

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

REGISTER
NATIONAL

6861 1 0 N 11

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Boyd Mounds Site
other names/site number (22-Md-512)

2. Location

street & number [REDACTED] not for publication
city, town Ridgeland vicinity
state Mississippi code 28 county Madison code 089 zip code 39205

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	_____ sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>6</u>	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>7</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: _____
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: _____

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Kenneth H. P. Pool May 23, 1989
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.

Edmund C. Beards May 23, 1989
Signature of commenting or other official Date
Chief Historian, National Park Service
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. 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:)

John J. Knevel 7/14/89
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic - Village Site

Funerary - Burial Mounds

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Landscape - National Park

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation

walls

roof

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Site Type: The Boyd Mounds Site, consisting of a Late Woodland-Early Mississippian Period burial mounds and village complex, is located

Environmental Setting:

The Mississippi/Alabama State line constitutes the eastern boundary (see Figure 1).

The topography of [redacted] consists of a flat-to-undulating area underlain by limestone, marl, and clays of the Cretaceous Vicksburg and Jackson formations.

(Morgan n.d.:2-3).

Archeological Investigations: The Boyd Mounds Site, consisting of six burial mounds and a village area, was extensively investigated by Charles Bohannon, a Park Service archeologist in 1963, and 1964. These operations were conducted to recover data [redacted]

[redacted] and to gain information on the interpretation of the site for future visitation.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
Archeology - Prehistoric

Period of Significance
AD 750-1250

Significant Dates

Cultural Affiliation
Late Woodland
Early Mississippian

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Summary Statement of Significance: The Boyd Mounds Site represents one of the few Woodland/Mississippian period sites to be intensively investigated in the [redacted] of Mississippi. The Boyd Site, located on [redacted] consisted of six burial mounds and a small village site. Excavation of three of the mounds revealed numerous burials, a minority of which were accompanied with ceramic vessels, shell and lithic artifacts. The mounds are primarily accretional in nature with burials in most cases simply being laid upon the mound surface and covered over with dirt (Morgan n.d.:9). [redacted], according to the Mississippi Historic Context, is not well known from an archeological standpoint, the Boyd Mounds Site could provide basic information concerning chronology, mortuary activities, and cultural associations.

Chronology: The Mississippi Historic Context for [redacted]

Among the more basic issues to be resolved in [redacted] is the cultural chronology of the region. At present the temporal framework for the area is sketchily outlined based upon information from adjoining regions with the Lower Mississippi Valley serving as a primary focus. The ineffectiveness of this approach is evidenced by the inability to assign Woodland-Mississippian period sites to more specific contexts (Morgan n.d.:23).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 2

Bohannon's work uncovered a moderately-sized burial mound and village complex, whose mounds "must have varied from 30-50 feet in diameter and 6-10 feet high" (1965:3). Most of the village and three of the six burial mounds (1, 3, and 5) had suffered damage from modern cultivation. According to Bohannon:

Three of the mounds, Numbers 1, 3, and 5, are mere vestiges, rising only 1.5-2.5 feet high. The location of Mound 2 on the edge of an old field argues that it too, has been plowed down, although it still stands 4.5-5.0 feet high. Mounds 4 and 6 lie in stands of apparently undisturbed hardwoods and have seemingly never been subjected to cultivation (1964:3).

Mound Excavations:

Mound No. 1 -- No excavations conducted due to disturbed nature of mound.

Mound No. 2 -- When first investigated, Mound 2 appeared to be an elongated earthwork about 100 feet long and 60 feet wide, which had been somewhat disturbed by modern cultivation (Bohannon 1964:27). Subsequent work, however, revealed that the internal construction of the earthwork consisted of two separate burial mounds (one 35 feet in diameter and the other 20 feet in diameter) that was later enlarged by covering both mounds with a continuous mantle of earth to make a single earthwork. Forty-one burials were found in Mound 2, eighteen in one of the original mounds, and eight in the other original mound. Fifteen burials were associated with the covering mantle (see Figures 2 and 3). Burials were deposited in shallow graves or on the original ground surface and then covered with earth. The mound grew as additional burials were added to the original two mound and the covering mantle. Burials consisted of flexed, extended, and secondary interments. No grave goods were associated with any of the burials.

