Form 10-300 (Rev. 6-72) UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

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Form 10-300a (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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4.

John Bridges East of Old Hwy 1 Winterville, Mississippi 38782

H. B. Crosby
% Commercial National Bank
Post Office Box 777
Greenville, Mississippi 38701

CIBA
Geigy Chemical Corporation
Attn: David Austin
Post Office Box 186
Winterville, Mississippi 38782



7.	DESCRIPTION								
		(Check One)							
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Winterville is a large Mississippian Period ceremonial site. The original site plan was an oval formation of temple mounds. The largest mound, which was fifty-five feet high, divided the oval into two plazas.

The earliest mention of the Winterville site was made in 1852 by Mr. Tellinghast Ireys, founder of the Washington County Historical Society, who observed sixteen or seventeen well preserved mounds. At that time, they had not been cleared of their natural vegetative covering which consisted mostly of cane. Ephraim Squier, an archaeologist of the Smithsonian Institution, noted in 1860 that all of the mounds were well preserved and remarked on their regularity of outline. Evidently much of the site was obscured by Vegetation during these earlier visits for Jeffrey Brain recorded twenty-three mounds during his investigation at the site in 1967.

From what was almost perfect condition in 1860, the site deteriorated with considerable erosion of the mounds being caused by cattle and farming operations.

In 1939 the City of Greenville acquired forty-two acres of the site or about eighty per cent of its total area. The deed specified that the land would always be used as a park. The Greenville Garden Club was given responsibility for park beautification and development. In 1960 the park was conveyed to the Mississippi State Park Commission. A museum and recreational facilities have been constructed and a program of mound restoration and preservation initiated.

Unfortunately, the approximately twenty per cent of the site remaining in private possession has been largely destroyed. Mounds, M-R, U, V, and W have either been completely destroyed or consist only of low remnants hardly distinguishable from a distance.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Winterville Site has been characterized by Dr. Jeffrey Brain, Archaeologist at the Peabody Museum, as representing the zenith of prehistoric developments in that part of the Mississippi Valley. It was here that the initial contact occurred between the Plaquemine Culture and the Mississippian Culture It is thought that this contact eventually resulted in the Mississippianization

The bulk of mound construction at Winterville is thought to have been accomplished in a fairly short period of time somewhere between 1200-1400 A.D. The absence of any appreciable amound of living debris indicated that the site was used primarily as a ceremonial center.

Excavations by Dr. Brain in 1967 suggested that culture change at Winterville was considerably different from that of other Mississippian centers in the area. According to him, it was achieved through the religious conversion of local people by a small group of missionaries from Cahokia, the huge Mississippian site near present day St. Louis, Missouri.

Ceramic studies indicate that the finitial occupation at the Winterville Site was of the Plaquemine Culture, more specifically a component of the Crippen Point phase, and that this settlement represented the northernmost outpost of Plaquemine. The next component at the site was of the Winterville phase, which represents the Cahokian contact. This contact is documented by the presence of Cahokian ceramic types which are said to be totally foreign to the area. Some of the vessels were evidently manufactured at Cahokia and transported directly to Winterville while others were made locally but with definitely new ideas. The Cahokia traits continue in the local ceramics, becoming blended with local traditions. This, together with the fact that the great majority of mound building was accomplished during the contact period, indicates that the proselytical purpose of the Cahokia people was accomplished.

Brain, Jeffrey.P. 1970. Winterville: A Case Study of Prehistoric Culture Contact in the Lower Mississippi Valley (Phd. dissertation Yale University, 1969).									
McCain, William D. and Charlotte Capers eds. 1954. Memoirs of Henry Tellinghast Ireys. Papers of the Wash- ington County Historical Society 1910-1915. Jackson, Mississippi.									
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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Form 10-300a (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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8.

The end of the Winterville phase is marked by a large fire. Evidently the mound top structures were ritually cleansed before the fire so it seems to have been peaceful in nature. During the subsequent Deer Creek phase, the only surviving traits are of Mississippian culture and acculturation thus seems to have been completed.

The conflagration is interpreted as possibly marking the end of an old cycle and the beginning of a new one. The population is thought to have decreased during the Deer Creek phase and mound building ceased. A possible reason for this slackening of activity is that people moved out of Winterville during this time to set up secondary mound centers.

Although recent agricultural practices have destroyed the archaeological record of the end of the aboriginal occupation at Winterville, Dr. Brain reasons that there was a gradual decline and final abandomment of the site before the time of De Soto. Since De Soto probably crossed the Mississippi within fifty miles of the site and was held up for about one month before crossing, there would probably be some discussion of Winterville in the accounts of that expedition if the site had been occupied at that time.

Winterville is the best preserved large mound site in the state of Mississippi and now stands as a reminder of the high cultural achievements of the people of this region before the coming of the white man. The heart of the site, including most of the remaining mounds, is the property of the Mississippi Park Commission and is now protected and preserved. A museum interprets the site and local prehistory in general to the public and houses valuable study collections for students of archaeology.





National Historic Landmarks

National Park Service

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NHL Information System

Winterville Site

Greenville, Mississippi

County of Washington.

National Register Number: 73001031 Resource type: Site.

Property type: Archeological Site. Certified Local Government: NO

NPS Contact:

Southeast Support Office.

Atlanta Federal Center, 1924 Building, 100 Alabama St., SW, Atlanta, GA 30303, Ph.

404/562-3171

Statement of Significance (as of September 14, 1993):

The Winterville Site is a prehistoric ceremonial mound complex, one of the largest such complexes of the Mississippian Period in the Eastern United States and the type site of the Winterville Phase (1200-1400).



