

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government/temple mound
Religion/religious structure
Funerary/burial(?) mound

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

agricultural/subsistence
agricultural field/pasture

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A
walls N/A
roof N/A
other N/A

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Physical Appearance:

The Mazique site consists of two earthen mounds and contiguous plaza/occupational area [redacted]. It is situated in the Loess Hills physiographic region of the Lower Mississippi River Valley, along [redacted].

[redacted]. The Loess Hills are a relatively narrow (5-30 mile-wide) strip of uplands that stretch from the northwestern to the southwestern border of the state. The location of this site allowed its aboriginal occupants access to resources from the surrounding oak-hickory forested uplands as well as from the Second Creek, Homochitto River, and Mississippi River bottomlands.

Surface collections of pottery fragments from the flanks of the mounds and the plaza between the mounds indicate site occupation by peoples of the Coles Creek culture of the Late Woodland period and the Plaquemine culture of the Mississippian period. Small amounts of fired daub and fire-cracked stone were also found on the surface in these areas. Based upon sherds collected by the Peabody Museum Lower Mississippi Survey (Jeffrey Brain, personal communication) and recent surface collections, site components include those of the Ballina and Balmoral phases of the Coles Creek culture, the Anna phase of the Plaquemine culture, and the historic Natchez phase. These ceramic types include: Baytown Plain, var. unspecified; Addis Plain, var. Addis; Plaquemine Brushed, var. unspecified; and Fatherland Incised, var. unspecified. Surface collections from the Mazique site are housed with the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Harvard University Peabody Museum, and Louisiana State University. The vertical extent of the deposits is not known since subsurface testing has never been carried out at the site.

The northernmost mound, Mound A, has been severely eroded on its east side by [redacted]. The height of this mound is approximately 5 meters. From north to south, Mound A measures approximately 60 meters along its base; however, due to erosion, the mound measures only about 20 meters from east to west at its widest point. Summit configuration is undeterminable. The erosion appears to have

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)
archaeology/prehistoric

Period of Significance
A.D. 600 thru 1700

Significant Dates
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
Plaquemine/Mississippian
Coles Creek/Late Woodland

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.

Significance of Property:

The Mazique site qualifies for listing under National Register Criterion D. Specifically, this site has yielded and is capable of yielding additional information important to prehistory. Its potential for contributing to our understanding of the Late Woodland and Mississippian periods within the Loess Hills physiographic region is considerable. In the Natchez area, the Late Woodland and Mississippian periods are represented by the Coles Creek (A.D. 600-1200) and Plaquemine (A.D. 1200-1700) cultures. Analysis of pottery sherds collected from the surface of the site indicates that the period of mound construction and site use includes the transition from the Coles Creek culture to the Plaquemine culture in the Natchez area. This transition occurred about A.D. 1100-1200, when Coles Creek peoples were influenced by Mississippian developments further north in the Middle Mississippi River Valley (Neitzel 1965, 1983; Brain 1978; Brown 1989). The beginning of the Plaquemine culture in the Lower Mississippi River Valley has been called a "grand florescence" by Brain (1978:344). This was a period of intense mound building activity, and substantial additions to some existing Coles Creek mounds (Brain 1978:344-350). Archaeological study of the Mazique site should determine the extent to which this florescence manifests itself here and as such contribute toward a better comprehension of the nature of this transition in the Natchez Bluffs region (Morgan, n.d.). A better understanding of this transition is also important for tracing the early development of the Natchez Indians, a cultural group who would later figure prominently in the European colonization of the area (Swanton 1911; Neitzel 1965, 1983). More extensive controlled surface survey and archaeological testing are required. To date, the Mazique site has not been scientifically excavated.

In addition to increased mound building activity, the transition to Plaquemine also included changes in pottery making techniques. Classification of pottery types and varieties in the Natchez area has formed the basis for modern studies of the Coles Creek and Plaquemine

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

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 # _____

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Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Historic Properties Division, Natchez, Mississippi

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property _____

UTM References

A
 Zone Easting Northing

B
 Zone Easting Northing

C
 Zone Easting Northing

D
 Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Site boundaries for the Mazique site were based upon that area from which aboriginal cultural debris has been recovered from the site surface by various investigators. Basically, this area is comprised of Mound A on the northeast, Mound B on the southwest, and the intervening plaza/occupational area.