Mound No. 3 -- No excavations conducted due to disturbed nature of mound.

Mound No. 4 -- At the time of the Bohannon excavations (1963-1964) Mound 4 was about 50 feet in diameter and about six feet high. Like Mound 2, this mound was noted as being constructed in two phases (see Figure 4) (1965:9). As observed by Bohannon:

Twenty-six burials were uncovered in the excavation of Mound 4. Twelve interments were associated with Stratum 1, and 14 with Stratum 2. The first burials were laid on the old ground surface or in shallow graves scooped from it and covered with Stratum 1 fill. Additional burials were included in the fill of this stage as it was built up. After Stratum 1 was completed, the mound was

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 3

temporarily abandoned and it was not until a number of years later that the inhabitants returned and resumed use of the structure. Then, burials were deposited on the surface of Stratum 1, covered with soil, and the first stage was gradually masked by Stratum 2 fill. Other interments were subsequently included in the fill of this latter stage, above the surface of Stratum 1 (1965:13).

Bohannon also noted that only four percent of the ceramics from Stratum 1 were shell-tempered, while the rest were clay-tempered. The ceramics from Stratum 2, however, had shell-tempering in 21 percent of the total ceramic assemblage. The shift from clay to shell-tempering is noted in the nearby Mississippi Alluvial Valley as representing a change from the Woodland to the Mississippian culture period (Bohannon 1965:13).

Only seven of the twenty-six burials from Mound 4 had any associated grave goods. These burials contained shell beads and ornaments, ceramic vessels, and stone celts and bifaces. One burial from Stratum 2 contained historic glass beads and indicates a Historic period Choctaw Indian interment.

Mound No. 5 -- No excavations conducted due to disturbed nature of mound.

Mound No. 6 -- Measuring 55 feet in diameter and four feet in height at the time of excavation, Mound 4 produced nine burials. Vandalism of the mound, however, precluded any real interpretation, although Bohannon believed that there might be two sequences of construction as found at Mounds 2 and 4. Only one stone celt was found as an associated grave good (1965:24-27).

Village Excavations: Excavations carried out by Bohannon in 1963 and 1964 demonstrated that the majority of the village area "had been destroyed by years of row cropping and subsequent erosion" (1965:6). The remains of only one house and three burials were uncovered of what amounted to a small village area, in the area investigated by Bohannon (see Figures 5 and 6).

The house was a circular structure which measured approximately 50 feet in diameter. Its walls were supported by a series of posts set in individual holes in the bottom of a narrow trench. The walls and roof were probably of wattled and thatched construction and may have been plastered with mud to make them weather tight (Bohannon 1965:7)

Based upon ceramic analysis, Bohannon originally interpreted the Boyd Mounds Site as having two distinct occupations: 1) a Late Woodland village, represented by the circular dwelling structure; and, 2) six Middle Mississippian burial mounds or necropolises, where perhaps kin groups interred

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 4

their dead (1965:51-52). The latter Mississippian groups used shell-tempered pottery, but in the mounding of earth over the dead, they included clay-tempered pottery ceramics from the earlier Late Woodland occupation.

Recent reinterpretation of the Boyd Site material as noted in the Mississippi Historic Context [REDACTED] indicates:

Shell-tempered ceramics are present within the fill of these mounds indicating that they were at least partially constructed during the Mississippian period. However, both Baytown and Mississippian vessels are associated with burials in these mounds, revealing initial construction and use occurred during the preceding Woodland period (Morgan n.d.:9).

This would mean that the village and mounds would be contemporaneous, and occupied from the Late Woodland into the Early Mississippian periods, or approximately AD 750-1250.

Site Integrity: As noted by the original excavator, the Boyd Site has been affected to a great extent by modern row crop agriculture. This type of agricultural practice has damaged most of the village area and substantially reduced three mounds (Mounds 1, 3, and 5). The other mounds (Mounds 2, 4, and 6) were completely excavated in 1963 and 1964. According the Natchez Trace Parkway Archeologist, although major portions of the Boyd Mounds Site have been affected by farming and archeological investigations, it is likely that the lower portions of Mounds 1, 3, and 5 have intact features (see Figures 7 and 8). Also, portions of the unexcavated village area may produce intact features, especially house remains (see Figure 9). These resources are in [REDACTED]

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2

As currently interpreted, the Boyd Mounds Site represents a transitional Woodland-to-Mississippian period site containing architectural and artifactual evidence of both cultural periods. Future controlled excavations at the Boyd Site could delineate the cultural sequences for these two cultural periods through radiocarbon dating, and at the same time clarify the ceramic sequence for [REDACTED], which currently relies on trade ceramics from the Mississippi River Valley to assign relative dating (Morgan n.d.:26).

