

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received DEC 9 1986
date entered JAN 7 1987

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Johnson Cemetery Site (22-Tu-516)

and/or common N/A

2. Location

[Redacted location information]

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mrs. Pearl Johnson Redrick

street & number Rt. 2, Box 142

city, town Tunica N/A vicinity of state Mississippi

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the Chancery Clerk
Tunica County Courthouse

street & number P. O. Box 217

city, town Tunica state Mississippi

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Miss. Archaeological Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date March 1971 federal state county local

depository for survey records Miss. Dept. of Archives & History

city, town Jackson state Mississippi

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u> N/A </u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Johnson Cemetery site was first reported by Brown (1926:117), who described it as a 14-foot high mound with a burying-ground on top. He added that "scattered about are many fragments of burnt clay, fewer potsherds, and still fewer flint chips" (1926:117). Barton (1927:85) adds little, except for making the only reference to a second mound by stating "...on the brink of the swamp... are two mounds, one probably twelve feet high, the other smaller. [redacted]; I believe there are some graves on the larger." The second mound is not mentioned in any other references, but there is a high knoll [redacted] (see Figure 1), with surface debris indicating the site of an historic period structure. Presumably this is what Barton was referring to.

Phillips, Ford, and Griffin, in their survey of the site in 1940, describe it as a "village site with large mound" (1951:51), adding that the single mound, possibly square, was about 12 feet high, and that there was abundant daub and scanty refuse in the surrounding village (1951:318). Phillips, who surveyed the site in 1940, wrote in his field notes (on file, Peabody Museum) that it was impossible to make out the shape of the mound remnant, but its general proportions, ca. 120 feet in diameter and 12 feet high, suggest a platform type. He added that it had "escaped cultivation but has suffered from erosion and is thickly covered with brush." Collecting conditions were apparently bad at the time, hampered by a thick weed cover in the surrounding corn field. The few sherds recovered were from immediately north of the mound in a less thickly overgrown area.

[redacted] Presently, the mound is about 105 feet in diameter at the base, while the crest is elongated (ca. 75 feet east to west), narrow (ca. 24 feet north to south), and approximately 12 to 14 feet high at the west end, tapering to ca. 10 to 12 feet high toward the east end (see Photo #1).

The owner plans to seed it with bermuda grass, but some irreparable damage has already been done. There is a heavy concentration of daub eroding down and scattered over all sides of the mound, indicating the presence of burned structures within it, along with the possibility of several phases of construction. There is still the Johnson family cemetery on top, but it too may be endangered if the erosion is not stabilized soon.

The site is located in an unusual physiographic situation (see Figure 1).

[redacted] shows heavy concentrations of daub, indicating numerous burned houses clustering in a relatively small area. Three boreholes, [redacted]

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates AD 1400 - AD 1600 **Builder/Architect** American Indian

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The significance of the site lies primarily in the research potential of its relatively well preserved mound, its small size, and its apparently short span of occupation. Although the mound has suffered disturbance from grave excavation, tree root growth, railroad infringement, erosion, and recent clearing of underbrush, the major portion of it remains intact at nearly its original height. Construction stages and burned structures are indicated within it, suggesting the potential for more absolute dating of its chronological development and study of nearly intact structural elements. The latter, in turn, poses the possibility of data retrieval with regard to ceremonialism within a small village and its relationship to and effects upon everyday life there. The small size of the village, especially the very limited area exhibiting burned house remains, would make an all-encompassing excavation more cost-effective, as well as providing better potential for viewing numerous aspects of village life within a relatively confined area. Finally, its apparently short occupation span could narrow down considerably the multiplicity of cultural components and temporally widespread features so often encountered in many other sites of the region. In all, it appears to present a culturally, temporally, and spatially compact, essentially single component unit with all the cultural potential of many larger Mississippian sites.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Johnson Cemetery Site (22-Tu-516), Tunica Co., Miss.

Continuation sheet Description

Item number 7

Page 2

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received

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[redacted], indicated a shallow midden deposit of from ½ foot (borehole 3) to 1 foot (boreholes 1 & 2) on the highest ground.

According to Fowlkes et. al. (1956:32-34), the soil [redacted] is Dundee silty clay loam, level phase, a moderately well-drained soil occurring on intermediate positions on old natural levees and derived from sediments deposited by the Mississippi River. Original flora of such areas "consisted of a heavy growth of hardwoods, brush, vines, briars, and canes." The soil [redacted] (Tunica clay and silty clay, level phases) [redacted] (Sharkey and Dowling clays) are both formed in slack-water areas (Fowlkes et. al. 1956:42-44). The Tunica soil is derived from river alluvium and occurs in narrow bands scattered throughout slack-water areas, but is better drained than its associated Sharkey soil (Fowlkes et. al. 1956:44). The Sharkey and Dowling clay "lie in broad, flat depressions closely related to swamps and low swags," with slow drainage (Fowlkes et. al. 1956:42). Cover consists of a fairly thick stand of hardwoods and a heavy undergrowth of brush, vines, briars, canes, and occasionally rushes and swampgrass. The site, thus, appears to have been sandwiched in a small area of high ground between a cut-off river channel (probably an open lake at the time of occupation) and a backswamp area immediately to the east, probably accounting for its small size.

Regarding the temporal position of the site's occupation, Phillips, Ford, and Griffin (1951:343) assigned it to a short time range in their period B-A (Late Mississippi period) and suggested the beginning of this period coincided with the 1541 passage of DeSoto through the area. With regard to this, they state that "ceremonial centers are still present but by no means as numerous as in the preceding period. Burial mounds are conspicuously absent. A general decrease in population seems to be indicated in this period.... Possibly this is a reflection of the depopulation trend which left this portion of the Mississippi Valley almost uninhabited by 1698..." (1951:343). It is questionable whether this particular site was inhabited that late in time, but with regard to a surface collection made there in 1986, it does seem to fit in closely in some respects with Phillips' Kent phase,¹ in which he places it (1970:Figure 447). The samples was rather small, but it consisted of 96% Mississippi period sherds, and the nearly even proportion of Bell Plain and Mississippi Plain sherds present is one of the Kent phase criteria listed by Phillips (1970:939). Three sherds of Baytown Plain and Mulberry Creek Cordmarked indicate a very minor Baytown component of hardly any consequence.

1. AD 1400 - AD 1600

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Johnson Cemetery Site (22-Tu-516), Tunica Co., Miss.
Continuation sheet References Item number 9

Page 1

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1927 Where did DeSoto discover the Mississippi River? In: A symposium on the place of discovery of the Mississippi by Hernando DeSoto; by Dunbar Rowland, 1927. Mississippi Historical Society, Special Bulletin No.1.

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1926 Archeology of Mississippi. Mississippi Geological Survey, University.

Fowlkes, Thomas, C.G.Morgan, J.A.Herren, D.D.Mason, and L.A.Davidson

1956 Soil survey [redacted] .S.Dept. of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, Series 1942, No. 14.

Phillips, Philip

1970 Archaeological survey [redacted] Mississippi, 1949-1955. Papers of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University. Vol. 60.

Phillips, Philip, James A. Ford, and James B. Griffin

1951 Archaeological survey [redacted] 1940-1947. Papers of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University. Vol. 25.

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National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Johnson Cemetery Site (22-Tu-516), Tunica Co., Miss.
Continuation sheet Boundary Description Item number 10

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