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11. Form Prepared By

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stabilized somewhat, although the mound is still threatened. Some sloughing continues along the steeply cut eastern side. Presently, the creek channel is about [REDACTED] of the main part of the mound. There is a noticeable east-west cut, or depression, near the middle of the mound's north-south axis marking where an excavation trench was opened during the development of the site in 1940 as a tourist attraction. Except for an area on the west slope which has been cleared for the installation of an electrical power line pole the mound is covered with trees and brush.

Mound B is located approximately [REDACTED] of Mound A and is more or less intact with a roughly circular base measuring approximately 170 meters in circumference. Its flattened summit measures approximately 20 x 15 meters. The mound is about 5 meters in height and is also tree covered. On the summit, near the south end, are two unmarked gravesites. Beside the graves, which are low, brick enclosures, a broken stone marker was found with the inscription: "to the memory of William King Wilson M.D., born January 18th 1797 and died June 19th 1833, aged 36 years, 5 months and 1 day." Another unmarked grave (brick enclosure) is located on the summit near the western end. These graves are historic and are not associated with the aboriginal development and use of the site. Brick steps leading from the summit to the base on the western side remain from the 1940 tourist attraction. Concrete fragments which probably also date to this development are found on and around both mounds.

Another grave with a standing headstone is located about 140 meters northwest of Mound A. This inscription reads: "James L. McMurtry, Mississippi, Corp. 420 Res. Labor BN, April 9, 1940." Near this grave is a depression indicating the possibility of an additional unmarked grave. This location is outside the boundaries of the site.

The first visitor to the Mazique site to record its archaeological features was Dr. M. W. Dickeson, who recorded three mounds there in 1844 (Brown 1926:35). He also stated that the largest mound, presumably Mound A, was about 25 feet in height (Brown 1926:35). If this figure is close to being correct for Mound A, then this mound has lost considerable height as well as width to erosion. By 1916, when Calvin Brown visited the site, only two mounds were evident and Brown described them as:

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. . . of the conical type. The first mound [Mound B] measured 500 feet in circumference at the base [essentially the same as modern measurements]; the second [Mound A] measured 131 feet in longer diameter on the top [again, this compares well with modern measurements]. This second mound stands directly on the bank of the creek and much of it has been cut away by the water (Brown 1926:35).

Brown also noted in this same report that the mound heights were 12-18 feet and that cultural debris was visible on the ground surface around the mounds. Brown also illustrated a sandstone pipe which was found at the site in 1924 (1926:243).

Other writers to mention the site are Moorehead, who did not visit the site, but showed it on a map of [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and Albrecht [REDACTED], who states that the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] surveyed and partly excavated the mounds in 1940. This excavation work was not done in a scientific manner. The so-called [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was, in fact, organized by entrepreneur, Jefferson Davis Dickson, to facilitate his development of the site as a tourist attraction. The excavations were primarily concerned with cutting a deep trench through Mound A. Photographs taken of the mound in 1940 show that this trench was roofed and enclosed to allow visitors to walk through the mound and observe its stratigraphy in profile. Under Dickson's direction, a temple was erected on Mound B and a museum building was built next to [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. The museum exhibited, for the most part, borrowed artifacts from other museums. The 1940 photographs also show an elaborate system of walkways, steps, and signs to guide tourists through the site. Dickson's untimely death during World War II ended the business venture. The project was never reopened and the buildings and other structures deteriorated.

Albrecht's work also sheds light on how the name "White Apple Village" came to be applied to the Mazique site. This was the name of the 1940 tourist attraction and the name by which some county residents refer to the site today. This name has, in fact, been closely associated with the Mazique mounds for almost two centuries. It is now generally agreed, however, among archaeologists and historians, that White Apple, which was one of the historic Natchez Indian villages recorded by the French colonists in the early 1700s, was in the vicinity of the [REDACTED], a mound site with a historic component located approximately [REDACTED] of the Mazique site [REDACTED] [REDACTED].

