

ARCHEOLOGY OF THE
BYNUM MOUNDS
MISSISSIPPI



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With additions by

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average post mold depth from old plow line 1.33 feet (maximum 1.7 feet, minimum 0.3 foot), average mold diameter 0.65 foot.

Circle B, circular, 61-foot diameter, encroaching on circle C, average post mold depth from old plow line 1.80 feet (maximum 4.1 feet, minimum 0.5 foot), average mold diameter 0.87 foot.

Circle C, 60-foot diameter, average post mold depth from plow line 1.54 feet (maximum 2.1 feet, minimum 0.5 foot), average mold diameter 0.66 foot.

Of several refuse pits within or encroaching upon these three patterns it was impossible to be sure which were associated with any of the three circles or with the superimposed historic Chickasaw occupation. However, it may be assumed in one case, that of the large rectangular pit within pattern A, labeled feature 26, that this shallow refuse basin was probably associated with historic burial 25, the child accompanied by over 1,300 glass beads and other grave goods.

None of the post molds of patterns A, B, or C intruded upon the historic burials. On the other hand, post molds presumably associated with these patterns were disturbed by the superimposition of burials 17, 21, 22, 25 and two pits, features 25 and 26.

As in the case of features 7, 14, and 19, the post molds of circles A, B, and C were perpendicular and single, the entrances not clearly indicated.

Analysis of the contents of the three circle patterns revealed no significant difference between the circles in cultural evidence. Taken together, the sherds show a predominance of sand-tempered wares in the post molds, where only one Tishomingo plain was recorded.

The historic burials superimposed upon the feature 24 area are treated under burials 17, 21, 22, 25, and feature 26.

FEATURE 25. Situated between circles B and C of feature 24 (fig. 4), this eccentrically shaped pit, 1-foot interior depth, top even with plow line, offered no concrete evidence as to its association with either prehistoric or historic occupation in the post mold pattern and grave area. No reason is evident for the irregular outline similar to feature 25 in the southeast sector of circles B and C of feature 24. The contents of feature 25 pit consisted chiefly of small mammal and bird bones, tortoise plastrons, some traces of burned reed, and sherds.

FEATURE 26, a rectangular pit, 10 by 7 feet, 1-foot interior depth, top cut by plow line, was located within the circle A pattern of feature 24. Primarily a fire or refuse basin, this pit contained at the northeast end a deposit of terrapin carapace and plastron fragments, a deer jaw, and miscellaneous detritus including sherds evenly divided between clay-grit and sand temper. At the opposite end of the pit on the pit floor was deposited burial 25, the historic Chickasaw child with quantities of trade beads, cup, spoon, etc. Probably this pit was historic and contained refuse from early and late village occupancy.

FEATURE 27, a subrectangular fire pit, measuring 5 by 3 feet and with 0.06 foot interior depth below the intrusive plow line, was located at N. 2075, E. 1686, unassociated with any other features or burials. This feature had two interesting aspects, a series of parallel burned logs partly intact and a paucity of artifact material, totaling nine sherds all sand-tempered. It is probable that

this pit is representative of the early occupancy of the village since sherd analysis places it in the sand-tempered, fabric-marked horizon. (See analysis, p. 28.)

FEATURE 28. Located at N. 2041, E. 1495, this feature was a small round refuse pit, diameter 2 feet, depth 2 feet, containing only sherds, several from a single pot and a few chert chips. The sherds are exclusively sand-tempered, plain or fabric-marked; hence, the pit is associated with the early occupation of the site. (See analysis, p. 28.) No other features or burials were associated.

FEATURE 29. This irregular 10- by 4-foot oblong refuse pit at N. 2180, E. 1605, graduated in depth from 4.7 feet below the plow line at the west end to 0.5 foot below plow line at the east end. The shape of this pit suggests the deep molds of mound B, feature 8 pit bottom.

Although the pit could not be associated with a post mold pattern, it is possible that a single large post was set up in the deep excavation at the west end of the pit. No bark impression traces were noted, however, and the general content of the pit suggested general village soil fill with a few bits of charcoal and sherd refuse intermingled. Of the sherds the predominant type is Baldwin Plain, with Furrs Cordmarked second. The topmost level shows Tishomingo Plain and Tishomingo Cordmarked. Probably the pit was constructed and used during the Furrs Cordmarked period, possibly extending into the clay-grit Tishomingo period.

FEATURE 30 was a 5- by 3-foot refuse pit located at N. 2155, E. 1547, 0.9 foot deep below plow line, with no suggested stratigraphy. The contents were mainly sherds, both Furrs and Tishomingo Cordmarked, including a small portion of a single pot.