Developed by Heritage Preservation Services

Comments/Questions



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Date of Action

United States Department of the Interior

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Registration Form	المراجعة ال المراجعة المراجعة ال
This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties of for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by markin the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For a (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.	g "x" in the appropriate box or by entering tapplicable." For functions, styles, materials,
1. Name of Property	terretaria de la companya del companya de la companya del companya de la companya
historic name Winterville Site	
other names/site number 22-Ws-500	***************************************
2. Location	
street & number 1.5 km south of Winterville along State Hwy 1	not for publication
city, town Winterville	vicinity
state Mississippi code MS county Washington code	151 zip code 38702
3. Classification	
Ownership of Property Category of Property Number of	f Resources within Property
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object	objects
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listed in the	f contributing resources previously le National Register
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4. State/Federal Agency Certification	
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State or Federal agency and bureau	
In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria	See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official	Date
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:)	

Signature of the Keeper

6. Function or Use	
Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions) Religion - Temple Mound Complex	Current Functions (enter categories from instructions) Landscape - State Park
7. Description Architectural Classification enter categories from instructions)	Materials (enter categories from instructions)
N/A	foundation walls roof
	other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Site Type: The Winterville Site is located in the west-central part of the Yazoo Basin in Washington County, Mississippi (See Figure 1), 6.5 km north of the city of Greenville, and 1.5 km south of the town of Winterville, from which the site derives its name. This site is one of the largest ceremonial mound complexes of the Mississippian Period in the United States and the type site of the Winterville phase (A.D. 1200-1400). The site originally consisted of 23 truncated pyramidal earthworks arranged in such a manner as to create two large plaza areas surrounded by earthworks, with the largest earthwork (Mound A) located in the middle of this arrangement.

Environmental Setting: The Mississippi Department of Archives and History designation for the Winterville Site is 22-Ws-500, and it is the site number that should be used when referring to the site. However, Harvard University's Lower Mississippi Survey refers to the Winterville Site in its final report of investigations as 19-L-1 (Brain 1989:11). The site is located on the south side of a bayou that once flowed directly into the Mississippi River and also formed a connection with Deer Creek (See Figure 2). The location coordinates are NE 1/4, NE 1/4, Section 19, Township 19N, Range 8W.

The Yazoo Basin, in which the Winterville Site is located, was formed during the Late Pleistocene and Early Holocene periods. Originally, the Yazoo Basin area had been scoured out by the erosional action of the Mississippi River rushing toward a Gulf of Mexico that was some 120 m lower that the present sea level.

The rise in sea level during the Holocene lessened the gradient, and the heavier particles, which had been suspended in the water, settled to the bottom of the riverbed, thus gradually building up the valley floor to its present level. During the latter stages of this process, the hydraulic system changed from one of multichannel braided streams to the shifting pattern of meandering rivers [Williams & Brain 1983:5].

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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During the last 5,000 years, after the Yazoo Basin was filled in with fine-grained alluvial soils, the meandering action of the major tributaries of the basin repeatedly reworked the water laid soils. This riverine activity created a landscape of slightly elevated natural levees of sandy loam soils, point bars, abandoned river channels, oxbow lakes, and backswamps (Williams & Brain 1983:5).

In his study of the Winterville Site, Jeffrey Brain notes that the prehistoric people appear to have selected the location for the construction of their mound center with great care. It was sited on an elevated natural levee next to a bayou that at one time formed the waterway connector between the Mississippi River and Deer Creek (See Figure 2). The well-drained sandy loam of the levee would have afforded the inhabitants excellent soil for the growing of food. In addition, until the recent construction of artificial levees, the natural levees were the only land surfaces in the Yazoo Basin that were "relatively immune to the annual inundations" of the Mississippi River (Brain 1989:14-16). Finally, the natural levee and associated river environmental system would have provided the prehistoric peoples of the Winterville Site with abundant wild plant and animal food resources (Brain 1989:18).

Archeological Investigations: The Winterville Site earthworks are so large that they were frequently noted in nineteenth-century accounts on prehistoric sites in the Lower Mississippi River Valley. They were originally owned by a Major Hunt whose plantation name, variously called Montrose, or Mount Rose, may be a reference to the Winterville Site earthworks (Brain 1989:18). According to Jeffrey P. Brain:

The earliest account of the site is a description recorded by Henry Tillinghast Ireys after a visit to Montrose in 1852 (McCain & Capers 1954:13-14;67-70). At that time the "cane and timber" had not yet been cleared, so that Mr. Ireys noticed only "sixteen or seventeen" mounds. Their good state of preservation is indicated by the observation that the ramp was still prominent on the north side of Mound A [Brain 1989:18].

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Ephraim G. Squier, a surveyor with the Smithsonian Institution, published the first map of the Winterville Site in 1860 (See Figure 3), showing eleven pyramidal mounds with ramps and connecting causeways (1860:171). This map does not resemble the actual arrangement of earthworks at the Winterville Site so there is some question as to how the site was mapped by Squier (Brain 1989:18). Twenty years later, the same map was reproduced by James Hough, of the Smithsonian (See Figure 4), with the same errors of arrangements of earthworks (Brain 1989:18, 22).

The first record of investigations at Winterville occurred in 1869, when George T. Blackburn, a riverboat captain, recovered some 40 burials from the site (Southern Living 1985). This was followed in 1882 by other amateur excavations

in the top of a temple mound on Captain Hunt's plantation, near Greenville, Mississippi. They found portions of two human skeletons, several broken clay vessels, and one carved stone pipe [Lewis 1936].

The size of the Winterville Site earthworks brought Clarence B. Moore, of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, to the site in 1907. Moore dug over 150 test pits (.9 m by 1.8 m and 1.2 m deep) in the tops of 15 mounds and in the plaza areas. However, this work did not uncover any noteworthy artifacts other than "a few badly preserved skeletons and some isolated pots" (Brain 1983:23).

