

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

JUN 01 1989

NATIONAL REGISTER

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 Bynum Mound and Village Site  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number \_\_\_\_\_  not for publication  
city, town Houston  vicinity  
state Mississippi code 28 county Chickasaw code 017 zip code 39751

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>	<u>2</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>7</u>	<u>2</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. Paul 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.

Edwin Beards May 26, 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. Knoerr 5/16/89

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Funerary - graves/burial - burial mounds

Domestic - village site

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Landscape - park - national park

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation

walls

roof

other

NA

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Site Type: The Bynum Mound Site consists of a Miller I phase burial mound and village complex

[REDACTED] Bynum Mounds has figured significantly in the formulation of the early Miller sequence of northeastern Mississippi, a local Woodland Period variant.

Environmental Setting: The Bynum Mounds Site is

[REDACTED] The geology consists of sandy loams and marl soils derived from the Cretaceous Ripley formation. Vegetation consists of a mixed oak and hickory forest environment.

[REDACTED]

Previous Archeological Investigations: Bynum Mounds first came to the attention of the archeological community through the archeological survey program for the Natchez Trace Parkway that was inaugurated under Dr. Jesse D. Jennings, in 1940. Bynum, because of its potential for public interpretation, and

[REDACTED] The Park Service later initiated extensive archeological investigations and analysis in 1947-48, under the direction of John L. Cotter and John M. Corbett. Cotter and Corbett's 1951 publication "Archeology of the Bynum Mounds, Mississippi," summed up their excavations in the following manner:

**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

100 BC - AD 200

Significant Dates

Cultural Affiliation

Miller I Phase

Significant Person

NA

Architect/Builder

NA

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

**Summary Statement of Significance:** The cultural material from the Bynum Mound and Village Site was used as the type site in defining the Miller I Phase. The ceramic assemblage of Saltillo Fabric Marked, Baldwin Plain, and Furrs Cordmarked recovered from burial mound and village excavations at Bynum are now recognized as type artifacts for the Miller I Phase (c. 100 BC - AD 200). The presence of exotic items from the Bynum Mounds reveal contact between the Miller I Phase peoples and Middle Woodland (Hopewell) groups from the Ohio Valley and the Marksville groups of the Lower Mississippi River Valley. It is assumed that this trade in exotic burial goods was facilitated by a north-south prehistoric trail system that evolved into the historic Natchez Trace.

Since the report of the excavation of the Bynum Site (1951), little further scientific work on archeological resources in [redacted] area has occurred. In 1988, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History completed a draft Historic Context on the Post-Archaic period for Northeastern Mississippi, [redacted]. The following research questions on refining chronology, understanding settlement patterns, and identifying cultural factors for the end of burial mound building were selected by professional archeologists in the state of Mississippi as important research questions for Miller I Phase sites, like Bynum Mound and Village Site, that still retain intact resources for study.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Cotter, John L. & John M. Corbett

1951 Archeology of the Bynum Mounds, Mississippi. National Park Service, Archeological Research Series Number One. Washington, D.C.

Morgan, David

n.d. The Post-Archaic Prehistory of Northeast Mississippi (Draft). Department of Archives and History. Jackson, Mississippi.

Jenkins, Ned

1979 Miller Hopewell of the Tombigbee Drainage. IN: Hopewell Archeology, The Chillicothe Conference, Edited by David S. Brose and N'omi Greber. The Kent State Universtiy Press. Kent, Ohio.

