later occupations. Broken pottery from several distinct cultural periods, along with numerous mussel shells, are now known to be present on the mound. Based on numbers of pottery fragments collected on the surface, its major construction phase appears to date to the Late Woodland Baytown period (A.D. 500-800). Because the enclosure is so lacking in artifacts, there was probably not a village within its walls; instead, it probably served some sacred or ceremonial function for which it was intentionally kept clean.

This occupation was not the end of the fort's usefulness. While the earthwork was not used after A.D. 450, later peoples continued to use the mound as late as A.D. 1300, with pottery testifying to their presence. But the site was clearly not a fort, and we now know conclusively that it was not Spanish either, since it was abandoned well before De Soto and his men crossed Mississippi in 1541.

*O*ften, the dilemma for archeologists is that the desire to preserve is pitted against the desire to know. In Louisiana, an archeologist teams with a geologist to find ways to achieve both, ahead of the impending destruction that threatens earthworks throughout the Delta.

SPEEDING AHEAD OF THE

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Mound  
Research in  
Northeast  
Louisiana

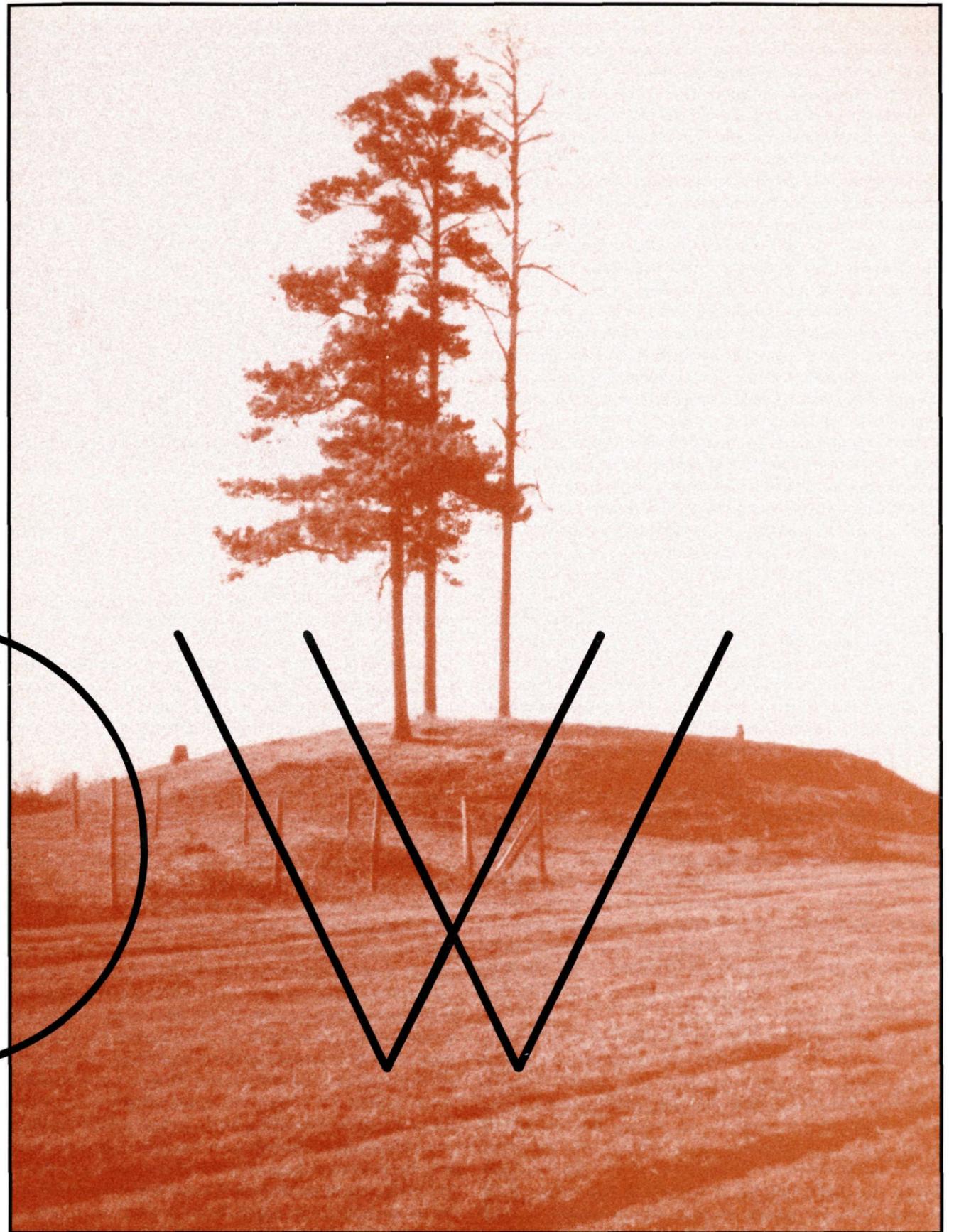
by Joe  
Saunders and  
Thurman Allen

The rate of mound destruction in northeast Louisiana is discouraging. Add land leveling to the equation, and it becomes staggering. In one parish, it is estimated that approximately 20 percent of the agricultural land has been leveled: so if one assumes an equal distribution of sites throughout the parish, 20 percent of the sites (prehistoric and historic) has been destroyed.

In the good old days, plowing lowered mounds, scattered artifacts, and disturbed subsurface features. Minimally, one still could determine a site's location, age, and (in many instances) function. It was possible to reconstruct settlement patterns through time. But

Mound site with flank destroyed. JOE SAUNDERS

OW



where land has been leveled, one can't even determine exactly where the site was. All one can conclude is that a particular site was occupied during certain periods of time.

A 1993-94 survey of 35 mound sites in one parish determined that at least one mound (if not all) had been leveled at 12 of the sites. Conversely, only 5 of the sites (14 percent) had at least 1 mound that had not been disturbed. A 1995 survey of 9 sites in a second parish identified 5 where at least 1 mound had been leveled. All of the mound sites had been disturbed, with only two retaining visible evidence of being an earthen structure.

