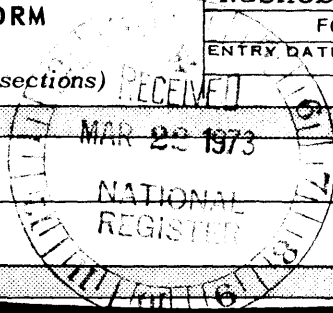


**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:
Mississippi
COUNTY:
Neshoba
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

MAY 7 1973



1. NAME

COMMON:
Nanah Waiya Cave Mound
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: [REDACTED]
CITY OR TOWN: [REDACTED] CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: [REDACTED]
STATE: [REDACTED] CODE: [REDACTED] COUNTY: [REDACTED] CODE: [REDACTED]

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Mississippi Park Commission
STREET AND NUMBER:
Robert E. Lee Building
CITY OR TOWN: Jackson STATE: Mississippi CODE: 39201 28

STATE: Mississippi

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Neshoba County Court House
STREET AND NUMBER:
CITY OR TOWN: Philadelphia STATE: Mississippi CODE: 39350 28

COUNTY: Neshoba

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Works Progress Administration, Parkway and Recreational Study for Mississippi
DATE OF SURVEY: 1940 Federal State County Local
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Mississippi Department of Archives and History
STREET AND NUMBER:
Post Office Box 571
CITY OR TOWN: Jackson, STATE: Mississippi CODE: 39205 28

ENTRY NUMBER: 1
DATE: [REDACTED]
FOR NPS USE ONLY

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

No detailed early accounts of the physical appearance of Nanih Waiya Cave Mound are known to exist. The migration legend recorded by Gideon Linsecum states that the Choctaws' journey ended near a sloping hill with a hole in its side overlooking a stream. Linsecum probably heard this account sometime before leaving Mississippi in 1848. No mention is made in this legend of the dimensions of the hill or the nature of the hole in its side. The genesis legend recorded by Halbert, which may have originally referred to the Cave Mound, suggests the possibility of an underground water-filled cavern. The Indians were said to have emerged from the mound and sunned themselves dry.

Evidently there have been numerous amateur investigations of the site over the years. Fabian W. Fraser of Noxapater, Mississippi, stated in correspondence with the Department of Archives and History in 1935, that according to local residents there had been many treasure seekers and many excavations there during the previous sixty years. Fraser also recorded that one such excavation had revealed a cave which was explored for a distance of one hundred forty feet before the spelunkers were driven out by gas.

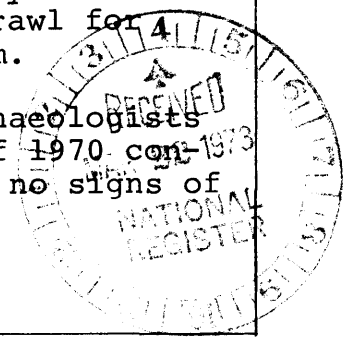
Fraser studied the site in 1935 himself, reporting a water level entrance around thirty inches in diameter, which he penetrated for a short distance apparently being able to stand after a few feet. Local people told Fraser there was formerly a ladder on the site which visitors used to climb and peer into a so-called second floor. The "second floor" entrance was a hole approximately seventeen inches in diameter which played out at a distance of about six feet.

Mr. Fraser, who suspected the mound to be a natural formation, consulted Dr. E. H. Dunn of the Mississippi State College Geology Department. His suspicions were confirmed by Dr. Dunn who also determined the caves to be of natural origin in spite of their having a hewn appearance.

A newspaper account in 1958 revealed that Fraser was again exploring the mound assisted by the local Boy Scout troop. Part of the hill was removed by a bulldozer and another cave revealed. This cavern was explored until the party was run out by gas. This time the explorers were forced to crawl for over eighty feet until they came into a large room.

Investigations by a team of geologists and archaeologists from Mississippi State University in the summer of 1970 confirmed the site to be wholly natural and revealed no signs of prehistoric activities.

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7.

The mound is wooded at present and its dimensions are approximately thirty-five feet high by two hundred fifty yards in length and one hundred fifty yards in width.

B. SIGNIFICANCE

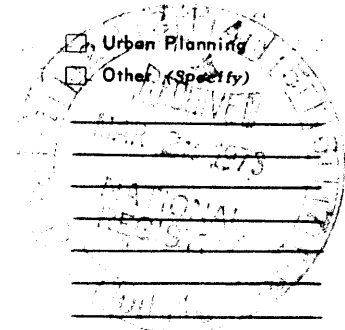
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Nanih Waiya Cave Mound is considered by many present-day Mississippi Choctaws to be the "Mother Mound" mentioned in their ancient legends.