The lack of major artifactual finds kept archeological interest in the site to a minimum. It was not until 1949 that Albert C. Spaulding, then with the Harvard Lower Mississippi Survey, drew the first accurate contour map of the site (See Figure 5). At this time, four small test excavations were conducted by the Survey, but no midden deposits were located. Similar results occurred in 1964 when the Mississippi Department of Archives and History undertook tests at the base of Mound A (Brain 1989:26).

The only major archeological investigations took place between July 1967 and June 1968, and were conducted by Dr. Jeffrey Brain of Harvard University. Because so little was known about the site,

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Brain undertook a resurvey of the site to establish a data base from which all future archeological investigations could be mapped (Brain 1989:27-29). Twenty-eight excavation units generally measuring 2 m by 2 m and grouped into eight locations (See Figure 5 for excavation locations) were excavated by Brain. As previous work indicated, Brain found little evidence of occupational debris, suggesting that the Winterville Site was primarily a ceremonial rather than habitation site (Brain 1989:29).

Location I investigations, in the vicinity of Mounds B and S, demonstrated a small cultural occupation midden on the natural levee, followed by the construction of Mounds B and S along with an interconnecting earthwork or causeway. Both mounds appear to have been used as domiciliary mounds from the accretion of midden refuse around the edges of the earthworks. Both mounds showed evidence that structures located on top of the mounds had been destroyed by fire. Over this fire layer, a mantle of clay was added before this part of the site was abandoned (Brain 1989:37). Mound B produced 23 intact and fragmentary burials, some with associated grave goods (Brain 1989:34-35).

Location II investigations, in the area of Mound D, produced stratigraphy similar to Location I. This sequence consisted of a small cultural occupation midden on the natural levee, followed by construction of Mound D. Mound D was topped by a domiciliary structure that was destroyed in a fire. This structure was later rebuilt (Brain 1989:40-41).

Location III investigations, in the area of Mound F, produced the same stratigraphy as Locations I and II. The only exception to the sequence noted above was evidence of a major fire in the pre-mound construction phase (Brain 1989:42).

Location IV investigations, in the area of Mounds G and H, also produced "a thin midden accumulation on the natural ground surface" (Brain 1989:48) underneath the mound construction. The Mounds G and H appear to have been constructed in a relatively short period of time as the bases for domiciliary structures, as there was no evidence of having been constructed in stages. As with the investigations in Locations I-III, the structures on top of these mounds were burned in a fire. The evidence of refuse middens in this area showed that the mounds were reoccupied after the fire (Brain 1989:48-49).

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Location V investigations, in the area of Mound K, were not taken down to the old natural levee surface so there was no confirmation of a pre-mound construction occupation of the Mound K area. While Mound K appears to have been constructed over a relatively short period of time, there was little or no midden refuse associated with the structure on the top of the mound. Brain believes that the lack of refuse points to a ceremonial rather than a domestic function for the structure that was located on top of Mound K. Like the other locations, Mound K also exhibited extensive evidence of a major fire. This fire level was covered over and the mound was reoccupied (Brain 1989:54-55).

Location VI investigations, in the area of Mound L, exhibited the most extensive pre-mound construction occupation midden area of the Winterville Site. This occupation was followed by two distinct mound construction phases. The second mound construction phase bore evidence of an intense fire. Modern farming activity destroyed the functional evidence of the use of the mound after the fire (Brain 1989:56-57).

Location VII investigations, in the area of Mound M, produced actual living floors of the pre-mound construction occupation on the natural levee. During the following mound construction phase at the Winterville Site, Mound M appears to have started as a small domiciliary mound. Eventually, midden deposits were accumulated and added to the mound to increase its size. A thick mantle of sterile construction fill was added to Mound M to further increase the size of the mound. This phase of the mound showed evidence of a major fire. After the fire, a "final layer of midden above this testifies to a still later occupation" (Brain 1989:58-59).

Location VIII investigations, in the North Plaza area, consisted of the excavation of several test pits to determine the use of the open areas. With the exception of one test pit, no artifacts were encountered. This would tend to indicate that the plaza areas were kept open and cleared of any debris (Brain 1989:59).

The Winterville Site was constructed on a natural levee made of clay and sandy loam deposited by the Mississippi River. On top of this levee, the first occupants constructed a small village, which

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left evidence in the ground in the form of a thin midden occupation. Later, an extensive mound complex was constructed on top of the previous cultural occupation using sterile alluvial soils, and sometimes midden refuse. This entire mound complex appears to have been swept by a major conflagration that destroyed the domiciliary and temple structures on top of the mounds. Most of the mounds and their structures were rebuilt, and in the case of Location I (Mounds B and S), burials were interred in the earthwork (Brain 1989:59-60).

Site Analysis: The earliest evidence of human activity at the Winterville Site is a Late Coles Creek (Crippen Point phase) village site found on the western and southern margins of the site at Locations II and VIII, and dates from about A.D. 1000-1200. The diagnostic ceramic set for this phase of the Coles Creek culture is Addis (Addis 1 subset). Of particular interest is the appearance of shell tempered ceramics (Mississippi Plain and Bell Plain). Shell tempered wares reveal a ceramic technology indicative of Middle Mississippian derivation. According to Jeffrey Brain:

It is logical to expect, however, that inasmuch as this technological mode had been slowly diffusing downriver since at least the turn of the millennium [ca. A.D. 1000], it should be found earlier at the more northerly Winterville [Brain 1989:103].