These figures may be unfair because they represent the destruction of mounds recorded as far back as C.B. Moore's early 1900s excursions in Louisiana.<sup>1,2</sup> Also, landowners today are preserving most of the large mound complexes. They are aware of their significance and take pride in protecting them. But that awareness changes with ownership, as recently demonstrated by the leveling of the south end of Ridge 6 at Louisiana's Poverty Point.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, smaller mound sites, often overlooked, continue to be plowed or leveled.

These data strongly suggest that prehistoric sites are rapidly disappearing. All sites, historic or prehistoric, mound or non-mound, are impacted by land leveling. However, earthen mounds are fewer in number and represent only 361 of 2,547 recorded sites in northeast Louisiana. Mound sites probably number less than 300, given the erroneous identification of natural features as mounds (11 in two parishes alone) and the misplotting of sites, with multiple site numbers for the same mound complex (one mound site was assigned three different site numbers because of plotting errors).

This destruction, plus the fact that earthen mounds provide a wider range of data than other surface sites, is why we have focused our attention on this area for the past three years. As an outgrowth of our field work, we have developed new techniques for estimating the age of mounds, defining their stratigraphy, and perhaps eventually determining how old they are without excavating them.

### Estimating the Age of Mounds

Louisiana has an advantage over other states in having developed a qualitative method to estimate the age of earthen structures. At least eight mound sites have been dated to >5000 B.P. (before present).<sup>4-9</sup> almost doubling the known antiquity of mound building in the southeast United States. With a greater span of time to examine, the process of soil development in mound fill (i.e., how the soil changes over time) offers a convenient means for estimating the age of mounds as pre-Woodland period (>3000 B.P.), Woodland period (<2000 B.P.), and post-Woodland period (<1000 B.P.).

The weathering of soil provides clues that help us estimate the age of mounds. The rate and degree of soil formation on mounds is determined by time, parent material, environment, slope, and organisms. The process begins with the parent material, the soil and sediment used to construct the mound. The unweathered parent material is defined as the C horizon. As time passes, organic matter is mixed with the surface of the C horizon, forming an organically enriched A horizon on the surface of the mound. With the passage of time, the movement of water through the soil strips clay and iron from the A horizon and

begins forming a B horizon between the A and C horizons.