See continuation sheet

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

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

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

**Specify repository:**

Southeastern Archeological Center, NPS  
Tallahassee, Florida

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 6 acres

**UTM References**

A [REDACTED]  
 Zone Easting Northing

C [REDACTED]

B [REDACTED]  
 Zone Easting Northing

D [REDACTED]

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary of the nominated property [REDACTED]

See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

Subsurface testing and archeological investigations by the National Park Service in 1947 and 1948 have determined the extent of this Woodland burial mound and village site complex. See Figure 1 for for the site boundary. [REDACTED]

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Original form prepared by William Cox (10/1/74) Revised by Mark R. Barnes, Ph.d  
 organization Southeast Regional Office, National Park Svc date March 10, 1989  
 street & number 75 Spring St., SW telephone (404) 331-2638  
 city or town Atlanta state Georgia zip code 30303

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Of the six mounds at the Bynum Site, two (Mounds E and F) had been previously so mutilated [REDACTED] one by cultivation) that they yielded little or no information. One other mound (Mound C) was left untouched so that in later years, if desired, the present excavations could be checked by more refined techniques. The remaining three mounds (Mounds A, B, and D), however, in conjunction with extensive testing and digging in the village area, showed that the Bynum Site was representative of a short period of American Indian life as it developed in the Southeast (1951:1) (see Figure 1).

### Mound Excavations:

Mound A -- At the time of the excavations, Mound A was 55 feet in diameter and 10 feet high. A large cellar hole was located in the southern three-fifths of the mound. However, upon excavation, "it was found that the central burial feature lay undisturbed only 1.5 feet below the cellar floor" (Cotter & Corbett 1951:5-6).

Mound A was built over the earlier remains of a house structure, with attendant sand-tempered ceramics. On top of this village debris, was constructed a log tomb in which one burial with a copper bracelet, and three in situ cremations were interred (Cotter & Corbett 1951:6) (see Figure 3).

Mound B -- At the time of the excavations, Mound B was 80 feet in diameter and 14 feet high. The mound was built over an irregular rimmed oval pit 38 by 30 feet, and 3.8 feet deep. As can be noted on Figure 4, the pit was covered by logs. It is believed that these log remains are the stumps of much longer logs that were intended to cover the pit.

Within the pit, the excavators uncovered sixteen post holes that supported a burial chamber. The log remains noted above would have formed the sides of the burial chamber. One burial and four cremations were interred in the burial chamber. Most of the burials had copper ear spools and ornaments associated with them, in addition to large caches of polished celts and Snyder spear points. It is not clear whether the burial chamber was fired and then covered with earth, or if it deteriorated in place after the chamber was covered by basket loads of earth (Cotter & Corbett 1951:6-9)

Mound C -- This mound was left intact and unexcavated (see Figure 5).

Mound D -- At the time of the excavations, Mound D was 45 feet in diameter, and six feet high. Like Mound B, there was a central burial pit within a log chamber in Mound D. The burial pit showed indications of an in situ cremation. A stone celt and copper bead and ear spool were the only artifacts associated with the burial chamber (Cotter & Corbett 1951:9-11) (see Figure 6).

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Mounds E and F -- These two mounds were so obliterated [REDACTED] farming activity that no internal burial features were located (see Figure 1). One greenstone celt was found in the debris of Mound F. The mounds are assumed to have been approximately 50 feet in diameter each (Cotter & Corbett 1951:11).

Village Area -- The entire village area, and to some extent, all of the mounds at Bynum suffered deflation due to row crop farming prior to acquisition by the Park Service. The authors estimate that "row crop farming has removed from 2 to 3 feet of the topsoil since the close of the nineteenth century" (1951:11).

Although erosion had destroyed much of the village area, excavators still uncovered numerous post hole patterns that outlined six circular dwelling structures (Features 7, 14, 19, 20, 21, and 24) (see Figures 1, 7, & 8). These ranged in size from 35 to 78 feet in diameter (1951:11-12). Typical Woodland period clay/grit tempered ceramics were recovered from these features, such as Furrs Cordmarked, Tishomingo Plain, Tishomingo Cordmarked, Saltillo Fabric Impressed, Marksville Stamped, and Baldwin Plain (1951:12-16).

Twenty-two burials were found within the village area, of which 17 were Woodland in date. These burials, unlike the elaborate high-status burials and cremations in the burial mounds, were placed in a flexed position in a small oval shaped burial pits with no accompanying grave goods (1951:14-16).