The Coles Creek culture was developed in the more southerly portions of the Lower Mississippi River Valley and slowly spread northward into the Yazoo Basin of Mississippi, so that by about A.D. 1000 the Crippen Point phase village at the Winterville Site represented the farthest major northern extension of Coles Creek culture. Brain suggests that these Coles Creek people migrated from the Holly Bluff (Lake George) Site, some 80 km to the south, to found the Winterville Site (Brain 1989:108).

About A.D. 1200, the resident Coles Creek population at Winterville appears to have experienced a sustained cultural intrusion from the Mississippian culture of the Middle Mississippi area, based at Cahokia, in western Illinois (Brain 1989:108). Whereas before A.D. 1200 the Coles Creek populace on the northern frontier of their

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culture area had been content to assimilate certain technological innovations, such as shell tempering for their pottery, they now embarked on a massive mound building program at Winterville, similar to the Mississippian culture of the Middle Mississippi River Valley (Brain 1989:104-105).

This new phase, termed the Winterville phase, dates from A.D. 1200-1400 and is marked by the mound construction at the site. According to Brain:

the construction projects seem to have been conceived as a whole, and most were probably put up within a relatively brief period, a comparison of the stratification and cultural stratigraphy between locations reveals some complexity attesting to unsynchronized hiatuses, many of which were the result of various occupational events [Brain 1989:105].

Brain was able to divide this phase into Winterville I and II subphases based on differences in the ceramic inventories. In the ceramic inventory of Winterville I, the Addis ceramic set (Addis 2 subset), which typifies Late Coles Creek culture, predominates even as the massive Mississippian-like mound construction was initiated. In the ceramic inventory of Winterville II, the Addis ceramic set is replaced by the Yazoo ceramic set (Yazoo 3 subset), which "exhibits a mixture of northern (Mississippian) and southern (Late Coles Creek) elements in its artifactual inventory, with northern modes and types ultimately predominating" (Brain 1989:105). Winterville represented a hybrid site plan. The massive mound construction reflected Mississippian influences, but it was essentially a vacant ceremonial complex that housed only a small governmental and priestly elite, similar to Coles Creek ceremonial centers.

The Winterville phase comes to an end with a major site-wide conflagration that destroyed all the habitation and ceremonial structures atop the mounds. This major fire does not appear to have been the result of intentional arson by an attacking force. Rather, it was probably the result of an accidental blaze and is dated at ca. A.D. 1400 (Brain 1989:110).

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After the fire, prehistoric occupation at Winterville was concentrated on the northern and eastern side of the site. Winterville continued to be occupied as a ceremonial center. Archeological investigation found that some of the mounds acquired new mantles of soil, and some of the temples and domiciliary structures were rebuilt (Brain 1989:110). However, the leadership position of the site in the Yazoo Basin appears to have been lost, possibly transferred to the Holly Bluff (Lake George) Site after A.D. 1400.

During the Lake George phase at the Winterville Site (post-A.D. 1400), all evidence of Coles Creek influence in the artifactual inventory is erased. Brain viewed the disappearance of the Coles Creek artifacts as "a case of eventual acculturation by the expanding Mississippian culture" (1989:110). Even as the Winterville Site became Mississippian in culture, the population was declining probably through movement to other Yazoo Basin sites. Before A.D. 1500, the Winterville Site was abandoned (Brain 1989:111).

Site Integrity: The Winterville Site originally consisted of a complex of 23 mounds on a land area of slightly larger than 20 ha. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Winterville Site was farmed, but the effects on the mounds were minimal due to their large size. In 1927, a major spring flood completely inundated the site and deposited a mantle of coarse sand on the site destroying the fertility of the land which was then turned into pasture. According to Brain:

This, however, was a mixed blessing, for while the smaller mounds were spared further plow destruction, the larger ones, which had theretofore survived quite well as they were unsuitable for agriculture, were now endangered by the removal of their natural protective cover through grazing [Brain 1989:23].

In 1939, a small corner of the site was destroyed by the construction of State Highway Number 1. But in the same year, largely through the efforts of the Greenville Garden Club 16.8 ha, or about 80% of the site was acquired, with the exception of Mounds M-R, U-W, and part of S.

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In 1960, the park was taken over by the Mississippi State Park Commission. The park area was augmented in 1965 by the acquisition of two acres (.8 ha) which included Mound R and most of Mound S. Both earthworks, however, had been destroyed in 1964, as also were Mounds N-P in the headquarters area of the neighboring plantation. Under the State's administration, recreational and education facilities have been constructed, including a museum on the western edge of the site. Most important of all, however, is a continuing program of mound stabilization and restoration, which hopefully will conserve what is still one of the best preserved of the large aboriginal mound sites in the southeastern United States [Brain 1989:26].

There are two noncontributing structures on the site: a museum building and the residence for the superintendent of the park. Outside the park boundary, but on land containing earthworks of the Winterville Site, are five noncontributing buildings.

Figures 6, 7, and 8 illustrate the present integrity of the earthworks at the Winterville State Park.

8. Statement of Significance	
Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in	relation to other proportion.
	ewide locally National Historic Landmark
Applicable National Register Criteria A B C X	Criterion 6
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)	D DE DF DG
Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions) I. Cultural Developments: Indigenous American Populations C. Prehistoric Archeology: Topical Facets 21. Major Contributions to the Development of Culture Histories B. Post-Archaic & Pre-Contact Developments	Period of Significance Crippen Point phase Winterville phase Lake George phase Cultural Affiliation Coles Creek Significant Dates A.D. 1000-1200 A.D. 1200-1400 A.D. 1400-1500
12. Post-Archaic Adaptations of	Plaquemine
the Mississippi Valley	Mississippian
Significant Person N/A	Architect/Builder

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

<u>Summary Statement of Significance</u>: The Winterville Site is a prehistoric ceremonial mound complex, presently consisting of 18 earthen temple and domiciliary mounds located on an abandoned bayou that once connected the Mississippi River with Deer Creek. The site is one of the largest prehistoric ceremonial complexes in the Eastern United States.