The B horizon develops in two stages. First, an increase in iron, and a slight increase in clay, changes the color of the B horizon (usually redder), and this is called a cambic B (Bw). Second, the clay particles continue to increase in the Bw horizon, and through time, transform the Bw horizon into an argillic (Bt) horizon. In some soils, an E horizon forms between the A and Bt horizon. The E horizon is an horizon whose sediments have been stripped of clay and iron and lacks organic matter. Particle size analysis of samples from each horizon help to measure the degree of weathering that has occurred in the mound fill.

One can conclude that a mound with only A and C horizons is younger than a mound with A, B, and C horizons. Furthermore, a mound with an argillic B (Bt) horizon is older than a mound with a cambic (Bw) horizon. The actual amount of time necessary for the development of these horizons is unknown. However, preliminary research suggests that in northeast Louisiana, Bt horizons can be seen in mounds that are 3,000 years or older. Bw horizons develop in mounds that are about 2,000 years old. Mounds that are less than 1,000 years old usually lack distinct Bw horizons.

### Mound Stratigraphy

Soil coring provides an efficient means of defining mound stratigraphy. With examination of a soil core, one can identify stages of mound construction and if there is evidence of human occupation beneath the mound.

The people who built the mounds did so by depositing basketful after basketful of earth in a heap. When examining a coring sample, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between individual basket loads of earth and the surfaces of succeeding stages of mound construction. Taking multiple cores, though, clarifies the stratigraphy because earlier stages of mound construction will be found at roughly the same depth in different areas of the mound.

### The Absolute Age of Mounds

There are two ways we know of to evaluate the absolute age of a mound, and they can be employed without excavating. We are currently evaluating both methods.

The first is by recovering small fragments of charcoal from buried A horizons. With accelerated mass spectrometry it is possible to obtain radiometric dates. Once the stratigraphy of a mound has been defined by coring, charcoal taken from the surfaces of earlier stages of mound construction or from sub-mound surfaces should provide accurate dates for the sequence of building and occupation.

We assume that charcoal recovered from a buried A horizon is *in situ*, undisturbed, a product of activities on the mound or sub-mound surface. Charcoal from basket-loaded fill is not dated, because it was transported to the mound from somewhere else.

The first time we tried this method, we were not successful. The site in question was remote, and we were unable to get to it with the coring truck. Instead we used a bucket auger (a mechanical arm with a bucket-like device on the end) to retrieve charcoal from the mound's A horizons. On its way in and out of the excavation shaft, however, the bucket would knock charcoal from the surface of the mound down to the bottom of the shaft. Mistaken for material from the mound's buried A horizons, the charcoal

## Once Upon a Time in the Delta

**B**efore farmers cleared out the vast bottom-land forests that once covered the Delta, ancient earthworks were probably everywhere. How plentiful were the mounds before agriculture started? Tennessee's Reelfoot Basin gives a glimpse.

**In 1811 and 1812, the New Madrid earthquakes struck the area. The tremors caused some land around Reelfoot Lake to subside, rendering it unsuitable for agricultural use. Ignored by the plow for generations, this small area contains a surprising density of mound sites—dozens of them, including groups that contain 20 mounds or more. Quite by chance, virtually all were acquired by state and federal agencies. They are a striking contrast to what remains.**

—Mary L. Kwas and Robert C. Mainfort, Jr.

was duly collected and dated. A site that had repeatedly dated to circa 3500 B.C. was suddenly dating to 1600 A.D.

We recommend that only samples obtained by continuous coring be submitted for dating. A continuous core collected from Mound 2 at Marksville, Louisiana, recovered organic material at 155 centimeters below the surface. A second core from a different place on the mound yielded the same material at 157 centimeters down, indicating that we had located a former organic surface.

Both cores contained Bw horizons (a B horizon's earlier stage), suggesting a date between 2000 and 1000 years before present. Radiometric analysis of the organic matter produced a corrected date of about 1,460 B.P.

The second method is luminescence-dating sediments from buried A horizons in mound fill. Luminescence is a measure of the stored energy in crystalline materials (such as quartz) that accumulates by the action of natural radioactivity. When the crystalline materials are exposed to light or heat, this stored energy is released, thereby erasing the luminescence signal. So the signal is proportional to the time that has passed since the sample's last exposure to heat or light.

