

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received MAR 28 1986
date entered APR 25 1986

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

1. Name

historic Midnight Mound Site (22 Hu 509)

and/or common same as above

2. Location

street & number

not for publication

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. Johnny Hammond

street & number Silver Creek Drive

city, town Midnight N/A vicinity of state Mississippi

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number P. O. Box 547

city, town Belzoni state Mississippi

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1970 private federal state county local

depository for survey records Harvard University

city, town Cambridge state Massachusetts

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Midnight Mound Site (22 Hu 509) [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Midnight Mound Site was originally located and surveyed by Philip Phillips (1970) in his part one Archaeological Survey [REDACTED]. At the time of Phillips (1970) visit to the site there were two mounds, along with village midden and cultural debris present. Since that time, the smaller mound (which Phillips refers to as "smaller and of uncertain form") has been completely plowed away by the intensive agricultural practices characteristically employed [REDACTED]. This includes land leveling and chisel plowing exceeding 32-36" today. At the time of his visit, Mound A, a large rectangular platform mound, 25x30 meters at the base and 3½ meters high was noted to have had a faint suggestion of a ramp [REDACTED]. It is on this portion of the site that the statement of significance is based. This ramp no longer exists, however, the rest of the mound has been preserved fairly well. A thick growth of substantial hardwoods and heavy underbrush help preserve the integrity of the mound by deaccelerating natural erosion and making pot hunting all the more difficult. Relic collectors are chased off the site by local residents.

The village site midden has been completely destroyed by agricultural practices, and at one time may have occupied as much as 7-8 acres. Soil augerings reveal no midden or aboriginally discolored soils in the village area which is today marked by the distribution of surface materials. An area of approximately 10x15 meters in size [REDACTED] probably reveals the location of the smaller mound mentioned by Phillips (1970); here surface materials are more heavily concentrated and some soil discoloration occurs also. Augerings reveal the discoloration is restricted to the first 5-10 cm (plow zone); hence, the integrity of this particular feature has been destroyed.

[REDACTED]

For years natural levees [REDACTED] have been known for the high incidence of aboriginal sites located atop them. [REDACTED] today has been heavily silted in and obstructed by fallen trees and other debris, prior to the twentieth century a considerable flow of water was channeled [REDACTED]. This would have been a rich natural habitat for various waterfowl, fish, and shellfish. The stands of mixed hardwoods that once existed in this area would have been a very favorable habitat for the white tailed deer and other mammals. In terms of relative availability of natural resources (floral and faunal) necessary for dietary reasons, and the relative availability of lithic materials in the creek, the area at the divergence [REDACTED] could be highly favorable for aboriginal occupation.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates see description

Builder/Architect N/A

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Midnight Mound Site (22 Hu 509), a late prehistoric period archaeological manifestation [REDACTED] is composed today of a rectangular platform mound approximately 20x25 meters at the base and approximately three meters high. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] A faint suggestion of a ramp [REDACTED] the mound was present in the middle of the twentieth century but, due to agricultural practices, no longer exists. Also present at that time was the base of a smaller mound located 100 yards northwest of Mound A; it has been completely plowed away, too. Mound A at Midnight dates to what was originally referred to as the Mayersville phase of the Mississippian Period (1200-1400 A.D.) according to Phillips (1970). Since then the name of the phase has been changed to Winterville (Williams and Brain, 1983) to reflect the dramatic and enduring Mississippian influence [REDACTED] at this time. Williams and Brain (1983) refer to the Winterville phase as a mixture of indigenous southern elements (Plaquemine) and northern originating elements (Mississippian), culminating in a cultural florescence in the lower Yazoo drainage. Characteristic of this period was widespread mound buildings; this was a time of concentrated earthwork construction and public works projects. Many mounds were constructed and both their sheer size and number increase dramatically over preceding periods.

At the Lake George Site, excavations have been undertaken at several mounds dating to this period. These mounds also happen to approximate the size and shape of Mound A at Midnight. Excavations at Mound C at Lake George (Williams and Brain, 1983) reveal successive stages of mound construction. Also present were structures atop the mound, and at least one on each of the final two stages of construction was recorded. The structures were burned and covered with a layer of sterile soil and the process of building a new structure was undertaken. The exact nature of these structures is uncertain but it is probable that they were used for some sort of ceremonial function. At Lake George (Williams and Brain, 1983) there is evidence of a possible circular enclosure around the structure. It is also worth noting that the entire mound was situated atop an old, natural levee, which, prior to mound construction, had been the locus of an earlier occupation as evidenced by midden at the base of the mound. A similar situation exists at Midnight where Mound A was constructed atop an old natural levee.

In addition deep augerings reveal darkish midden at the base of Mound A at Midnight much like the situation at Mound A at Lake George. Excavations should be directed at determining the relationship of the basal midden to the mound.

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Continuation sheet Mississippi

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8 - SIGNIFICANCE

Excavations at Midnight should be directed at ascertaining information regarding building construction by the horizontal stripping down of layers of the basket loaded fill (mantles). Attention should be paid to recording postholes and pits inside and outside of the possible structure, and other associated features. I have noticed human bone eroding out of the side of the mound on several different occasions. Burials should be expected and careful attention should be paid to these features. Burials were present in Mound C at Lake George but are considered to be a secondary activity in relation to the construction of the structures atop the various prepared surfaces of the mound. While Lake George has provided us with the best burial information for the entire Lower Mississippi Valley, the site itself is of a completely different order and magnitude in comparison to the small Midnight Site, [REDACTED]. The role of these small mound sites needs to be further explored, especially regarding the function of the possible burned structures while paying attention to any possible burial situations.

9 - MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Williams, S. and J. P. Brain

- 1983 Excavations at the Lake George Site [REDACTED] 1958-1960.
Papers of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University,
Vol. 74, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