The data categories necessary to test the above would be charcoal samples, and ceramics from intact strata in the village area or Mounds 1, 3, and 5.

Mortuary Activities: As the Mississippi Historic Context for [REDACTED] indicates, most of the sites excavated in this physiographic area have been conical burial mounds, such as the Boyd Mounds Site. These conical mounds have consistently been found to date to the late prehistoric period (Late Woodland/Mississippian) which is in contrast to neighboring areas of the State of Mississippi, where flat topped pyramidal temples mounds are the rule for the late prehistoric period (Morgan n.d.:28).

Bohannon saw the Boyd Mounds Site people in [REDACTED] as living "in something of a cultural backwater" (1965:67). Major Mississippian cultural innovations, such as temple mounds, high-status burial offerings, and imported shell-tempered ceramics, seemed to have bypassed this area. According to Bohannon:

Shell-tempering was passed along, but the idea of temple mounds with accompanying religious and political changes was never adopted... [at Boyd]. Political organization was loose and casual, probably characterized by small groups based on kinship. Their religion was likewise informal and in the hands of the individuals themselves or of part time practitioners (shamans) (1965:67-68).

Further work at the Boyd Mounds Site could contribute to a better understanding of the cultural organization of the people in [REDACTED] as a whole through a comparative study of the mortuary activities. The data categories needed to test Bohannon's view of the culture of the people who constructed the features at the Boyd Mounds Site would be intact burials from the remaining mounds and village area of the site. Lack of high-status burials with exotic and imported burial goods would tend to support Bohannon's views on the Boyd Mounds Site people. On the other hand, excavations at the remaining burial mounds and village areas might uncover high-status burials with numerous exotic and imported burial offering, which would tend to refute Bohannon's view of the Boyd people living in a "cultural backwater" (Morgan n.d.:28-29).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 3

Cultural Associations: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] cultural influences coming from the North Central Hills area of Mississippi, and the Lower Mississippi River Valley cultures during the Woodland and Mississippian periods. According to the Mississippi Historic Context for the Jackson Prairie:

It is apparent that throughout the post-archaic (Woodland and Mississippian periods) associations with outside cultures vary depending upon location with [REDACTED] (Morgan n.d.: 32).

During the Woodland period, Mississippi Valley Marksville cultures appear to be responsible for the introduction of conical shaped burial mounds, such as those found at the Boyd Mounds Site [REDACTED]. However, excavation of such sites have consistently proven to date to times later than Marksville (Morgan n.d.:30). Another example of Mississippi Valley influence are diagnostic trade ceramics, although the number of Coles Creek ceramics observed is indicative of only minimal cultural influence by this group. Again an assumption in need of testing" (Morgan n.d.:31-32).

The Boyd Mounds Site yielded shell-tempered ceramics indicative of Mississippian culture influences. However, it is still unclear what the exact nature of cultural associations on Boyd or other contemporary sites in the [REDACTED] is with either these Mississippian cultures in the north or the groups in the Lower Mississippi River Valley (Morgan n.d.:31-32). The Boyd Mounds Site, representing the transitional Late Woodland-to-Mississippian periods, could help in clarifying what the effects of the dominant prehistoric cultures had on an inland and somewhat isolated area of Mississippi that appears to have only partially received innovations in burial practices and ceramic technology.

Data categories necessary to test the amount of influence on Boyd Mounds Site, by Lower Mississippi River Valley and Mississippian cultures would consist of intact strata in the remaining mounds and village area which can be separated into Woodland and Mississippian time periods. Comparative numbers of ceramics (both locally made and imported), diagnostic lithic tools and the quarrying sources, and architectural remains could serve as the basis for identifying the level of cultural association with other prehistoric areas in the past.