The layer of organically rich soil on the ground's surface—what eventually becomes the A horizon—contains quartz grains that, exposed to sun and daylight, lose their luminescence. Once the moundbuilders began their work, however, dumping their basketloads of earth over this surface, the quartz grains would have been shielded. Luminescence loss would have stopped and accumulation of stored energy would begin again. Thus, luminescence-dating of the A horizon would determine when the various stages of mound construction began.

James Feathers of the University of Washington's luminescence lab collected three sediment samples from radiocarbon-dated buried surfaces at two sites. The samples were collected from walls of test excavation units. If the dates prove reliable (results should be available by this spring), further samples can be collected from continuous cores.

## Conclusion

We are aware that coring of mounds cannot replace proper excavation. Cores provide an extremely limited view of mound stratigraphy and virtually no information on associated artifacts. However, the rate of site destruction is so rapid that it will never be possible to conduct even limited excavations of impacted mound sites. So alternatives must be sought.

Obviously, preservation is the preferred option. But as we previously stated, commitment to preservation changes with ownership. Our second option is to collect as much data from existing mounds while minimizing impact on the sites.

Coring of mounds is perhaps the most efficient method available. There are several sound reasons why it should be pursued. Minimally, it will allow us to distinguish natural hills from mound sites. Second, it will provide accurate information about mound stratigraphy. Third, allowing that further refinement is necessary, the use of soil development for dating a mound is promising.

Fourth, AMS and luminescence-dating are exciting developments. They may prove to be an accurate method of dating mounds. Although both methods are considerably more expensive than standard radiometric dating, eliminating the cost of site excavation quickly balances the scales. The truth is that we continue to lose valuable information on a daily basis. The sadder truth is that the process cannot be stopped.

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# In Search of a Mound

By Joe Saunders

**D**own the back trails in the piney hills south of Bayou D'Arbonne in Louisiana we rumbled along in search of the mound. My companion, Frank Thomas, knew the route, since it was his property. But he wasn't the only one familiar with the back roads that led to the mound, which explained why I was along for the ride. Looters had been here too. They, too, knew about the site, and had already put in some hard hours of digging.

The evidence they left prompted the Thomases to call me at Northeast Louisiana University. What could be done to stabilize the damage and preserve the mound?

It rose up out of the swampy underbrush, perched on an alluvial terrace above the bayou. Conical in shape, the mound was about 50 meters wide at the base and six meters high. The work of the relic-hunters was plainly visible: a trench 3 meters wide and 25 meters long.

Around the turn of the century, the land had been farmed by the Hedgepeth family. Though it had been plowed for decades, few artifacts turned up: several projectile points, a grinding stone, no pottery. Mr. Hedgepeth knew that there was something extraordinary about the mound, because he forbade family members from disturbing it. The site had remained intact until the looters arrived.

I examined the exposed trench walls for artifacts, but found none. Instead, my attention was drawn to the horizontal bands of weathered mound fill exposed in the walls of the trench. A beautiful sequence of soil horizons was clearly visible. In Louisiana, it takes tens to hundreds of years for surface sediments to become organically enriched (A horizon) and thousands of years for the clay near the surface (E horizon) to be stripped and redeposited, forming a clay-enriched zone (Bt

horizon) above the unweathered sediments (C horizon). The soils at Hedgepeth suggested that the mound had stood for thousands of years, and I began to wonder if perhaps this was a natural feature. Topographically it appeared to be manmade, but the lack of artifacts and the degree of weathering reminded me of a story I had heard recently.

A few years ago, an archeologist discovered a mound in Louisiana's uplands that made a stir in the local news. The mound was associated with artifacts that dated to the Poverty Point period (ca. 1700-1200 B.C.). But a geologist who examined the site came to the conclusion that it was not a mound at all. Instead, he claimed, it was a natural feature on which Poverty Point people had camped. Was the Hedgepeth site also a natural feature? That would explain the absence of pottery. Was I about to make the same mistake?

I contacted soil scientist Thurman Allen of the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Allen had worked at Poverty Point and also conducted a number of soil surveys in the area of the Hedgepeth mound. At first sight, he concluded that what we were looking at was indeed a mound. But after he examined soil horizons in the trench walls, he too began to wonder.