There are basically two versions of the way in which the Choctaw originally appeared in Mississippi. According to one legend, the people came from the ground beneath a hill in east-central Mississippi. The other legend tells of their migration from a land somewhere west of the Mississippi River.

Both legends mention a sloping hill or mound, usually with a cave or a hole in it. There has been conflicting opinion for many years as to which is the correct site. The two contenders are Nanih Waiya Cave Mound, a natural geological formation, and the Nanih Waiya Mound, a large archaeological site (Nanih Waiya Mound and the associated village site are being submitted as a separate nomination.)

The earliest recorded mention of Choctaw origin was made by Du Pratz, an 18th century French historian-geographer, in 1758, and it seems to refer to both legends, although it did not describe or locate the site:

According to the tradition of the natives this nation passed so rapidly from one land to another and arrived so suddenly in the country which it occupies that when I asked them from whence the Chat-kas came, to express the suddenness of their appearance they replied that they had come out from under the earth.

The next mention of origins was made by Bernard Romans, an English surveyor and botanist, in 1771. According to Romans, the Choctaws spoke of their origin as being from a hole in the ground. Again, there is no location or description of the site. James Adair, an English trader, in the third reference to Choctaw origins also seems to refer to a subterranean genesis:

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When I arrived at the thick settlement of these lower towns, I began to imagine that they had opened a communication with their subterranean brethren of Nanne Yah.

Apparently, Adair's statement is the first time the site is named in print. He also described the site he referred to as "Nanne Yah," and it is undoubtedly the archaeological site and not the cave mound.

Apparently the first written suggestion that Nanih Waiya Cave Mound could be the site referred to in the genesis legend was that made by Willa Bolton, geography professor, State Teachers College of Mississippi, in 1925 when she suggested that it could be the site described in both legends. The next recorded connection would appear to have been in 1935 when Fabian W. Fraser of Noxapater, Mississippi, corresponded with Dunbar Rowland, director of the Department of Archives and History, and Moreau Chambers, field archaeologist with the same organization. Mr. Fraser contended that the cave mound was the site of the legendary Choctaw genesis and deplored the fact that most of what had been printed concerning Nanih Waiya failed to make a distinction between the two sites and mistakenly identified the legendary site as being the archaeological site.

An early mention of the Cave Mound's association with the migration legend was made by Dr. Gideon Lincecum who lived in Mississippi from as early as 1818 until 1848. He gives the usual version of the migration legend in which the Choctaw were guided to the vicinity of Nanih Waiya by a sacred pole which was stuck in the ground every night. In the mornings the direction of travel for the day was determined by the direction in which the pole was leaning. According to the Lincecum account, the pole remained erect one morning thus signaling an end to the migration. The camp that night had been near a hill overlooking a stream; the hill had a hole in its side and since it sloped, the Indians called it "Nanih Waiya or sloping hill." The Lincecum account goes on to add that at a later date mounds were built nearby with an enclosing circular embankment (the Nanih Waiya archaeological site).

There also appears to be a reference to the Cave Mound by Simpson Tubby, a Choctaw who was interviewed by Swanton. Tubby stated that the first national assembly was held at the "Blue Hole Cave," and that thereafter the assemblies were held at the archaeological site.

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It seems that at least one account which mentions the archaeological site and its associated earthen wall, is confused and possibly originally referred to the Cave Mound. H. S. Halbert relates an account of the Indians emerging from the ground under the mound and sunning themselves dry on the earthen embankment before proceeding any further. The Cave Mound with its water-filled cavern is obviously a much more likely spot to inspire such a legend.

It seems certain that the question of which is the correct site will never be settled. It is equally apparent that both sites have a significant place in Choctaw history and that steps should be taken for their protection and preservation.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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 1775. The History of the American Indians. pp. 355, 378,
 London: Edward and Charles Dilly.

Bolton, Willa.
 1925. Our State, a Geographical Reader of Mississippi.
 Richmond, Virginia.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "				
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: [REDACTED]

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
 Samuel O. McGahey, Archaeologist

ORGANIZATION: Mississippi Department of Archives and History DATE: 3-16-73

STREET AND NUMBER:
 Post Office Box 571

CITY OR TOWN: Jackson STATE: Mississippi 39205 CODE: 28

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: R. A. McLemore
 R. A. McLemore

Title: Director, Miss. Dept. of Archives and History

Date: March 16, 1973

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Robert W. Utley
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 5/7/73

ATTEST: [Signature]
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: 4 26 73

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9.

Commercial Appeal, July 13, 1958.

Halbert, H. S.

1901. "The Choctaw creation legend." Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. 4, p. 268, Oxford, Mississippi.

Lincecum, Gideon.

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Riley, Franklin L., Compiler

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Swanton, John R.

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