

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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 Arcola Mounds

other names/site number 22-Ws-516

2. Location

[Redacted location information] [X] not for publication

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- [X] private
[] public-local
[] public-State
[] public-Federal

Category of Property

- [] building(s)
[] district
[X] site
[] structure
[] object

Number of Resources within Property

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, 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 [X] 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 [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. [] See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Mississippi Department of Archives and History State or Federal agency and bureau

Date Nov. 29, 1990

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:

- [X] 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:)

Entered in the National Register

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action 1/3/91

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion - religious structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture - agricultural field

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.

According to the earliest known account of its physical appearance, the Arcola Site consisted of a group of six mounds (Brown 1926:80).

The soil is Bosket very fine, sandy loam nearly level phase. "a soil which is formed from medium-textured alluvium

(Morris 1958:32). Cotton is grown around all three remaining mounds except where Mounds B and C join the railroad and in the case of Mound C, where it lies next to the "borrow pit" and the cemetery. Three of the original mounds no longer exist and parts of Mounds B and C have been removed.

There is little artifactual material found on the site except for that on or around the mounds and this may be related to the fact that the site is a "vacant Ceremonial Center" (Morgan ND:72) and there was little or no permanent habitation there. The ceramics place the site within the Lake George Phase (A.D. 1400-1600) of the Mississippian Period (Williams and Brain 1983:379). As the area surrounding the mounds is cultivated field, the horizontal extent of deposit was determined by observing the surface distributions of artifacts. The deposit is roughly circular and is ca 1000 feet in diameter. A detailed description follows:

Mound A

Mound A is described by Brown as his "Mound B," 27 feet tall, rectangular with steep sides and a gentle slope up the east side. Phillips, Ford and Griffin (1951:326,327) show a map with respective mound elevations in feet, and on the following page give a list of descriptive elements as follows: plaza length 250', oriented E-S; Mound A height 43', square with ramp. Phillips (1970:461) gives the Mound A dimension as 70 x 60 meters at base, 27 x 22 meters at summit and 13 meters high with remains of a ramp clearly visible in the east side. These dimensions are essentially the same today although there may have been some erosion depletion of the summit.

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The ramp is still quite prominent [redacted] but is very eroded, [redacted] due to its recent use by 3-wheelers as access to the top. There is also a 3-wheeler track down the steep west side, but erosion appears to be less of a problem there. [redacted] the summit is badly eroded with gullies washing out there. There are two large, old potholes on the flat top of the mound. Also, there are three U.S.C.G.S. triangulation markers on top, one in the center labelled Arcola 1959, and two others at the northwest corner, both with arrows pointing to the central marker.

According to Mr. John Aldridge, one of the owners, about ten years ago the northwest corner of the mound sloughed off and dirt was pushed back up with a bulldozer to try to preserve the shape of the mound. Mr. Aldridge also stated that posts were erected on the mounds during the 1927 floods for the purpose of chaining mules to keep them from sliding down the steep sides into the water.

Mound A is presently grown up in mulberry, hackberry, and chinaberry and pecan trees with a variety of underbrush and vines.

Mound B

Mound B was described by Brown (1926:81) as 14 feet high, rectangular, following the cardinal directions, and having modern-day burials upon it. Phillips, Ford, and Griffin described it as 15 feet high and square (19:327). Phillips (1970:461) states that it is 5 meters high and 40 by 45 meters at the base, [redacted]

[redacted] It is essentially unchanged from the previous description, with the addition of at least three large potholes on top, one of which is currently being used as a pit to drive 3-wheelers through. These vehicles have been run up and down the north and south sides as well, causing some erosion that if not checked soon will create gullies and extensive damage. The mound is grown up in elm, hackberry, pecan trees, as well as underbrush and vines. 3-wheeler tracks have kept portions of it clear so that one can easily walk up the two ends and across the top, which is flat except where potholes are located.

The owners say there are black graves on this mound, also referred to by Calvin Brown. Mules were kept there during the 1927 flood, so like Mound A, there may be postmolds on top where the mules were tethered. This should be kept in mind if excavations are ever done on top.

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There is a turnrow around the mound, with cotton planted [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Other than the above mentioned disturbances, the mound appears to be in very good condition and well worth preservation.

Mound C

Mound C was described by Brown (1929:81) as rectangular, 12 feet high, [REDACTED] Phillips, Ford, and Griffin (1951:327) refer to it as 16 feet high and square. Phillips (1970:461) states that it is exactly the same size as Mound B, but slightly lower, and had been damaged by a cut on the south side. It should be noted that on the Phillips, Ford, and Griffin map (1951:326), Mound C is shown as 15 feet high and Mound B as 16 feet high, just the reverse of their statement in the listing on page 327. Perhaps their designation of B and C are not the same as those given later by Phillips (1970:461). The mounds are not given such designations on the P., F., and G. map, but are shown as such on the Phillips map.

According to the landowners, the south end of Mound C was cut away to get clay for making bricks, probably in the 1890s or soon after 1900, by their father who used the bricks to construct the first brick store in Washington County. The store is supposed to have burned in 1932. Mound C is still essentially as it was described above. The landowners say there are black graves on top of this mound and that mules were also kept there during the 1927 flood, probably leaving post molds as mentioned for the other mounds. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Phillips (1970:461) speculates these may have been borrow pits for mound construction, but the survey party could not find the smaller one to the north. [REDACTED]

Mound D

Mound D was described by Brown (1926:81) as small and somewhat to the southeast of Mound C. Phillips, Ford and Griffin's map (1951:326) shows it as being 5 feet high but no description is given. Phillips (1970:461) gives its dimension as 17 meters in diameter and 1.5 meters high, and "possibly rectangular." Presently this mound is merely a slight rise in the field and is no longer definable as a mound.

