



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

1. Name of Property

historic name: Stratton Archaeological Site
other names/site number: 22Lf541

2. Location



3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally X statewide ___ locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Kenneth H. P. Paul JUNE 3, 1999
Signature of certifying official Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register,
___ See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the
National Register
___ See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the
National Register
 removed from the National Register
___ other (explain): _____

[Signature] Signature of the Keeper Date of Action
7/28/99

Stratton Archaeological Site (22Lf541)
Leflore County, Mississippi

5. Classification

Ownership of Property:
PRIVATE

Number of Resources within Property:
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Category of Property:
SITE

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

1

buildings
sites
structures
objects
Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register**

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:
DOMESTIC/village site

Current Functions:
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/agricultural field

7. Description

Architectural Classification(s): N/A

Materials: N/A
foundation:
roof:
walls:
other

Narrative Description:

See Continuation Sheets

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Stratton Archaeological Site (22Lf541)
Leflore County, Mississippi

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

The Stratton archaeological site (22Lf541) consists of the remains of a prehistoric Indian settlement [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The primary occupation of the site occurred during the second half of the Poverty Point period, from ca. 1200 - 600 B.C. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] his midden is composed of organically darkened soil containing mussel shell, animal bone, broken pottery, stone artifacts and other debris. Shovel test probes have revealed that midden deposits reach depths of at least 50 cm, well beneath the disturbed plowzone. It is likely, therefore, that intact cultural features exist at the base of the midden.

The Stratton site was first recorded on January 18, 1968 by archaeologist Jeffrey P. Brain of the Lower Mississippi Survey, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University. No excavations were conducted, but diagnostic artifacts were found on the surface: the brief published reference to the site notes that "fiber-tempered pottery occurs in abundance" (Williams and Brian 1983:355). The Lower Mississippi Survey site form (copy on file, Mississippi Dept. of Archives and History, Historic Preservation Division, Jackson) further states that the fiber-tempered potsherds from the site include decorated specimens of the type Wheeler Punctated. Fiber-tempered ceramics are distinguished by small linear impressions in the clay matrix left by vegetal fibers, such as Spanish moss, grass, and palmetto, which were added as the tempering agent to aid in binding the clay together during hand molding and to prevent its cracking during the subsequent drying and firing process (Sassaman 1993:66).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 2Stratton Archaeological Site (22Lf541)
Leflore County, Mississippi

The fiber-tempered Wheeler series, formally described by Sears and Griffin (1950), was the first pottery to appear in the western Gulf Coastal Plain, around 1200 B.C., and remained in use until about 600 B.C. (Jenkins et al. 1986:548). This time interval coincides with the terminal Late Archaic period of North American prehistory. Populations inhabiting [REDACTED] and the greater lower Mississippi Valley during this time were of the Poverty Point culture, characterized as "certainly the most highly developed cultural expression in all North America north of Mexico in the second millennium B.C." (Williams and Brain 1983:396).

A key material trait of the Poverty Point culture is the occurrence in the lower Mississippi Valley of distinctive utilitarian and ornamental artifacts made from lithic materials imported long distances from extraregional source areas (Sassaman 1993:40, 222-25; Webb 1977; Williams and Brain 1983:388-89, 396-99). The complex and widespread Poverty Point exchange network which facilitated trade of such exotic materials has been ascribed to "a class-ranked, redistributive socioeconomic system," suggesting "control of the society by an elite" (Williams and Brain 1983:398-99). The appearance of the fiber-tempered Wheeler ceramic series in the western Gulf Coastal Plain may have been a result of Poverty Point procurement of steatite (soapstone) vessels from the Georgia Piedmont, where the production of fiber-tempered pottery was already well established (Jenkins et al. 1986:548).

Phillips (1970:524-532) designated the subregional, [REDACTED] manifestation of the Poverty Point culture the Jaketown phase, after the type site in Humphreys County, Mississippi (Ford et al. 1955). However, fiber-tempered ceramics occur sparsely at Jaketown and at Poverty Point sites in general (Ford et al. 1955:65-66; Jenkins et al. 1986:548). Stratton, together with the few other known sites [REDACTED] with significant quantities of fiber-tempered ceramics, therefore have been tentatively identified as representing a late, localized Jaketown variant provisionally called the McGary phase by Williams and Brain (1983:354-356). The small number of sites assigned to this unit are suggested by Williams and Brain as loci of the incipient adoption of ceramics [REDACTED]. However, the temporal position of the phase is not well defined, as it currently lacks support from absolute dates.

Stratton Archaeological Site (22Lf541)

Leflore County, Mississippi

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

ARCHAEOLOGY/prehistoric

Period of Significance

1200 - 600 B.C.

Significant Dates

N/A

Criteria Considerations:

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Significant Person(s)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation(s)

Poverty Point

Architect/Builder

N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance: See continuation sheets.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

Stratton Archaeological Site (22Lf541)
Leflore County, Mississippi

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Stratton site possesses statewide significance under National Register Criterion D, in that it has yielded, and retains the potential to yield, information important to knowledge of the prehistory of Mississippi. As one of the few sites [REDACTED] known to have abundant quantities of fiber-tempered ceramics, the site can likely provide valuable data relating to the introduction of the earliest pottery to the lower Mississippi Valley.