There appeared to be no conclusive answer to the question until a few days later, when I visited the site again with Mr. Thomas. Looking hard at the trench wall one more time, I noticed what appeared to be a large piece of quartz. As I cleaned the area around the object for a photograph, it gradually became clear that it was a ground stone adze. There was no evidence of an intrusive pit in the trench profile, so the artifact had not been placed in a pit that had been excavated into an existing mound or hill. The adze had to have been transported to that spot during mound construction. Only one agency was capable of transporting an object of that size to the top of the mound: human labor. The Hedgepeth mound was, indeed, a prehistoric mound site.

Because of the extensive weathering in the mound fill and the absence of pottery at the site, Allen and I were convinced that the site was at least preceramic (pre-500 B.C.). Later, a test pit dug in the bottom of the looters' trench would yield charcoal from a submound hearth which dated to ca. 3000 B.C.

Thurman Allen and I have since been using soil development as a means for identifying mounds that we suspect to date from the Archaic period. We plan to re-evaluate the site that apparently had fooled the archeologist a few years back. What we had learned from the Hedgepeth site makes me wonder. Perhaps the archeologist had found an early mound, and it was the geologist who had been tricked by the soil.

**Landowner in potters trench, Hedgepeth Mound.** JOE SAUNDERS



# Peril or Potential

BY HESTER DAVIS

It was 31 years ago that the alarm was first sounded about what was happening to the archeological sites in the Mississippi Valley. Archeologists doing highway salvage work in southeast Missouri were watching the land levelers scrape away the natural levees, filling in holes to make the world safe for soybeans.

The cry brought archeologists together to confront the problem of Soil Conservation Service-sponsored destruction of sites. The result was two studies, one for Arkansas, the other for Missouri, to find out exactly how bad the situation was. It was pretty bad. Both studies concluded that about a quarter of known sites had been destroyed in the previous ten years.

A long-neglected issue was gaining momentum. Archeologists met again in 1968 to determine how much was known about the area between Illinois' Cahokia and the mouth of the Mississippi. They suggested an area-wide program of survey and testing, as well as ways to fund it. A meeting in St. Louis the same year brought significant results—the drafting of the Archeological and Historic Preservation Act, which became law six long years later.

SCS land leveling programs had instigated the crisis, but other federal undertakings bore responsibility too, particularly those of the Army Corps of Engineers. In truth, all agricultural practices were wreaking havoc on archeological sites. The 1968 meetings suggested tackling the problem from an administrative angle, creating advisory and steering committees, and another committee made up of landowners and amateur archeologists. They advocated a nuts-and-bolts approach, too, demanding priorities be set for a 20-year program of survey and excavation, realizing that any site could be gone tomorrow.

Most interesting of all is a statement the SCS issued at the time, estimating "confidently" that "In less than 25 years, all levelable land in Arkansas will have been cleared and leveled." Now, almost 30 years later, can anything be left to worry about? Has the situation changed? Yes. Improved? No. Worsened? Probably. Should alarms once again ring across the land? Of course.

Certainly, the situation has changed. Leveling continues, so everything wasn't wiped out in 25 years. A few of the larger important sites have been placed in public hands. The amount of archeological work done in the valley in these last 25 years probably more than doubles that done in the previous 100. Sites are recognized by listing on the National Register. Congress has recognized the importance of the history and prehistory of the delta by sup-

porting historic preservation in the Delta Initiatives study. All that is fine and dandy, but what does this mean for the future of whatever shreds remain?

There has never been a study to rival the one we did in 1968. There is no comparable data today about farm policies, practices, and how they effect sites in the future. More rice? More fish farms? It would be useful to do another specific review of a local area to see if another quarter or more of the recorded sites are gone. Intensive surveys of vulnerable areas (urban spread, flood control) could be planned. We're probably 20 years too late for much of that, but better now than never.

The heritage tourism industry is growing fast. There is no doubt we should act now—making long-term plans to protect selected sites of various time periods, investigate and interpret them. Here is a way archeology could actually *enhance* the economic opportunities in the delta while at the same time saving those sites which have the greatest research and interpretive potential.

**T**he triage principal, what to save and what to abandon, should be applied on a regional basis. But it will take local support to carry through. This means more heavy-duty public information to the movers and shakers in the levee boards, the city councils, zoning authorities, and state governments.

Archeologists who have worked in the valley for a long time have become discouraged because trying to record sites while the machinery whizzes by seems like such a drop in the bucket.

