**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

**NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. STATE</th>
<th>Louisiana</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. THEME(S). IF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE, WRITE &quot;ARCH&quot; BEFORE THEME NO.</td>
<td>II- Early Indian Farmers</td>
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**3. NAME(S) OF SITE**

Poverty Point

**4. APPROX. ACREAGE**

2,100

**5. EXACT LOCATION (County, township, roads, etc. If difficult to find, sketch on Supplementary Sheet)**

Sec. 14, T 19 N., R 10 E, West Carroll Parish, La.

**6. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER (Also administrator if different from owner)**

Poverty Point Plantation, Randolph F. Marston, Shreveport, owner

**7. IMPORTANCE AND DESCRIPTION (Describe briefly what makes site important and what remains are extant)**

The Poverty Point site is the largest and most complex ceremonial earthwork in North America, and the largest community of the first millennium B.C., known in the United States.

The site is dominated by the huge Poverty Point Mound, which is 640 by 710 feet in base dimensions, and rises to a height of nearly 70 feet. At its base lies the flattened remains of six concentric octagons, three-quarters of a mile across, enclosing a large central area. The eastern half of the octagon was destroyed by a river channel about 2000 years ago, but when complete an estimated 11.2 miles of artificial ridges would have made up the earthwork. Based on their original height and size, Dr. Ford estimates the quantity of earth in the octagon as 35 times the cubage of the Great Pyramid of Cheops in Egypt.

A mile and a half north of the center of the octagon lies another large mound, the Motley Mound, only slightly smaller than the Poverty Point Mound. Contour maps show this mound to have had essentially the same outline as the Poverty Point Mound, but turned at ninety degrees to it. Ford postulates that two other similar mounds, now removed by changes in the river channels, once completed the symmetrical arrangement of the site.

Radiocarbon dates for the site cluster at about 700 B.C., and certain artifact forms indicate relationship of some nature to the contemporaneous Adena culture of the Ohio Valley. However, the occupants at Poverty Point made no pottery, and in the absence of suitable stone in the alluvial Mississippi Valley for the purposes of "stone boiling" they made and baked clay balls for this purpose. Over 20 million of these cooking balls must have been made by the occupants.

- See continuation sheet -

**8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Give best sources; give location of manuscripts and rare works)**


**9. REPORTS AND STUDIES (Mention best reports and studies, as, NFS study, HABS, etc.)**

"Poverty Point," special site study, Region One, NPS, 1962.

**10. PHOTOGRAPHS***

**ATTACHED: YES ☑ NO ☐**

**11. CONDITION**

good

**12. PRESENT USE (Museum, farm, etc.)**

agricultural

**13. DATE OF VISIT**

2/12/60: 5/9/61

**14. NAME OF RECO/BER (Signature)**

[Signature]

**15. TITLE**

Regional Archeologist

**16. DATE**

2/28/62
The Poverty Point site is in good condition and is a unique and impressive site within this Theme. Professional archeologists are unanimous in appraising its significance and many have advocated its preservation.
Oblique air view of the Poverty Point earthworks. View is towards the northwest. Photograph by Junius B. Bird.