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[REDACTED]; also see Brown 1985:4-5; 1989:16 for the locations of the historic Natchez villages). Use of the White Apple name for the Mazique site has led to some confusion in the literature and, to avoid future misinterpretations, has not been used as the historic name of the site in this nomination. Albrecht traces the connection between the White Apple name and the Mazique site back to the writings of Colonel Anthony Hutchins, a retired British army officer, prominent settler who came to the Natchez region in 1772 (1944:68). Hutchins (formerly Chief Magistrate under the British) built his home at the Mazique site after reportedly being led to the spot by a descendant of the Natchez tribe (Claiborne 1978:48, 118, 123, 129). It was at this time that Hutchins, possibly acting on the testimony of the Indian, first applied the name "White Apple Village" to the site. Albrecht also states that Hutchins was buried on one of the mounds (1944:68). As mentioned above, unmarked graves are present on Mound B.

In the nineteenth-century this tract was acquired by the prominent African-American Mazique family, adding to their extensive post-Civil War landholdings in [REDACTED].

In the late 1940s, John L. Cotter made a surface collection at the site (now housed in the Louisiana State University Museum) and examined the stratigraphy of Mound A in the exposed walls of the trench opened earlier by Dickson (Ian Brown, personal communication). Members of the Peabody Museum Lower Mississippi Survey also visited the site in the 1970s during their survey of the Natchez Bluffs and made a small surface collection (Ian Brown, personal communication).

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cultures (Neitzel 1983:69-104); Steponaitis, Brain, Brown 1983:139-145). Ceramic analysis at Mazique will be important for determining this site's temporal relationship and degree of interaction with other principal Mississippian mound centers in the [REDACTED] area. Extant Plaquemine mound center sites in [REDACTED] include: Mazique, the Grand Village of the Natchez Indians (Fatherland 22-Ad-501), Anna (22-Ad-500), Emerald (22-Ad-504), and Foster (22-Ad-503). Only the Grand Village and Emerald have undergone major archaeological investigations (Neitzel 1965, 1983; Brain 1972).

Archaeological testing will be necessary to estimate the original size and summit configuration of Mound A, which has been severely eroded on its east side by Second Creek. Based upon the size of the eroded remnant, the original mound may have been two to three times its present volume, ranking it among the larger Mississippian mounds in the [REDACTED] area.

The general alignment of the two Mazique mounds is similar to that found at the Grand Village (Neitzel 1983). However, before comparisons are made between the layout of the Mazique site and the other mound centers mentioned above, the question of a third mound at the site will need to be addressed. As noted in Section 7 of this nomination, three mounds were recorded at the Mazique site in 1844, while only two were evident by 1916 (Brown 1926:35). A later observer, however, reported that the 1940 museum was built on a third mound at the site (Albrecht 1944:68). An extensive site survey and testing program will be necessary to determine whether or not other mounds were present.

The Mazique site could potentially add to our knowledge of Coles Creek and Plaquemine house types. A recent, important study by Brown (1982) has traced the development of house construction from the Coles Creek culture into the Plaquemine culture. To date, however, only two sites in the [REDACTED] have yielded remains of both Coles Creek and Plaquemine structures (Brown 1982: Figure 10). The remains of house structures may survive in the plaza between the mounds and on the mounds themselves. This is supported by the recent discovery of fired daub on the flanks of the mounds.

Finally, only extensive archaeological testing will determine the effect of the 1940 tourist attraction development on the site. Mound A, in particular, suffered serious damage when a large trench was cut through it to allow visitors to walk through the mound. It is possible that the tops of the mounds may have received some

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leveling at this time since an archaeologist who visited them in 1916 recorded them as being conical in shape (Brown 1926:35). Photographs of the site in 1940, just after the tourist development was completed, shows Mound B to be flat-topped with a recently constructed temple on its summit. One report (Albrecht 1944:68) indicates that the museum building was built on a mound, but this remains to be verified.

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