FEATURE 33. While not directly connected with mound B, this circular 7 foot diameter refuse pit lay only 10 feet southwest of the mound periphery from the present sod line to 1.2 feet below. Many sherds were found in the pit fill, the predominant types being sand-tempered Baldwin Plain and Fabric Impressed. Tishomingo Plain is in the minority with Houlika Gray.

The presence of lumps of pottery clay may indicate pot firing was done here, although the pit sides were not fire-marked.

FEATURE 37. This pit, 25 feet northwest of mound A, was 11 by 6 feet, 3.5 feet interior depth below sod line, with vertical sides and flat bottom. No artifacts other than a few shreds were noted in the fill, which was mainly village soil with bits of charcoal intermingled.

Burials. Burial 8 was located at N. 2158, E. 1556, in an area of scattered post molds, lying directly in the plow line and destroyed except for a fragment of the skull from which the vault was missing. The fragments indicate an adult. Although a pit is not defined, it may be assumed that the burial once occupied an oval pit typical of the village site and was probably flexed.

BURIAL 11, situated at N. 2064, E. 1431, was one of a loose cluster including five other burials, Nos. 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16, all located east of feature 14 and north of feature 19 post mold circles and characterized by oval pits, flexed position with heads to the east with the exception of No. 16. Burial 11 was subadult, female, flexed, on left side, disturbed by the plow in a shallow pit. The right half of the cranial vault had been sheared away.

No inclusive grave goods were noted. All remaining bones were badly decayed.

BURIALS 12, 13, AND 14. All of these burials were associated in proximity and in almost identical aspects. Each was tightly flexed in a shallow oval pit disrupted by the plow line; the bones of each, fragmentary and greatly decayed, were apparently adult and small, head to the east. No artifacts were associated with the burials.

BURIAL 15, at N. 2049, E. 1426, like its neighbors described above, was extremely fragmentary and decayed, only enough of the outline being preserved to indicate a small individual tightly flexed in an oval pit, with head to the east. The tooth caps, scattered by the plow, were recognized as milk teeth.

BURIAL 16 was a flexed, young adult male in an oval pit. The body lay on its right side but with head to the northwest, contrary to the evident custom of head to east. The pit, at N. 2075, E. 1417, lay only 2 feet east of feature 23. This burial was less disturbed by the plow than the preceding five and was removed en bloc in a cast. No inclusive grave goods were noted. Sherds, probably accidentally included, indicated this burial was of the clay-grit period.

BURIAL 17 was an historic Chickasaw child burial intrusive upon the top 0.5 foot of circle C post molds of feature 24, 1 foot below the surface. Although the grave was not completely observable, indications were that it had been rectangular. The head lay toward the east. The bone fragments were extremely decomposed. Numerous trade beads lay in the head and chest area in association with a ferrous metal cup and a silver spoon. Flakes of bright red paint were located in the facial area.

Arthur Woodward, curator, Los Angeles County Museum, has made the following comments on this burial.

This would seem to be sometime in the 1820's-1830's, possibly middle 1830's, judging by the spoon and the beads. Exact date is impossible. The spoon doesn't correspond to any known type because of the peculiar fluting or ridging on the handle. The bowl is typically nineteenth century, however. The beads are of the common varieties of the period ranging on into the 1860's for some of them. The small, dark red faceted bead is the one which I believe was sold by the traders during the first three decades at least as "mock garnet." The other faceted beads are of the cut type of the first half of the nineteenth century. At an earlier period, early eighteenth and seventeenth centuries, the faceted beads were molded, and later, in the early twentieth they were machine molded or pressed.

BURIAL 18. This was the most spectacular of the historic Chickasaw burials (pl. 12, fig. 2), a middle-aged male buried lightly flexed on the right side, head east, in a 4 by 2-foot rectangular grave immediately below the old plow line at N. 2213, E. 1153, the west border of the site. Burial 19 lay 7 feet to the north. The skeleton was normal and incomplete only in that the right hand was missing from the wrist down.