Archeological investigations by Jeffrey Brain of Harvard University in 1967 and 1968, as part of the restoration and interpretation of the Winterville Site, identified the remains of a Coles Creek culture Crippen Point phase (A.D. 1000-1200), Winterville phase (A.D. 1200-1400), and Lake George phase (A.D. 1400-1500) occupation of the site. The work conducted by Brain at the site defined Winterville as the type site for the Winterville phase in the Yazoo Basin of the Lower Mississippi Valley. Brain's work at the site has contributed a better understanding of the prehistoric cultural chronology, but also to understanding the interactions between various prehistoric cultures in the Southeastern United States. In particular, the Winterville Site has been significant in dating and documenting cultural dynamics of cultural contacts between the Mississippian culture spreading south from Cahokia, Illinois, and the Coles Creek culture of the Lower Mississippi River Valley.

The Winterville Site is considered nationally significant under National Historic Landmark Criterion 6 for its contributions in defining prehistoric cultural sequences in the Mississippi River Valley, and in understanding the cultural dynamics of cultural contacts between the late prehistoric Mississippian culture of the Middle Mississippi and the Coles Creek culture of the Lower Mississippi River Valley.

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THEMATIC FRAMEWORK

- I. CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS: INDIGENOUS AMERICAN POPULATIONS
 - C. Prehistoric Archeology: Topical Facets
 - 21. Major Contributions to the Development of Culture Histories

Cultural Chronology of the Mississippi River Valley

The Yazoo Basin of northwestern Mississippi is situated along one of the major ecological divides in the United States, the Mississippi River. The river functioned as a communication and transportation corridor to expose native populations in the Yazoo Basin to a variety of prehistoric cultures and innovations. These natural and cultural factors have contributed to a very complex prehistoric record in the Lower Mississippi River Valley.

With the excavation of the Winterville Site, archeologists were able to develop a better understanding of a major portion of the sequence of prehistoric cultures and chronology in the Mississippi River Valley. The work conducted by Jeffrey Brain, of Harvard University, identified not just the sequence of these prehistoric cultures, based on specific artifact types (primarily ceramic), but also established specific dates for these cultures using radiocarbon dating for the Yazoo Basin of Mississippi.

The Winterville Site is the type site for the Winterville phase based in the Yazoo Basin of Mississippi during the prehistoric thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in the Lower Mississippi River Valley. Prior to this time, the area of the Yazoo Basin appears to have been lightly settled by Coles Creek culture groups migrating northward. The Coles Creek culture is best represented by small, ceremonial mound centers (usually not more than three mounds) which appear to have been the location of an elite governing group that was supported by outlying hamlets or farmsteads.

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About A.D. 1200, the Coles Creek culture, in the Yazoo Basin, was exposed to cultural and technological innovations from the Mississippian culture based at Cahokia, Illinois. Winterville, because it was on the northern frontier of the Coles Creek culture area, was probably the first recipient of influences from the Mississippian culture area. The result of this influence was the construction of one of the largest mound complexes in the Eastern United States, similar to other Mississippian culture sites in the Middle Mississippi area, but exhibiting settlement patterns and artifactual assemblages characteristically Coles Creek. With the establishment of the mound complex at Winterville, Mississippian influences spread throughout the Lower Mississippi River Valley, modifying the Coles Creek culture and creating new ceramic types which have served to identify other thirteenth-century prehistoric sites in the area.

THEMATIC FRAMEWORK

- I. CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS: INDIGENOUS AMERICAN POPULATIONS
 - B. Post-Archaic and Pre-Contact Developments
 - 12. Post-Archaic Adaptations of the Mississippi Valley

Cultural Dynamics of the Lower Mississippi River Valley

The Winterville Site, while significant in comprehending the sequencing of prehistoric cultures in the Lower Mississippi River Valley, has also been significant in developing an understanding of the prehistoric cultural dynamics of two distinct cultures—the Mississippian and the Coles Creek. The Coles Creek culture first appeared in the Lower Mississippi River Valley about A.D. 400. For several hundred years, this culture appears to have utilized the same types of artifacts and settlement patterns within a restricted geographical area.

Archeologists who have studied the Coles Creek culture suggest that this geographic restriction to the arable subtropical environment of the Lower Mississippi River Valley may possibly have been due to

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the adoption of a subtropical variety of maize, perhaps introduced from Mesoamerica. If the Coles Creek culture appears conservative to archeologists because its resource base was restricted to a particular environment, it has been suggested that:

this may offer an explanation in part for the fact that the obviously successful Coles Creek adaptation apparently made no significant effort to expand beyond its original borders but instead, once the major innovations had been integrated, concentrated on perfecting a lifestyle that was clearly introverted and conservative [Williams & Brain 1983:408].

Continuity in the Coles Creek culture also extended to settlement patterns. As early as A.D. 400, Coles Creek mound complexes were being constructed (Williams & Brain 1983:405). However, these ceremonial precincts were modest in size, usually not more than three temple mounds arranged around a plaza.

The sites themselves are "vacant" centers in the sense that they were not primarily residential units, although they were occupied by a small group who were presumably religious caretakers and/or privileged personae—the beginnings of a new elite. This was an elite who could not only cause the centers to be built according to rigidly considered plans that were widely disseminated, but who could also afford to detach and nucleate themselves from the rest of the population, which was dispersed in small hamlet settlements [Williams & Brain 1983:407].

