

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received DEC 9 1986

date entered JAN 7 1987

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

1. Name

historic [redacted]

and/or common [redacted]

2. Location

street & number [redacted]

not for publication

city, town [redacted]

state [redacted]

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" 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
	N/A <input 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 type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mrs. Lilly Elizabeth Owen Withers

street & number Route 1, Box 94

city, town Tunica vicinity of state Mississippi

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number P. O. Box 217

city, town Tunica state Mississippi

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 3/16/71 federal state county local

depository for survey records Miss. Dept. of Archives & History

city, town Jackson state Mississippi

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	date _____ N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Phillips, Ford, and Griffin first recorded the Owens Site in 1940 during their Lower Mississippi Valley survey. They described it as consisting of a "village site with large and small mounds" (1951:50). From their survey record and from an additional description in their Table 12 (Small Ceremonial Centers), they added that the largest mound (A) was rectangular, stepped, 150 x 125 feet, 12 feet high at the south end and 10 feet high at the north end, rounded, and plowed over. The plaza, [REDACTED] was ca. 400 feet long. A smaller mound (B) was described as 150 feet in diameter and 3 feet high, with plenty of wattle (daub) and lots of pottery. Presumably this is the knoll where boreholes #4 and #5 were placed as shown in Figure 1. They also mentioned the possibility of two additional small mounds, but do not describe or locate them. Their sketch map is no longer available from the Peabody Museum. One could have been the knoll where boreholes #1 and #2 were placed as shown in Figure 1. Both of these knolls are 3 to 5 feet higher than the ground surface between them and Mound A. The other possible mound could have been the knoll just to the north of boundary corner B in Figure 1, but a recent surface check of that area showed no cultural materials.

Presently, the site appears to have changed little from Phillips, Ford, and Griffin's description. Mound A (Photo #1) is no longer heavily cultivated, but is covered in grass. It is approximately 168 feet north-south by 135 feet east-west at the base, spread slightly since 1940, but remaining nearly the same height of 10 to 12 feet, and basically the same shape. There is a small, somewhat flattened area atop the mound, measuring ca. 30 x 42 feet, which slopes gently to the north. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (Phillips, Ford, and Griffin 1951: Table 12) appears to be somewhat confused, since that area is primarily lower ground and seems to be mostly outside the limit of the site. A distinct plaza area could not be determined under the present conditions of vegetative cover.

In order to test for midden depth, as well as for some indication of the nature of the two knolls to the east of Mound A, a series of 4 boreholes was placed in them, along with one (#3) inbetween. These knolls are distinctly higher than the surrounding ground, [REDACTED], but whether or not they are mound remnants has yet to be determined. Boreholes #1 and #2 (see Figure 1 locations) revealed disturbed midden to a depth of 2 feet, underlain by sterile yellow sandy loam. The same is true of borehole #3, [REDACTED], as well as boreholes #4 and #5. Deep plowing has apparently taken its toll on these higher elevations, although further testing could reveal intact sub-plowzone features in this area.

Phillips, Ford, and Griffin, in their survey record, mention house sites and daub in quantity, but do not describe their locations within the site. One possible house remnant was observed plowed up atop the northern knoll beside borehole #4. It remains undefined as a feature, but consisted of burned dirt dauber nests, a large amount of charred wood, and portions of a small Barton Incised globular jar and a small Bell Plain vessel, probably of the same shape. No feature outlines were visible, but this is assumed to be in some way associated with a burned Mississippian house. Further investigation of this and surface daub concentrations must await the wheat harvest.

(see continuation sheet)

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 A.D. 400-A.D. 1730 **Builder/Architect** American Indian

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Several questions were raised in the preceding description of the Owens Site concerning the validity of phase assignments, the temporal continuity of occupational components, the origin and purpose of Mound A construction, the distribution of Mississippian houses, the position and orientation of a plaza, and the nature of possible sub-plowzone features. The significance of this site lies in its potential for answering these questions. Of the original sherd count of some 3,000 fragments, the vast majority (ca. 77%) were of Baytown origin, with most of the remainder being Mississippian, suggesting that the major occupation, along with the mound, was Baytown. Only testing of the mound could resolve this questionable origin, since most mounds of this type are assigned to a Mississippian component. The minor Marksville and Coles Creek components here are relatively negligible at the present time with respect to sherd counts. The solution to the problems of continuity and internal site definition with regard to the major Baytown and Mississippian components, as well as their inter-site relationships within their supposed phase areas, lies in further sub-surface testing and research in the village area and inter-site comparisons of the results. Plaza location, house distribution, and sub-surface features, when defined, will add significantly not only to resolution of the above problems, but to the overall data base for Baytown-Mississippian settlement and subsistence patterns

