

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 88001138 Date Listed: 7/28/88

Three Sisters Shell Midden (22-Ha-596) \_\_\_\_\_ Mississippi  
Property Name County State

Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

John J. Knorr  
Signature of the Keeper

July 28, 1988  
Date of Action

===== Amended Items in Nomination: =====

Item 8. Significance.

Delete "Woodland" add "50 B.C. - 1000 A.D." under period of significance.

Delete "50 B.C. - 1000 A.D." under significant dates.

Verified by phone with:

Jim Lauro  
Archeologist  
Mississippi Department of Archives and History

**DISTRIBUTION:**

National Register property file

(without nomination attachment)

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

JUN 27 1988

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

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 Three Sisters Shell Midden  
other names/site number 22-Ha-596

2. Location

street & number [redacted]  not for publication  
city, town [redacted]  vicinity  
state [redacted]

3. Classification

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

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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 A. P. Pool June 24, 1988  
Signature of certifying official Date  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Mississippi Department of  
State or Federal agency and bureau Archives and History

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:)

John J. Knorr July 28, 1988  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Village or resource extraction station

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Timberland

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A

walls \_\_\_\_\_

roof \_\_\_\_\_

other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Three Sisters Shell Midden (22-Ha-596) is a small shell midden (oyster and clam) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Located on the last piece of high dry ground in the southerly portion of the State of Mississippi, this shell midden is approximately 75' x 100' in size and extends from the present ground surface to a depth of three feet. A single/meter test pit was dug revealing black midden, shell, faunal remains, some floral remains in an apparently undisturbed context. The site appears to date sometime in the Woodland Period (100 B.C.-1000 A.D.) on the basis of four sand tempered plain body sherds of which two came from the test pit and two from the ground surface. The site is covered on three sides by marshland and a small bayou \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Cedar, myrtle, and several other hardwood varieties of trees along with a thick underbush of palmetto and saw grass cover much of the site and protect it from erosion. The midden is very thickly packed and it was not possible to use a solid core soil auger in an effort to determine the depth of the midden in order to compare stratigraphy with the one meter test pit dug in the eastern side of the site. Several animal burrows (one rather deep) were inspected and both revealed black earth midden and shell in the profiles and backdirt. This indicates there should be no non-site areas within the 7500 square feet area of the site.

No pot holes or other evidence of relic collecting activities were found, quite an unusual situation, as many of Mississippi's coast shell middens have had their integrity compromised significantly by this type of activity. The piece of land upon which the site is located more than likely has never been cultivated, however, it is likely that timber may have been harvested here in the past. This type of activity, especially when done on a small scale as would probably have been the case here, would cause little damage to the archaeological record. No logging roads or other types of access roads are located in the immediate vicinity of the site. Other shell middens in the southern portion of the State of Mississippi have demonstrated favorable preservation of faunal materials (Claiborne Site, Deer Island Site, and the Raymond Bass Site) and it is reasonable to assume that the preservation is good at the Three Sisters Shell Midden. Human burials may be present at this site as the same group of coastal shell middens mentioned above 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

Woodland

Significant Dates

50 B.C.-1000 A.D.

Cultural Affiliation

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.

The Three Sisters Shell Midden (22-Ha-594) is a relatively small, apparently undisturbed Woodland Period shell midden, occupying an area of approximately one-half acre at the tip of a point of land jutting out into the marshland [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The site is covered in a heavy growth of mixed hardwoods and underbrush and is surrounded by marsh, making access to the site particularly difficult. The site appears to be in a good state of preservation considering the absence of disturbances due to relic collecting. Shell middens on and adjacent to the Gulf of Mexico are becoming scarce; many have been destroyed by construction, relic collecting, tidal activities, and hurricanes. This makes the value of the site even more important, and the Three Sisters Shell Midden is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria D. The site is likely to produce valuable information important in the area of prehistoric archaeology. Excavations at the site should be geared to gathering as much information as possible regarding coastal subsistence strategies. Faunal remains have been recovered in the test pit and are most likely to be found throughout the midden in significant quantities. Excavations should utilize screening through graduated mesh in an effort to recover small skeletal elements that might normally fall through a 1/4" screen. The data should be analyzed and attempts made to ascertain the relative importance of the individual elements within the total diet. Little is known about coastal subsistence strategies in Mississippi and questions relative to this area are likely to be answered by scientific excavations at this site. At the Richard Site (22-Hr-636) in Harrison County on Biloxi's Back Bay, a single female burial with grave goods were found at the base of a shell and black earth midden in an apparently Mississippian Period context.

Although the Three Sisters Shell Midden appears to date earlier (Woodland Period) much like the Up the Tree Shell Midden (22-Ha-594), a nearby site of similar make up and configuration, the possibility that burials may be found in or beneath the shell midden must not be ruled

See continuation sheet

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out. If recovered, they would provide data on Woodland Period burial customs in a coastal situation. Further, floral remains are present (several charred acorn shells) although amounts and varieties are uncertain, and apparently in a good state of preservation due to the conditions at this site. If water screening techniques were utilized, additional subsistence data would come to light. This information, in conjunction with faunal remain data, could be utilized to ask questions about settlement patterns regarding seasonality. We would then be in a good position to understand what time(s) of the year the site was utilized.



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revealed aboriginal burials. The presence of several charred acorn shells indicates the likelihood that other floral remains are preserved and present in the midden.