By the beginning of the second millennium A.D., the Coles Creek culture had expanded into the northernmost subtropical environment of the Lower Mississippi River Valley—the Yazoo Basin of present day northwest Mississippi. This occupation is referred to as the Crippen Point phase of the Coles Creek culture and is marked by the establishment of typical Coles Creek ceremonial centers and hamlets on natural levees throughout the Yazoo Basin. This phase is also characterized by new cultural traits beginning to appear in the archeological record of the Coles Creek culture sites of the Yazoo Basin.

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Brain views the introduction of these traits—new ceramic forms and tempering agents—as undirected technological diffusion of practical improvements from the Mississippian culture of the Middle Mississippi area. These technological improvements appearing about A.D. 1000, are according to Brain:

a case of undirected secondary diffusion, a faint reflection of the developments to the [Mississippian] north but not a close association. The traits were adopted on their own merits [1989:116].

Sometime before ca. A.D. 1200, actual diagnostic trade items (Ramey Incised and Powell Plain ceramics) manufactured in the Mississippian culture area begin to appear at the Winterville Site. Brain believes that the difference between the appearance of new technological innovations and objects made outside the area of northwestern Mississippi involves two new cultural factors.

The first is that this event must have represented the immigration of a sociopolitical group, an organized intrusion from the Mississippian core area. The second point is that the new introduction does not exhibit a direct correlation with the Mississippi River. The orientation is distinctly toward the interior, and the secondary drainage systems [Brain 1989:116].

Following the beginning of the thirteenth century (ca. A.D. 1200), the nature of contact between the Cahokia area and the Yazoo Basin intensified beyond the realm of trade. This contact is characterized by the development of the mound complex at Winterville, which from its position connecting both the Mississippi River and the internal river traffic of the Yazoo Basin, appears to have been the largest site in the area. Whether the inspiration for the development of this large center was due to the spread of trade, religion, or other factors is not yet understood.

The Winterville phase (A.D. 1200-1400) named after the type site of Winterville, is not a strictly transplanted Mississippian cultural phenomena but according to Brain:

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is archeologically manifested [in site plan and artifacts], it was a distinctive blend of northern and southern elements, quite literally a hybridization that resulted in unusual achievements. The overall development is referred to as the Plaquemine culture. Plaquemine is conceived of as a Mississippianized Coles Creek—that is, neither one nor the other, but the offspring of both [Brain 1989:122].

This hybridization is expressed in the pottery recovered from Winterville during the Winterville phase representing "a large inventory of pottery types of both northern and southern origin, and many instances of unusual combinations of modes from both traditions" (Brain 1989:122). At the same time, the construction of the mound complex and site plan at Winterville in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, while derived from the Mississippian north, was not intended to function as a Mississippian mound center. Instead of containing a large population, Winterville retained its Coles Creek tradition of the mound centers housing only a small elite population (Brain 1989:122-123).

About A.D. 1400, the entire mound complex at Winterville burned. Although partially rebuilt, Winterville never reemerged as the major mound center in the Yazoo Basin and was probably abandoned ca. A.D. 1450. This role was assumed by the Holly Bluff (Lake George) Site (designated a National Historic Landmark in 1964) in the fifteenth century. It was during this century that mound complexes near the Mississippi River (eg., Winterville) were abandoned and replaced by fortified mound complexes (eg., Holly Bluff) situated on the interior rivers of the Yazoo Basin (Brain 1989:125).

In summary, the Yazoo Basin was an important meeting ground of two major late prehistoric cultural traditions, the Mississippian and the Coles Creek. In the Yazoo Basin, the first permanent late prehistoric settlement of the natural levees was accomplished by the indigenous Coles Creek population, which by ca. A.D. 1000 was receiving from the Mississippian culture random ceramic technological innovations. This stage of contact was followed shortly thereafter by direct trade of Mississippian ceramics and stone tools into Yazoo Basin Coles Creek sites, such as Winterville (Brain 1989:128).

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By ca. A.D. 1200, in what Jeffrey Brain believed to be a planned effort, direct contact was established in the Yazoo Basin between the Mississippian and Coles Creek cultures through the migration of people from the Cahokia core area (Brain 1989:129). This migration into the Yazoo Basin occurred at the same time as apparent general expansion of the Mississippian culture along major river corridors of the Eastern United States. A similar example of this expansion was the contemporary northward movement of Mississippian migrants to the Aztalan Site, in Wisconsin (designated a National Historic Landmark in 1964). Whereas the Aztalan Site was a fortified mound complex indicative of a hostile reception by local indigenous groups to the Mississippian immigration, the Coles Creek culture appears to have readily accepted and worked with the newcomers to construct one of the largest mound complexes in the United States. Such a program of expansion by the Mississippian culture appears to have been motivated primarily for economic reasons 1989:129).

The direct outcome of this migration did not, however, result in a carbon copy of the Mississippian culture. While the mound complex at Winterville reflected influence from the Middle Mississippi area, the use of the site by a small elite population and much of the artifactual assemblage was derived from the indigenous Coles Creek culture. The melding of two cultures to form the Plaquemine culture shows that the Coles Creek populous was affiliated with the Mississippian on a partnership level, but still retained their individual cultural identity during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Brain 1989:129).

The Winterville Site is significant not just because of the large size of its ceremonial mound complex, but that the mound complex is the result of the combining of the Mississippian and Coles Creek cultures. The investigations of the site by Jeffrey Brain illustrate that the Winterville Site "was the product of the meeting of two viable aboriginal cultures" (1983:131). As Brain summarizes his findings:

The prehistoric sequence of events at Winterville seems to differ sharply from that at many other approximately contemporary sites reacting to, or participating in,

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Mississippian-inspired contact. The cliche of overwhelming Mississippian intrusion, domination, and then submergence is not repeated here. The Mississippian and Coles Creek cultures seem to have met peacefully at Winterville. There is no evidence of violence or fortification, nor of the intrusion and replacement of one culture by the other. Rather, a true conjunction seems to have been achieved between these cultures at the point of contact. The significance of this fact is that this was not a case of immediate Mississippian replacement and acculturation, but first of a dynamic transculturation which resulted in a local florescence [Brain 1989:131].