The relative abundance of fiber-tempered ceramics at Stratton contrasts sharply with the generally sparse occurrence of this pottery in western Mississippi. The exceptional abundance of this material at Stratton has implications for elucidating cultural influences affecting the sporadic westward diffusion of fiber-tempered ceramics from its place of origin on the eastern seaboard. Jenkins et al. (1986) have advanced the idea that the Poverty Point trade network, which imported soapstone bowls to the lower Mississippi Valley from the Georgia Piedmont, also functioned as a conduit promoting the westward spread of pottery, since fiber-tempered ceramics were well established in the region where soapstone bowls originated. However, Sassaman (1993:223) has pointed out that this free contact diffusion model does not account for the slow rate of diffusion (it took centuries from the time of its initial appearance on the southeast Atlantic slope for fiber-tempered pottery to become established in the lower Mississippi Valley). In contrast to ceramic vessels, which could be made locally using clay as the ubiquitous raw material resource, soapstone containers were a commodity available only from limited areas where quarries of this mineral were located, and therefore it was possible to control distribution through a restricted-access exchange network. As such, Sassaman has offered the alternative hypothesis that, rather than facilitating the spread of ceramic vessel production, the elites ostensibly in control of the Poverty Point exchange network may have used their position of socioeconomic influence to actively impede the assimilation of pottery, in order to preserve the prestige- and power-perpetuating soapstone vessel trade (Sassaman 1993:37, 40, 222-29).

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 4Stratton Archaeological Site (22Lf541)
Leflore County, Mississippi

Sustained resistance to the adoption of pottery by those controlling the soapstone bowl trade is therefore postulated by Sassaman to account for the apparently very belated introduction of fiber-tempered ceramics in western Mississippi. Under this scenario, the occurrence of Wheeler pottery in substantial quantities at sites [REDACTED] may therefore be regarded as a possible indicator of the decline of the Poverty Point exchange network and its controlling elite, presaging a reversion to the more egalitarian social order evident in the subsequent Woodland period. It has been noted, however, that this scenario of resistance to innovation diffusion by Poverty Point social/economic elites is considered preliminary, due in large part to the fact that knowledge of spatial, chronological, and technofunctional variability of the Wheeler ceramic complex is limited (Sassaman 1983:230).

To test Sassaman's diffusion resistance model, more chronological and typological information from Poverty Point sites containing abundant Wheeler ceramic material is needed. In particular, a critical area for further research is to define the temporal position of the putative McGary phase, in order to assess the validity of this construct as an indicator of the initial establishment of ceramics on the geographic peripheries of the Poverty Point culture. According to Sassaman (1993:40, 228), inhabitants of areas relatively remote from large Poverty Point political/trading centers may have been less under the sway of elite-controlled exchange relations. This may have encouraged the abandonment of undoubtedly expensive imported stone vessels in favor of the local production of ceramic containers, the technical knowledge for which had diffused from the east, probably through the same trade network used to distribute soapstone bowls (Sassaman 1993:40). Stratton is a key relevant site in this regard, located near the eastern margin of the Poverty Point cultural region, and it is known to have plentiful Wheeler pottery as well as undisturbed sub-plowzone deposits with organic remains suitable for radiocarbon dating. As a result, the Stratton site has high potential to provide important contextual data to help address the issue of cultural factors influencing the differential diffusion of early ceramic technology in the Southeast.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 5

Stratton Archaeological Site (22Lf541)
Leflore County, Mississippi

REFERENCES

- Ford, James A., Philip Phillips, and William G. Haag
1955 *The Jaketown Site in West-Central Mississippi*. Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History, vol. 45, part 1, New York.
- Jenkins, Ned J., David H. Dye, and John A. Walthall
1986 Early Ceramic Development in the Gulf Coastal Plain. In *Early Woodland Archeology*, ed. by K.B. Farnsworth and T.E. Emerson, pp. 546-63. Kampsville Seminars in Archeology 2. Center for American Archeology Press, Kampsville, Illinois.
- Phillips, Philip
1970 *Archaeological Survey in the Lower Yazoo Basin, Mississippi, 1949-1955*. Papers of the Peabody Museum, Harvard University, vol. 60, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Sassaman, Kenneth E.
1993 *Early Pottery in the Southeast*. University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa and London.
- Sears, William H., and James B. Griffin
1950 Fiber-Tempered Pottery of the Southeast. In *Prehistoric Pottery of the Eastern United States*, ed. by J.B. Griffin, pp. 2-20. Museum of Anthropology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.
- Webb, Clarence H.
1977 *The Poverty Point Culture*. Geoscience and Man, vol. 17. School of Geoscience, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge.
- Williams, Stephen, and Jeffrey P. Brain
1983 *Excavations at the Lake George Site, Yazoo County, Mississippi, 1958-1960*. Papers of the Peabody Museum, Harvard University, vol. 74, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Stratton Archaeological Site (22Lf541)

Leflore County, Mississippi

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: [redacted]

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	C	[redacted]	[redacted]
B	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	D	[redacted]	[redacted]

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Keith A. Baca, archaeologist

organization: Mississippi Department of Archives and History

street & number: 618 E. Pearl St.

city or town: Jackson

state: MS

date: 17 February 1999

telephone: (601) 359-6940

zip code: 39205-0571

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner(s)

name: Jo S. Schneider

street & number: 4547 Eastwood

city or town: Jackson

state: MS

telephone:

zip code: 39211

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Stratton Archaeological Site (22Lf541)
Leflore County, Mississippi

Section number 10 Page 6

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

[REDACTED]

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries of the site described above delineate the horizontal limits of surface artifact distribution.

[REDACTED]

PHOTOGRAPH INFORMATION

Stratton Archaeological Site (22Lf541)

Geoffrey R. Lehmann, photographer
May, 1990

[REDACTED]