Undoubtedly this individual was a man of prominence. He was adorned with a crown of silver alloy on his head, the salts of which had preserved bits of cloth beneath the metal at the back of the head (pl. 6, fig. 2). To the right of the head 0.3 foot away lay a ferrous metal tomahawk pipe (pl. 14, fig. 16). A sawed-off rifle barrel lay along the left forearm, and the lock mechanism and some knife parts (pl. 14, figs. 11, 13, and 14)

lay along the right forearm. Earrings and pendants attached lay at the sides of the head (pl. 14, figs. 2, 3, 4, and 5). A shell gorget showing no design lay on the neck at the chin and was partly overlaid by a "tincup" of conventional thin sheet iron (pl. 6, figs. 1 and 4). A few beads and a brooch (pl. 6, fig. 7; pl. 14, fig. 7) lay on the neck. Scattered in the thoracic area were a flint for the rifle, a fragment of an iron key, an unfired lead ball, a flattened lead ball, a small thin piece of copper, parts of a three-sided file or rasp, and a "medicine bundle" consisting of a cluster of one small ground sliver of soapstone, one smooth slate honing stone, one small undefinable iron fragment, and one small steel spring.

No definite pattern was observable in the post molds scattered about the grave nor did the grave seem to intrude on the molds.

The comments of Arthur Woodward follow:

The silver crown was a common head ornament used by the southern Indians during the 1820's-1830's. The shell gorget is probably of conch shell from the Bahamas and was probably made at Pascack, N. J., in the Campbell Bros. wampum factory . . . The silver "buckle" is in reality a silver double heart (crowned) brooch. This is a northern form and is more commonly found among the Iroquois and the Delaware although at this period, 1820's-1830's, it seems to have reached south occasionally and even into the Osage country. It is sometimes termed the Luckenbooth brooch. It is an Old World symbol and represents the Fifth Wound of Christ. This particular brooch has been broken and then rather crudely mended. There may have been a silversmith's mark on the upper portion which was broken off. Robert Cruickshank of Montreal made a great number of these brooches (1774-1808).

The portion of a "key" or "corkscrew" is in all likelihood part of the screw of a cock of a flintlock pistol which may well have been of French or Spanish origin, late eighteenth or nineteenth centuries.

The black gunflint came from the Brandon quarries in England. It was used in a common trade musket . . .

The tomahawk pipe . . . fits into the period with the other items.

BURIAL 19, a young female adult, lay 1.6 feet below the plow line in a rectangular grave at N. 2222, E. 1158, flanked by burial 18, 7 feet to the south, and burial 20, 2 feet to the north. The position of the body was unique at Bynum, having been placed on the back, lightly flexed in a rectangular 3.5- by 1.7-foot area, with the knees drawn up to where they touched the plow line. The head was toward the east.

The only artifact association was a small strand of glass trade beads around the neck, stated by Woodward to be of a type common for the period 1820-40.

BURIAL 20, the northernmost burial in the series of burials 18, 19, and 20, lay at N. 2225, E. 1158, partly exposed to the plow line and poorly preserved, head to east. The total depth of the existing rectangular 3.7- by 1.9-foot grave was only 0.5 foot below the plow line. As typed by Dr. Newman, this was the burial of a middle-aged female. Flexing was light, with the body lying on the right side. A silver spoon and iron cup were located in the upper chest area and a small strand of glass beads lay at the neck in a manner similar to burial 19 beads. No other artifacts were associated.

BURIAL 21 was a historic Chickasaw grave at N. 1858, E. 1585, intrusive on circle C of feature 24 post molds, rectangular, 4.5 by 3 feet, lightly flexed, a middle-aged adult, probably female, head

east, extending through the plow line only 0.1 foot and badly disturbed. The grave was slightly intrusive on the tops of circle C post molds of feature 24. No post molds intruded on the grave. Glass beads in great numbers lay in the presumed chest area with two copper bells and an iron nail.

Woodward states:

Beads of this burial seem a trifle earlier, say in the late eighteenth century. The bronze bells might also tally with this period, although these bells are found all during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

BURIAL 22, located at N. 1845, E. 1592, was an historic Chickasaw burial in a rectangular 3.4- by 1.8-foot grave only 0.1 foot below the intrusive plow line, but less disturbed than burial 21 due to extreme flattening. The grave intruded upon some circle A post molds of feature 24. The skull, however, was badly damaged. The bones possibly represented a male adult lying lightly flexed on the right side, head east (pl. 12, fig. 1).

Artifacts associated with the burial were undamaged and comprised a silver crescent on the chest (pl. 14, fig. 19), cloth traces intact beneath the crescent, glass beads about the neck, and copper earrings, described by Woodward as follows:

The silver gorget is not an official issue; hence it was in all likelihood obtained as a trade item, or possibly as an annuity gift. It has no decoration on it that smacks of the work of Cruickshank but, again, no mark; hence I cannot say definitely. The period is around the 1820's.