The scientific results of Brain's 1967-1968 excavations, as presented in his recently published report of investigations (1989), are widely known in the archeological community and considered a significant contribution to the study of prehistoric cultures in the Lower Mississippi River Valley for the last quarter of a century. With this publication, an alternative, and equally significant interpretation of the data from the Winterville Site has been proposed by Dr. James B. Griffin, of the University of Michigan.

Griffin agrees with Brain's conclusion up to A.D. 1200, or the end of the Crippen Point phase at the Winterville Site (Griffin 1990:66). Where Griffin takes exception to Brain's view of the Winterville Site is the extent of the post-A.D. 1200 influence of the Mississippian culture on the Yazoo Basin Coles Creek culture. As noted above, Brain's evidence for his viewpoint rested on the evidence of Cahokia imported ceramics and Mississippian-like earthen structures and settlement pattern as found at Winterville. However, according to Griffin:

The amount of [Cahokia derived] Powell and Ramey pottery that has been recovered at Winterville is not seen by this reviewer as sufficient to support the interpretation of a strong organized contact from the Cahokia [cultural area] [Griffin 1990:68].

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Griffin notes that the Mississippian culture attributed technological innovation of tempering ceramics with shell may have first developed in northeast Arkansas and the Cairo Lowlands of southeastern Missouri, and then "diffused northward to the Cahokia area," before its appearance at Winterville (Griffin 1990:67). As for monumental earthen architecture, Griffin notes that the platform mound, used as a base for important prehistoric communal structures, may have come originally from the Gulf Coast area of Florida, diffused to the Middle Coles Creek culture of the Lower Mississippi, and then "moved up the Mississippi valley to the St. Louis (Cahokia) area" (Griffin 1990:67).

Griffin questions Brain's view of changes at Winterville as

primarily a religious introduction from Cahokia that caused the Coles Creek societies in the Lower Yazoo and adjacent areas to turn away from their pristine Lower Valley development and become producers of material items and architectural constructions called Mississippian [Griffin 1990:71].

Griffin proposes cultural interaction up and down the Mississippi River Valley between prehistoric societies as early as A.D. 400 through the mechanism of "traders, explorers, or shamans moving along a stream" (Griffin 1990:72), stopping at convenient settlements along these waterways, and exchanging material goods along with new ideas and technologies. By A.D. 1000, a number of closely interacting cultural centers had arisen throughout the length of the Mississippi River Valley (Griffin 1990:72), linked by this system of exchange and cultural interaction.

In Griffin's view:

the interaction of the next 400 years, A. D. 1000-1400, was of the same general kind, heightened by increased populations, better knowledge of the location of major centers, and increasing similarity of beliefs and behavior. It is in this period that ideas and concepts developed in many areas became widespread, and societal enclaves participating in this exchange of ideas are

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identified by archeologists as Mississippian. Most of the eastern United States was an interacting culture area, even though there are identifiable regional societies with distinctive flavors. I feel that Coles Creek societies contributed significantly to those further north and helped to produce the societies of Mississippian cast. In turn, the northern Mississippian societies cross-fertilized with late Coles Creek, and the recoverable materials from say A.D. 1150 or so became increasingly similar to those from Mississippian societies in much of the east [Griffin 1990:72].

Future archeological investigations at the Winterville Site could help resolve the question of which cultural factors--religious or economic--were responsible for the sudden emergence of one of the largest mound building cultures in the United States--the Plaquemine--in the Lower Mississippi River Valley.

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	X 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 1973 previously determined eligible by the National Register designated a National Historic Landmark recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # 10. Geographical Data Acreage of property 53 acres (21.5 ha) UTM References A	Primary location of additional data: X State historic preservation office Mississippi Other State agency Federal agency Local government University Other Specify repository: Dep't of Archives & History, PO Box 57 Jackson, Mississippi 39205 B Zone Easting Northing
Verbal Boundary Description	
The boundary of the nominated property is marked by the following UTM reference poir 3706840, C 15 680440 3706700, D 15 680320	
	See continuation sheet
Boundary Justification	
The boundary for the Winterville Site has excavations and mapping of the extant eart in 1949 by Albert Spaulding. Archeological	been established based upon past archeological thworks. The site was first accurately mapped al investigations in the 1960s confirmed the baulding map in the location of the earthworks.
	See continuation sheet
11. Form Prepared By	
	neologist, National Register Programs Division
organization National Park Service - SERO	date September 4, 1991
street & number 75 Spring St., SW	telephone <u>(404) 331-2638</u> state <u>Georgia</u> zip code <u>30303</u>
city or town Atlanta	state stb code zip code

