

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

1. STATE Louisiana	2. THEME(S). IF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE, WRITE "ARCH" BEFORE THEME NO. II- Early Indian Farmers
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 millenium 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.

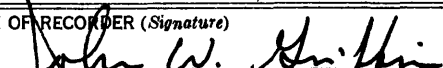
Radiocarbon dates for the site cluster at about 700 B. C., and certain artifact forms indicate relationship of some nature to the contemporaneous Adena culture of the Ohio Valley. However, the occupants at Poverty Point made no pottery, and in the absence of suitable stone in the alluvial Mississippi 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)
James A. Ford, "The Puzzle of Poverty Point," Natural History, Nov., 1955. James A. Ford and Clarence H. Webb, Poverty Point, A Late Archaic Site in Louisiana. Anthropological Papers, American Museum of Natural History, Vol. 46, part 1, New York, 1956.

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

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

10. PHOTOGRAPHS* ATTACHED: YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	11. CONDITION good	12. PRESENT USE (Museum, farm, etc.) agricultural	13. DATE OF VISIT 2/12/60: 5/9/61
14. NAME OF RECORDER (Signature) 	15. TITLE Regional Archeologist	16. DATE 2/28/62	

* DR. MOUNT ON AN 8 X 10 1/2 SHEET OF FAIRLY HEAVY PAPER. IDENTIFY BY VIEW AND NAME OF THE SITE, DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH, AND NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER. GIVE LOCATION OF NEGATIVE. IF ATTACHED, ENCLOSE IN PROPER NEGATIVE ENVELOPES.

(IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS NEEDED USE SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET, 10-317a, AND REFER TO ITEM NUMBER)

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SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET

This sheet is to be used for giving additional information or comments, for more space for any item on the regular form, and for recording pertinent data from future studies, visitations, etc. Be brief, but use as many Supplement Sheets as necessary. When items are continued they should be listed, if possible, in numerical order of the items. All information given should be headed by the item number, its name, and the word (cont'd), as, 6. Description and Importance (cont'd) . . .

STATE	Louisiana	NAME(S) OF SITE	Poverty Point
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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