There should be a region-wide effort to come up with ways the valley could increase its economic potential through *heritage tourism* (read archeological research, site protection, and development). That should whip up enthusiasm again, particularly if there is some reason to believe that it will be worth the effort.

Heritage tourism is well-recognized as a source of economic growth. The potential is there for Good Things to be done for the remaining sites and for the economy. If we can't get together to tackle this in the next 25 years, be assured that you will be able to visit Poverty Point, Toltec Mounds, Parkin, Fatherland, and a few precious other sites, but nothing else will remain.

*Hester Davis is a member of the Arkansas Archeological Survey, a professor at the University of Arkansas, and since 1967 the State Archeologist. Contact her at (501) 575-3556, fax (501) 575-5453.*

### Implementing the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act

#### Digital Collections System May Aid Repatriation

The Corps of Engineers is developing a collections management system that may help the repatriation process. TASC, Inc., of Dayton, Ohio, has been working with the Corps to display its thousands of artifacts electronically—provided they are of a non-sensitive nature—in a relational database.

Archeologists and tribes will be able to identify objects and determine their cultural affiliations on-line. Non-photographic images will show where in the body particular bones are from.

The implications go beyond NAGPRA, however. With the images available, artifacts may no longer have to be handled, inviting access by the public and teachers.

The technology has been shared with the Army's central identification laboratory, which specializes in identifying human remains. A September roll-out of the system is anticipated.

For more information, contact Fred Briuer at (601) 534-4204, e-mail [briuerf@ex1.wes.army.mil](mailto:briuerf@ex1.wes.army.mil).

#### For More Information

Contact Timothy McKeown, NAGPRA Program Leader, Archeology and Ethnography Program, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013, (202) 343-4101, fax (202) 523-1547.

#### Anchorage Museum, Brigham Young Univ. Submit Repatriation Inventories

Since the last issue, the Park Service archeology and ethnography program has received the following completed inventories of Native American human remains and associated funerary objects:

##### Office of the State Archeologist

University of Iowa

Iowa City, Iowa

The remains of a woman, from a collection donated by the estate of a Mr. John Morrie. Through information provided by the donors, the state archeologist reasonably believes they were found on the Columbia River near Vantage, Washington. The state archeologist has consulted with the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Indian Nation, who have considered the river's banks part of their lands since before contact with Europeans.

##### Museum of Peoples and Cultures

Brigham Young University

Provo, Utah

The remains of a man, approximately 45 to 60 years old, and 13,558 associated funerary objects. The items, excavated from Forest Service lands near Spring Lake, Utah, in 1917, include brass bells, an iron spur, several thousand multicolored glass beads, a metal axe head, and copper bracelets.

As early as 1919, Anglo informants positively identified these funerary objects as the personal belongings of Black Hawk, chief of the Timpanogots, who died in 1870 and was buried in the area where the items were found. Representatives of the Uintah-Ouray Ute tribe say the objects are typical for late 19th century burials. No evidence suggests that the remains are those of

anyone but the Timpanogot chief. Great-great grandchildren of Black Hawk's brother, Mountain, have claimed the items on the basis of lineal descent.

##### Anchorage Museum of History and Art

Anchorage, Alaska

Remains consisting of one skull fragment excavated from a cemetery on Little Diomed Island, donated to the museum in 1970. The Inalik Native Corporation, which represents the villages of Little Diomed for repatriation purposes, has identified the island as the traditional territory of the local native people since pre-contact times. Museum officials have determined that shared group identity can be traced between the human remains and the native group.

##### Bureau of Reclamation

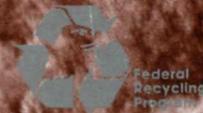
Upper Colorado Regional Office

Salt Lake City, Utah

The remains of seven individuals discovered during archeological surveys prior to the construction of a dam and reservoir at Nambe Falls on tribal lands owned by Nambe Pueblo. There are also the remains of three dogs reasonably believed to have been placed with the individuals as part of a death rite or ceremony. All the human remains, identified as Puebloan, are believed to be ancestral to present-day Nambe Pueblo people.

As of February 13, the archeology and ethnography program's NAGPRA team has received 292 inventories from museums and federal agencies. Seven hundred-three summaries have been submitted.

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