Specific dates:

- Coahoma Phase - AD 400 - AD 850
- Helena Phase - 0 - AD 200
- Walnut Bend Phase - AD 800 - AD 1200
- Kent Phase - AD 1250 - AD 1730

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A single borehole was placed [redacted] where there is heavy daub and midden debris scattered on the surface. This test only showed disturbed midden and daub to a depth of 1.5 feet, underlain by sterile brown heavy loam. Another borehole was placed in the top of Mound A to a depth of about 6 feet, revealing only loam, the mound's cultural origin remaining undetermined.

The two knolls tested, as well as the third one [redacted], appear to be for the most part indigenous rises [redacted]

with the knolls up to 5 feet higher (see contours in Figure 1). The soil type found on the site is Bosket sandy loam, described as being found on well-drained old natural levees in this area (Fowlkes, et.al. 1956).

Concerning the temporal position of the site's occupation, Phillips, Ford, and Griffin (1951:340) state that Owens is one of five sites recorded in their survey with rectangular temple mounds, classified as small ceremonial centers, dating in period E-D (Middle Baytown). Such sites, they observed, tend to lie nearer the Mississippi than earlier conical mounds, suggesting development of the rectangular mound trait moving along the central part of the valley at this time (1951:340). Though there are other components at the site, Phillips' 1947 sherd count (Peabody Museum file) showed ca. 77% Baytown types, as opposed to ca. 22% Mississippian shell-tempered types. Of these, a majority (44%) was the type Mulberry Creek Cordmarked. Such percentages prompted Phillips (1970: Figure 445) to include Owens in the Coahoma phase of the Baytown period, defined by Phillips (1970:905) as the "main representative of Baytown culture in the Upper Sunflower region, beginning sometime before the end of the Marksville period and carrying on through the entire Baytown period." According to his distribution map (1970: Figure 445), Owens is on the northern fringe of this phase area. Apparently, Coahoma is the major occupation represented at the site, if sherd counts are an indicator.

Other components listed by Phillips (1970: Figures 444, 446, 447) include the Helena phase of the Marksville period, the Walnut Bend phase of the Coles Creek period, and the Kent phase of the Mississippi period. The validity of all three phases at Owens is questionable. The Helena component was apparently based on two Marksville stamped sherds in the collection, along with its central location among other sites assigned to Helena by Phillips (1970: Figure 444). The Walnut Bend component was based on the presence of Wheeler Check Stamped sherds, which Phillips (1970:914-916) considers the only useful marker type for this phase. Owens is on the southern fringe of this phase area, as well as the southern fringe of the subsequent Kent phase of the Mississippi period. The Mississippian sherd count leaves some question as to whether this should actually be in Kent or the Parchman phase just to the south, or if it is marginally between the two, with influence from both. The question of continuity from the northern fringe of a Baytown period phase to the southern fringe of Coles Creek and Mississippi period phases suggests that much work remains to be done in this area before specific phase assignments can be made at the site.

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Fowlkes, Thomas, C.G.Morgan, J.A.Herren, D.D.Mason, and L.A.Davidson
1956 Soil survey [redacted] Series 1942, No.14.
U.S.D.A., Soil Conservation Service.

Phillips, Philip
1970 Archaeological survey [redacted]
1949-1955. Papers of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and
Ethnology, Harvard University. Vol.60.

Phillips, Philip, James A. Ford, and James B. Griffin
1951 Archaeological survey [redacted]
1940-1947. Papers of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and
Ethnology, Harvard University. Vol. 25.

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Site boundaries, as depicted in Figure 1, were set up during a visit there in March, 1986. Though hampered by a thick growth of winter wheat, this effort revealed in the interspaces between rows what is thought to be a reasonably accurate estimation of surface scatter upon which the site limits are based.