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Borehole #1 was placed about [REDACTED] in the vicinity of where Mound D should have been. The boring turned up nothing but yellowish, sandy loam, all sterile, from the surface to a depth of 1.5 meters. This suggests no subsurface features in this location, but further testing would be necessary to confirm this for the entire area covered by the mound.

Mound E

Mound E was described by Brown (1926:81) as a conical mound, in cultivation, 5 feet high, with daub, potsherds, and other artifacts in more abundance there than around the other mounds. Phillips, Ford and Griffin (1951:326) do not describe it, but show it as 3 feet high on their map. Phillips (1970:461,463) states it had been flattened to a height of less than 1 meter by cultivation, and that an abundance of daub there indicated that it was probably a rectangular house mound.

At present this mound, like Mound D, is only a slight rise in the field, no longer definable as a mound. Collecting conditions are not favorable currently, so the abundance of daub etc. could not be confirmed. Borehole #3, however, was placed in what should be the approximate location of the mound with the following results: plowzone and to 50 cm, a sterile clay layer. Below 90 cm sterile yellow, sand loam. There is an indication here then, that some sub-plowzone features still exist. This area, like Mound D is planted in a cotton field.

Mound F

Mound F was described by Brown (1926:81) as conical, in cultivation, no doubt much spread and 3 feet high. Phillips, Ford, and Griffin's map (1951:326) shows it as 3 feet high also. Phillips (1970:483) says the same of it as Mound E, flattened and spread by cultivation to a height of less than 1 meter. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Mound F at present is no more than a slight elevation in the field, like the previous two mounds described above. It is also planted in cotton with poor collecting conditions. There are a few small sherds which according to the landowner is characteristic of the area when the vegetative covering is gone. They indicate that the field has been cultivated since the 1840s or 1850s.

Borehole #2 was placed [REDACTED] where Mound F should have been on what appeared to be the highest spot in the vicinity. The following strata

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were observed. From surface to 80 cm was yellow sandy, loam including plowzone. Between 80 and 90 cm was charcoal, dark soil, and a shell tempered sherd. From 90 to 100 cm was a heavy ash and charcoal layer. From 100 to 130 cm was a diminished amount of ash and charcoal. At 130 cm was a Mississippi plain sherd. Below 140 cm was sterile, yellow, sandy loam. According to the landowners, this area has been subsoiled for a number of years, so there may be disturbance to a depth of approximately 60 cm.

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. 1400 - 1600

Significant Dates

Cultural Affiliation

Lake George Phase

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 Arcola Site 22-Ws-516 has yielded and is capable of yielding additional information important to the prehistory [redacted] of Western Mississippi and is thus eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion D.

It is a single component site of the Lake George Phase of the Mississippi Period (Williams and Brain 1983:379). It had been considered one of three single component sites of the Deer Creek Phase by Phillips (1970:456) but in the opinion of Williams and Brain, the Deer Creek Phase, based on considerable additional data, was considered insufficiently different from the Lake George phase to warrant a distinction (Williams and Brain 1983:379).

Arcola is characterized by Phillips, Ford and Griffin as a large Ceremonial Center (1951:327). Ceremonial Centers [redacted] were vacant Ceremonial Centers. That is to say that they were primarily non-residential with perhaps a small caretaker population (Morgan ND:72). Although these centers are assumed to have had a religious function, nothing is known of the specifics of the ceremony or ideology (ibid). While there is a widely dispersed if numerically weak distribution of "Southern Cult" material over [redacted] this phenomenon is thought never to have gained wide acceptance in the area (Williams and Brain 1983:417). The reported discovery of a copper eagle in the large mound (Mound A) (personal communications John Aldridge to John Connaway 1987), however, may indicate a late visit to the site by individuals who were involved with the cult. Trade beads were also said to be in association. Unfortunately, the current location of these artifacts is unknown. This material would probably be intrusive and may represent an isolated visit after the primary occupation of the site. It is, however; of interest to note the occurrence of Southern Cult Artifacts in the summit of Mound A, the large mound at the Lake George Site (post A.D. 1420) (Williams and Brain 1983:419) and in Mound K at Winterville (post A.D. 1410) (Williams and Brain 1983: 418,345,346).

See continuation sheet

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There is the possibility that careful excavation at the Arcola Site could reveal added Southern Cult information.

Outside of Winterville (22-Ws-500) and Lake George (22-Yz-557), the two largest Ceremonial Centers, the evidence for phase affiliation is almost totally ceramic. Excavations at Lake George Phase sites as Arcola are needed to ascertain the degree of similarity within the Lake George Phase in its non ceramic aspects (Morgan ND:72). C-14 dates for the phase are also confined to five dates all from these two sites (Williams and Brain 1983:345). The preserved contexts within and beneath the Arcola mounds probably contain datable organic material in good context.

In summary, the site is one of major significance to the area in terms of its potential for adding to our knowledge of the Mississippian Culture.

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

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

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property _____

UTM References

A _____
Zone Easting Northing

B _____
Zone Easting Northing
D _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary _____

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title John Connaway, Sam McGahey, David Morgan, Archaeologists
organization MS Department of Archives and History date _____
street & number 618 East Pearl telephone (601) 359-6940
city or town Jackson state Ms zip code 39201

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