The remaining five burials from the village area were historic Chickasaw burials. These burials contained numerous European trade items, such as glass beads, silver and copper ornaments, flintlock weapons, iron tomahawks, pewter spoons, and china plates (1951:15-16).

The general interpretation of Bynum Mounds by the original excavators was a Miller III Phase site (AD 500-1000) that showed affiliation with the Copena culture in northern Alabama and central Tennessee, and Marksville culture in the lower Mississippi River Valley, based on the presence of trade items such as Marksville pottery, Snyder points, and copper and shell ornaments that were interred in the high-status burials in the burials mounds at Bynum. Bynum, therefore, was a localized variant (Miller Phase) of the general Woodland pattern of prehistory in the southeast with connections to Hopewellian and Marksville exotic grave goods that may have been transported to the site over a north-south trail system which eventually became the Natchez Trace (Cotter & Corbett 1951:57).

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Since the publication of Cotter and Corbett's work, in 1951, excavations at Miller Phase sites in northeast Mississippi and northwest Alabama have further refined the interpretation and dating at Bynum Mounds. Ceramic analysis now indicates that all of the Bynum Mound and Village Site structures were constructed during the Miller I Phase. As Jenkins states, "relative dating with the Marksville and Illinois areas indicates the (Bynum) site was occupied sometime between 50 BC and 200 AD" (1979:178).

Site Integrity: The Bynum Site has lost the top two to three feet of cultural deposits due to row cropping in the 19th and 20th centuries, before it was acquired by the National Park Service. The loss of cultural deposits occurred on both the village site and six mounds. Mounds E and F were destroyed and yielded little information. Three mounds (A, B, and D) were totally excavated and Mounds A and B were reconstructed (see Figure 9). Mound C and large portions of the village site contain intact cultural remains for future investigations. The Park Service has interpreted this site along the Natchez Trace Parkway, and covered the bulk of the site in a protective grass cover.

The only noncontributing structures within the area of the Bynum Mound Site  
  
reconstructed Mounds A and B.

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The Miller I Phase is represented by a change in the ceramic tradition of northeast Mississippi [REDACTED], as a whole, from the preceding Gulf Formative Period. But more importantly, it represents the inception of Woodland (Hopewellian) burial mound traditions entering [REDACTED], along with the attendant long range trade in exotic goods (such as copper, shell, lithics, and pottery) that were interred only with the high-status individuals in the burial mounds. The Mississippi State Historic Context for the Miller Phase [REDACTED] indicates that further research into the nature and timing of this interaction between extra-regional groups and the indigenous peoples of northeastern Mississippi is needed. Bynum represents the type site for defining this critical phase and still contains intact village and mound remains that could contribute to a better dating for the beginnings of the Miller I Phase (Morgan n.d.:92).

Adequate dating of the various stages of the Miller I Phase, based to a large extent on the material assemblage from Bynum, requires further clarification. Some authors (Jenkins 1979) have proposed subphases in the dating of the Miller I Phase. The Bynum Site has the potential to resolve these chronological differences because of the intact nature of its cultural assemblage, which could provide radiocarbon dates.

At the same time, while the unusually large structures found in the village area of Bynum have been employed in characterizing house types during the Miller I Phase, it is unclear how activities at such sites differ from those carried out at non-mound sites during this period. This is an issue which can only be resolved through excavation of village sites, using new methodologies and techniques and comparison of the recovered evidence with that from contemporary mound village sites, such as Bynum (Morgan n.d.:92).

Excavations at Bynum and other Miller Phase Woodland sites in northeastern Mississippi and northwestern Alabama have been used to establish relative temporal chronology, predicated largely upon mortuary evidence, particularly burial complexity and frequency of exotic grave goods. An important issue concerning mound sites is the proposed demise of construction and use of mound sites during the latter Miller phases. To date, very few mortuary sites have been excavated to verify the accuracy of this observation. Bynum still has intact mound and village cultural deposits which could assist in this area of research (Morgan n.d.:92-93).