BURIAL 23. A superficial oval pit burial at N. 2091, E. 1703, unassociated with any feature in the village site, the flexed skeleton lay from the plow line to 0.4 foot below with the left side of the cranial vault destroyed by the plow. The bones indicate a male adult, lying with head to the northeast. Inclusions of fresh-water modern pelecypod and gastropod shells show no use as ornaments or evidence that they were intentionally placed in the grave (pl. 12, fig. 4).

BURIALS 24 AND 26. These two burials lay in a refuse pit 5 feet in diameter and extending from the plow line to 0.6 foot below at N. 2125, E. 1702. Burial 24 was a tightly flexed flesh or possibly a bundle burial lying on the right side disturbed by the plow and distorted possibly by disturbance in aboriginal days. All long bones were broken repeatedly and portions were crushed, possibly by the weight of farm machinery. The skull vault was cut in half by the plow but the tooth caps indicated an adult.

No evidence suggested deliberate inclusion of shells as grave goods, although clusters of gastropod fresh-water shells were observed on both burials as well as in the rest of the refuse fill. Some pelecypod shells were also included. Only one was worked, although most of the gastropod shells were broken at the top of the whorl so that they could have been strung. The bead, the only shell ornament recovered from the prehistoric horizon, is of the species *Pluerocera oborata* and was brought into the Bynum area from Kentucky, Tennessee, or northern Alabama.

BURIAL 26 was a child in the same refuse pit lying tightly flexed

in an almost upright position with the vault sheared in half by the plow at the pit rim. This body was likewise badly broken and could either have been disturbed in aboriginal days or placed as a bundle burial, or both. These burials were late according to sherd analysis (p. 29).

BURIAL 25 was superimposed upon the common center of the three post mold patterns of feature 24 at N. 1836, E. 1585. It was a Chickasaw child burial in the southeast end of the shallow rectangular basin of feature 26 which intruded upon several post molds.

Although the skeletal portions of burial 25 were decayed beyond recovery, the tooth caps identifying the child and the wealth of artifacts adorning the body were intact. The position of the head was to the southeast. A 22-foot strand consisting of 1,300 glass beads lay on the chest with a china cup and pewter spoon at the chin. Five copper bells, a snuffbox, and two copper earrings and a lead button, marked "A. Matthews," made up the grave inclusions certain to have been deliberate. A flaked arrow point, a lead ball, and some fresh-water shells may have been in the fill of feature 26, lying over the burial.

Woodward comments on the historic grave goods:

The lead button by A. Matthews is probably English manufacture around the 1820's or 1830's. . . . The small porcelain bowl is also of the 1830's. It is probably of English manufacture.

The beads are lumped with the other beads of the Chickasaw burials at Bynum as being common types for the 1820's through 1830's.

BURIAL 27 was an adult in an oval pit at N. 2204, E. 1590, sex indeterminate, tightly flexed, on the right side, and unaccompanied by grave goods. The burial, being 1.0 foot below the plow line, was undisturbed and in fair condition. In the pit fill were noted sherds of Baldwin plain, Furrs, and Tishomingo cordmarked, with the last-named type dominant.

BURIALS 28 AND 29 were two cremations lying 8 feet from each other and between 25 and 30 feet northwest of the periphery of mound B at N. 1842, E. 1687. Whether or not these cremations should be associated with the village site or with the cremations of mound B, feature 8 pit, which appear identical in type, is uncertain. Both cremations lay close to the present sod line and were discovered in scraping operations with slips to gather fill for reconstructing mound B. Burial 28 was 0.4 foot below the present sod line and burial 29 was 0.2 foot below. Neither had been disturbed, showed evidence of inclusion in a fire pit or burned area, or yielded traces of artifacts.

In the absence of conclusive evidence, it is useless to suggest these cremations might have been laid down at the time feature 8 of mound B was being furnished as a tomb, but possibility of a connection exists, particularly in the absence of any human cremation evidence in the remainder of the considerable village area tested.

Plate 6.—Provenience of Chickasaw grave goods

Figure No.:	Object	Provenience
1.....	Shell gorget.....	Burial 18, on neck.
2.....	Silver crown.....	Burial 18, on head.
3.....	Powder flask spout.....	Burial 18, thoracic area.
4.....	Galvanized iron cup.....	Burial 18, on chest.
5.....	Glass beads.....	Burial 25, upper body area.
6.....do.....	Burial 17, body area.
7.....	Glass and shell beads.....	Burial 20, neck.
8.....	Glass beads.....	Burial 17, body area.
9.....do.....	Burial 19, neck.
10.....do.....	Burial 21, neck.
11.....do.....	Burial 22, neck.