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UTM Reference Points

A	15	679800	3706780
В	15	680420	3706840
С	15	680440	3706700
D	15	680320	3706420
E	15	680020	3706300

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UTM Reference Points

A 15 679800 3706780

B 15 680420 3706840

C 15 680440 3706700

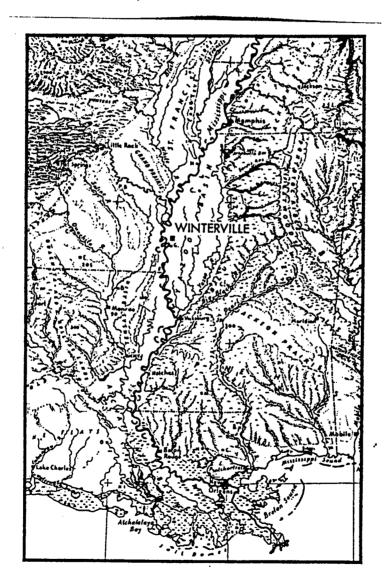
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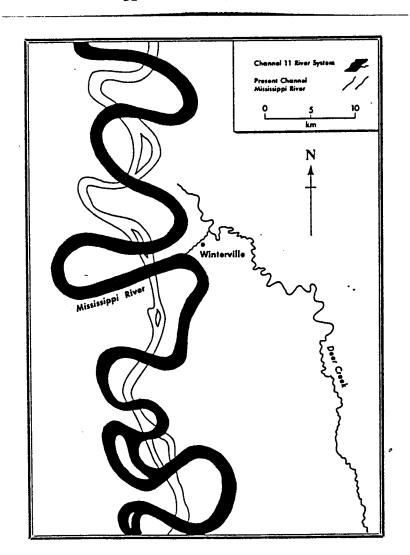
Figure 1. Physiographic Map of the Lower Mississippi River Valley showing the location of the Winterville Site in the Yazoo Basin of northwest Mississippi. (From Brain 1989:15)



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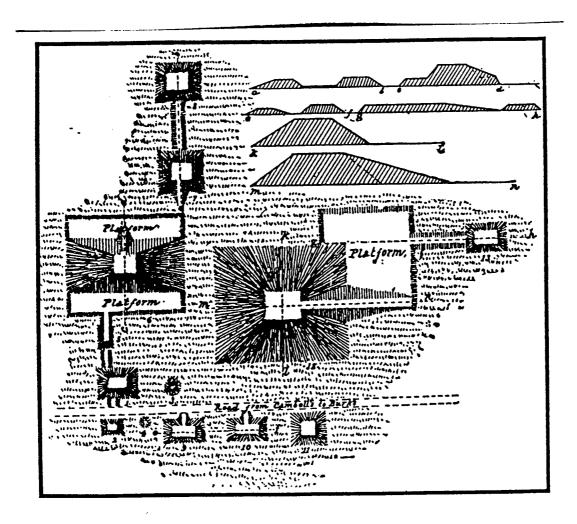
Figure 2. Reconstruction of the Mississippi River Channel during the occupation of the Winterville Site (superimposed on the course of the present Mississippi River Channel). Shows the site of Winterville and its prehistoric connection with the Mississippi River. (From Brain 1989:19)



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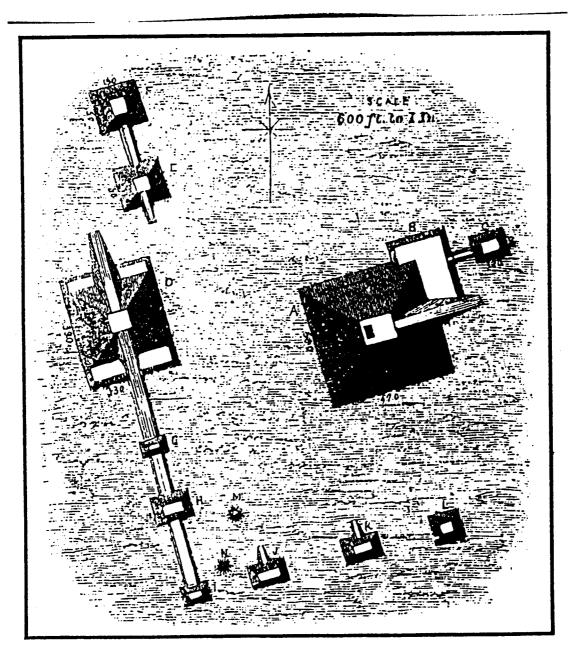
Figure 3. Map of the Winterville Site as presented by Ephram Squier in 1860 (From Brain 1989:21).



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Figure 4. Plan of the Winterville Site as presented by James Hough in 1880. (From Brain 1989:22)



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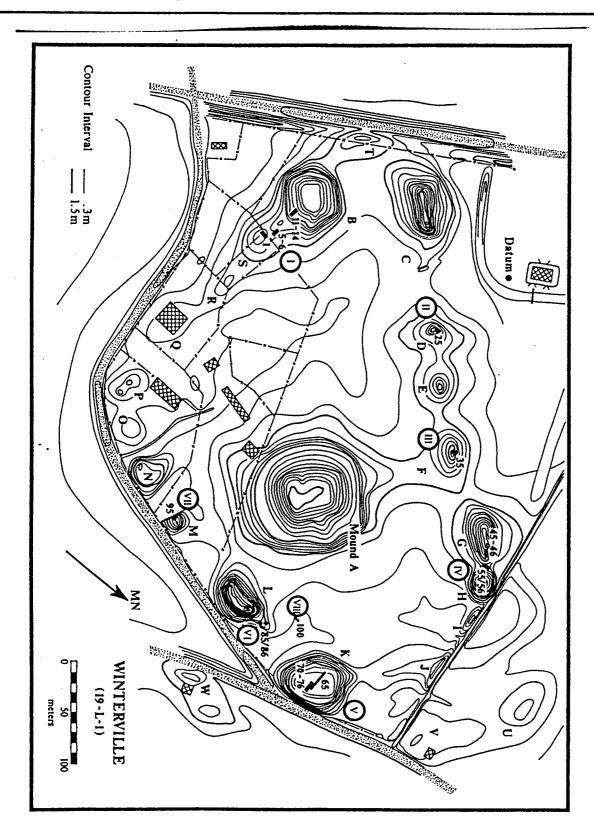


Figure 5. Topographic map of the Winterville Site prepared by Albert Spaulding in 1949. Locations of the 1960s excavations by Brain are included on the map. (From Brain 1989:28).

